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THE BOY I LEFT BEHIND ME

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OUR HERITAGE OF LIBERTY  
MY REMARKABLE UNCLE  
HOW TO WRITE  
HAPPY STORIES





Portrait by Karsh

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The Boy I Left  
Behind Me

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STEPHEN LEACOCK

THE BODLEY HEAD • LONDON



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## Contents

Stephen Leacock : a personal note <i>by Barbara Nimmo</i>	7
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### Part One

#### *Some Chapters of Autobiography*

1 There'll always be an England	17
2 Life on the Old Farm	37
3 My Education and what I Think of it Now	69
4 Teaching School	94

### Part Two

#### *A Last Miscellany*

1 Are Witty Women Attractive to Men?	113
2 Living with Murder	120
3 What Can Izaak Walton Teach Us?	123
4 Andrew Macphail	132
5 Gilbert's " Bab " Ballads	140
6 Common Sense and the Universe	163
7 A Plea for Geographical Science	180
8 An Apology for the British Empire	193
9 Britain and Canada	203
10 This Business of Prophecy	213

### Epilogue

Three Score and Ten—the Business of Growing Old	217
<i>(From MY REMARKABLE UNCLE)</i>	



## STEPHEN LEACOCK

(December 30, 1869—March 28, 1944)

### *A Personal Note*

THESE NOTES on my uncle, Stephen Leacock, are no more than jottings of a few things that stand out in my memory during the years I knew him, especially when I lived in his house and did his secretarial work. It was a bit like living beside a volcano : there was nothing dull or routine in life. In the winter months we were in Montreal, in a comfortable town house at the foot of the mountain ; in summer, as soon as McGill was over, or sooner if it could possibly be arranged, we were off to his lakeside farm.

The winter months were broken by many trips to all parts of the States for lectures—four or five a month, lecturing perhaps three or four times on each trip. Those who have heard Uncle Stephen lecture know there were few people who could hold an audience as he could ; that there were few to equal him as a public speaker. “I started giving public humorous lectures to help the Belgian refugees in the last war, and went on after the war to help myself. My bread on the waters came back as cake. I lectured (1915-37) all over the United States from Kansas City to the sea, and through England and Scotland and in Canada from Halifax to Vancouver. To get a new audience I would have had to learn Chinese. So I stopped lecturing.”

He lectured at McGill three days a week, which gave him three free days for outside lectures and literary work. He had started there in the reign of Queen Victoria, giving just one lecture under her reign. He

remained on the staff until his retirement in 1936, being head of the Department of Economics and Political Science from 1908. McGill was one of the great interests of his life, and he one of its outstanding figures. One always knew when he came into the Art Building by his sure heavy step and the loud thump of his cane on the marble floor, even if he didn't chance to greet anyone in his deep resonant voice.

In his sketch written at the death of Sir Arthur Currie, Principal of McGill and one of his close friends, he spoke of the lowly professors following behind the various dignitaries with "shabby, shuffling steps." I have never liked that passage since it was not really what he thought of professors at all. He would rather have been a professor than anything else, and especially at McGill. He thought it a position of great dignity, not of humility. He liked McGill as a cosmopolitan seat of knowledge, not bound by religious sects or narrow policies. He liked the long months of leisure from set hours and routine it gave: months he could devote to his writings and to life in the country. As he wrote somewhere, "In point of leisure, I enjoy more in the four corners of a single year than a business man knows in his whole life. I thus have what the business man can never enjoy, an ability to think, and, what is still better, to stop thinking altogether for months at a time."

He valued above all else "brains," and was quick to realize latent ability in his students. He did a great deal for many of his honours students, either getting them started in the business world by personal introductions, often to old students, or else by helping them to gain further degrees in outside colleges.

Of all his associates at the University his closest friend was Professor René du Roure, head of the French department, who died a few months after the collapse of France in the late war, a tragedy which carried René away with it, broken-hearted. The two had been friends for years, and I have often wished that I could have retained more of their

lengthy discussions on war, history, literature and education. They were a brilliant pair. They played a great deal of chess together in the evenings in my uncle's study, and on days when he lectured in the afternoon invariably met for a game of billiards at the University Club. Their matches were famous in the Club, not for the excellence of their play but for the fun they had over it. They played for a dollar a game, and the same dollar constantly changed hands. I could always tell which had won when they drove up to the house, for the loser paid the taxi.

During his thirty-six years on the staff Stephen Leacock gave much time and thought to the direction of the Arts Faculty, as a dominant voice on the Faculty Committee. He never wanted to be principal or dean of a Faculty, but was content to be head of a department with small administrative duties to perform. These duties he carried out very rapidly with a pen and a piece of bristle board, plotting a course or a time-table for lectures. He had a quick and orderly mind in planning. I first saw one of his bristle-board tables when as a little girl I gazed at the neat charts he had made for some medicine his son was taking. Later when I came to stay we used sheets and sheets of it a week in the study and at McGill. A large chart hung behind the study door for lecture engagements, and there were others for expenses, household routine, etc. At his farm in Orillia, too, the barnyard was hung with charts showing the amount of grain the livestock got a day, the rotation to weed the garden, and each of the hired men's duties.

When with the enforcement of the sixty-five years age-limit he was asked to retire in 1936, he did not pretend to like it. He wanted to go on lecturing. It gave him a routine around which to fit the rest of his work, a sort of "prop" as it were. His disappointment caused him to feel quite bitterly for a time towards the university he had served so well. "I was then

retired, much against my will, on grounds of senility, having passed the age of sixty-five."

In the autumn of 1936 came an invitation to cross Canada on a lecture tour. He had never lectured in Canada for money, although he had spoken at numerous clubs and societies, and for charity, as when he lectured during the first world war for the benefit of the Belgian Relief Fund. There followed several weeks of breathless planning, arranging lectures in the various cities, frantic packing until the night of November 25th, when Uncle Stephen and Stevie, his son, got off with two huge black suitcases plastered with bright red stars for "quick identification." His letters were full of enthusiasm over the success of the trip. In Winnipeg he wrote, "It is just like a come-to-Jesus parade. I talked at the Fort Garry Hotel and they said a little before the meeting, 'This is the record for seats except for the Queen of Roumania,' and a little later, 'This beats the Queen of Roumania,' and later, 'The Queen is nowhere.'" Again from Victoria: "I had the most marvellous success here with a talk yesterday on *Economic Separatism in the Empire*. They laughed and cried, just about: never was there anything like it, they said." But with all his enthusiasm was a determination never to lecture again. "No more this season, and please God I won't need to lecture any more—wonderful success—all records broken, but it's too hard." Nor did he ever lecture again, except to small gatherings of Ontario Conservatives or McGill Alumni rallies; but his writing never stopped. He arrived back and immediately started off on *My Discovery of the West* while the iron was hot.

I have never heard people laugh as they laughed around his dinner-table. He loved entertaining and almost always made any visiting celebrity an excuse for a party—author, actor, or explorer (he was always fascinated with explorers. He nearly went on an expedition to the South Pole—was it with Shackleton or Vilhjalmur Stefansson? I forget; he knew them both.

But when he found he could not take along his own supply of whisky, the long cold nights of the antarctic seemed too much.)

One winter, I think it must have been in 1934, he gave a series of radio readings, short passages from his humorous writings. It was the first time anyone had been able to persuade him to talk over the radio. He didn't like it, and was afraid of the new technique. There were some sixteen broadcasts in all, every Tuesday and Friday evening for fifteen minutes. His friends in Montreal enjoyed these evenings, for in order to have someone to talk to, and not merely a microphone, he would ask a dozen or more people to join him for drinks at the club and then take them in a body over to the broadcasting studio. When the talk was over came the fun of the evening as we piled into taxis and went on to the house for a supper party. But he still did not like giving radio talks, and never did so again except when a speech before a large audience was put on the air—he did not have to think of the microphone then. He needed to feel the pulse of his audience. What he says of Dickens in his book on his life is, I think, true of his own public speaking. "Dickens's audiences were quite truly carried away. They were outside of themselves. They laughed and they sobbed, they were in an 'ecstasy.' And Dickens controlled them with hand and voice and eye—like a magician."

He always read his articles or his books aloud, piece by piece, to any of us who happened to be there. There was a sort of exultation in his spirits, as over a thing well done. "Fetch me that manuscript on my study table," he would ask me (I'd usually find it somewhere else), "and my spectacles—I don't know where." I can always hear his rich and full-toned voice as I read anything he has written, feel the pauses for emphasis, and hear the laughter that followed.

The summers, as I said, were spent at his country house in Orillia, known as "Old Brewery Bay." He



used to say he'd judge his visitors by the name. "If they like the name Old Brewery Bay, they're all right. They can have everything on the place. I have known that name, the Old Brewery Bay, to make people feel thirsty by correspondence as far away as Nevada." The house was large and comfortable with a wide-swept lawn to the lake. Two large furnaces made it habitable in winter. With the war and the consequent shortage of domestic help and the difficulty in effecting repairs the place has begun to grow shabby. But Uncle Stephen seemed hardly to notice. He reminded me to some small degree of old E. P. Leacock, whom he describes in one of the best sketches he ever wrote, "My Remarkable Uncle." Not that he was the likeable humbug that E. P. was, but he always saw the best in things about him and not the worst, the possibility of what they might be and not what they really were. He would direct us, full of kind welcome, to the "west wing" bedrooms when I arrived for the summer vacation with my husband and little girl. The room faced the west, yes, but there were no screens and there wasn't a stopper to the bath. And it really did not matter.

Life in Orillia was all confined within the bounds of the Old Brewery Bay except for an occasional trip to a trout stream, or a fishing trip in his old sailing boat. Uncle Stephen wrote many charming stories about fishing, and since I know nothing about it myself, I leave that part out. His enthusiasm infected people who had never liked fishing before. I think he enjoyed a fishing companion who didn't know too much, because then he had the fun of showing how it was done. Great preparations had to be made for these trips. Everything else stopped in the routine of farm and house while someone packed the lunch, someone else bicycled to town for worms, and another person fixed the boat. There were trappings and devices on that boat that were unique in sailing annals, devised by Uncle Stephen to make life aboard it as easy and leisurely as possible.

I remember once in the hustle and bustle of getting Uncle Stephen and a friend off, he called out to the young hired man of the hour: "Bring me a piece of ice, a small piece about the size of your brain." And he chuckled as the boy returned with a chunk as big as a ten-gallon hat.

Gardening and farming came even before fishing. The farm was what you might call a truck farm. Tomatoes, beans and peas were grown in quantity to sell to the village store, and at different times other things were tried out. One summer it was Montreal melons, which reached a size of twenty pounds but needed as much care as a newborn baby; another year, turkeys. I remember our dining one Thanksgiving on the sole survivor of a brood of one hundred, which at fifty cents initial outlay plus the feed until one by one they died, represented a hundred dollars. But Uncle Stephen could always laugh it off—often literally, by writing a story about it which would make many hundreds more. He once wrote: "I have a large country house—a sort of farm which I carry on as a hobby . . . ten years ago the deficit on my farm was about a hundred dollars; but by well-designed capital expenditure, by drainage and greater attention to detail, I have got it into the thousands."

Gardening and farming were not the only things that went on around the farm. There was always something in the process of being made—a hen-house or boat-house, cottage or lodge. Uncle Stephen designed them all himself. The barnyard he made for fun like an old French stockade, a high green fence with a building at each of the four corners, for feed, tools and chickens, etc., with the stable for one work horse and two cows in the centre. There was a charming little lodge, a cottage by the lake, and a boat-house on the bay. When they were finished however, Uncle Stephen was liable to lose interest in them. He might even rip one apart to start another. But it was all fun.

He liked entertaining in Orillia particularly—to fill the house with week-end guests, friends from everywhere. He liked to look down the broad table and proudly point out that everything was “off the farm” except the tin of sardines in the *hors d'œuvres*. He might acknowledge that it could have been done much cheaper by a caterer from Toronto; but that wasn't the point. On a summer evening, if the crowd were large, we might dine on the sun gallery, which he would decorate by having vast ferns brought in from the surrounding woods and stuck in huge pots. Once he even had cut flowers from the back garden stuck all along the perennial beds to give a bit of colour when the flowers there were off season. He was often a hard taskmaster; he worked hard himself and expected it of others. I have known him dismiss all the maids with a house full of guests and take them back the next day at increased pay.

“I find,” he once wrote to me, “that from May 1st to May 15th we served 333 meals and they cost 17 cents each for outside supplies; but as many things represent ‘stocking up’ (having just come up from Montreal) and as inside supplies increase greatly with broilers and vegetables, I hope to get down to close to 10 cents. . . . The fowls, eating by the measured pound of food of which I know the cost, are running at about a little over \$15 a month: but the hens lay not far from 50 cents a day (20 cents a day cash and the rest we eat) so that they are very nearly feeding the 225 broilers.” He enjoyed getting things like this down on paper—farm accounts, house accounts—and called it “putting the college to it.” Then he'd forget it all the next day.

No article about Uncle Stephen ever omits a description of his personal appearance. He was a rugged, fine-looking man, not really large as most people make him out to be, but with a large head, tremendous stride and a deep rich voice—all of which made him seem bigger than he really was. He had deep-set keen blue eyes with a constant sparkle, just occasionally lit up by

a flash of rage. His hair—and he had plenty of it—thickly covered his head and crept down his forehead in a fetlock, not easily brushed down. I remember my grandmother once remarking how grey his hair was getting. “That’s just because I have some left—you don’t notice the other boys.”

I could go on writing indefinitely of small incidents, but perhaps I have said enough for my purpose, which was simply to sketch very lightly a personal portrait of a man whose writings won him so many friends throughout the English-speaking world. No doubt it is as a humorist that Stephen Leacock will be best remembered; but I think he will be long remembered at McGill as a notable, an almost legendary figure in the life of that great University; and there are many Americans no less than Canadians who will surely remember him as an unofficial “ambassador of good-will” between their two countries, apologist for neither but the warm and understanding defender of both, as he was of the British Empire.

Warmth and understanding, sympathy and kindness, were indeed the key-notes of his character, with a bed-rock of courage and sanity. He was a humorist of the school of Dickens and Mark Twain and in himself the embodiment of an old and good tradition. Life meant very much to him. He lived it for all he was worth. And it may truly be said—no epitaph would please him better—that he lived it well.

BARBARA NIMMO



PART ONE

Some Chapters of Autobiography

CHAPTER I

*There'll always be an England*

I WAS born in Victorian England on December 30th in 1869, which is exactly the middle year of Queen Victoria's reign. If I were analysed by one of those scientific French biographers who take full account of the time, the place, the circumstance, or by the new school of psychologists who study "behaviour," I imagine much could be made of this. As expressed in a plain sense, I am certain that I have never got over it.

I was born at Swanmore, which is a hamlet and parish on "Waltham Chase" in Hampshire. They use names like that in Hampshire because it is so old: it doesn't say who chased whom: they may have forgotten. Anyway, it is a mile and a half from Bishop's Waltham, which is ten miles from Winchester and of which details may be had by consulting Domesday Book, though of course there is earlier information also. One reason why one feels proud of being born in Hampshire is that it is all of such immemorial antiquity. The Norman Conquest there is just nothing. Porchester and Winchester and Chichester are all a thousand years older than that.

I fell into an error about my birthplace and put it into print a good many times during the several years it lasted, so that I came near to having the honour of a disputed birthplace like Homer and Mr. Irvin Cobb. It was Irvin Cobb—was it not?—who said he had nearly got one but couldn't keep the dispute going. Mine arose quite innocently. I discovered that there is a Swanmore which is a suburb of Ryde in the Isle of Wight, and as

I knew that my grandfather lived near Ryde I moved my birthplace into that suburb. Finding there was doubt, I wrote to a solicitor at Ryde who had conducted the family business of the Leacocks for generations and asked about it. He wrote that he thought it extremely unlikely that I was born in such a locality as Swanmore, Ryde. But I didn't know whether this was one on Swanmore or one on me, whether Swanmore was not fit for me to be born in, or whether I had not the required class for Swanmore. So it stands at that. In any case it was in 1869 and Swanmore may have picked up since.

But I was led by this to write to the Vicar of Bishop's Waltham and he sent me back a certificate of my birth and christening at Swanmore Parish Church, and he said that I was not only born in Swanmore but that Hampshire was proud of it. This gave me such a warm thrill of affection for Hampshire that I very nearly renewed my subscription (one guinea per annum) to the Hampshire Society: very nearly—not quite. I knew they'd take the guinea but I was not sure how they'd feel about it. People who come from celebrated places like Hampshire, known to all the world, and go away and don't see them again year after year, are apt to get warm rushes of sudden affection and pride towards the good old place. I've known people feel this way towards Texas or Newfoundland or in fact anywhere to which you can't get back.

In such a glow of feeling years ago I subscribed to the Hampshire Society (one guinea per annum) and it was certainly a delight at first to get the annual circular, with the names of the Lord-Lieutenant and a lot of people as fellow-members, and the receipts and disbursements, and the balance carried forward—excitements like that. So it went on that way year after year for years—a guinea, and a guinea, and a guinea—till one year all of a sudden I got an angry fit of economy (in the depression) and asked, What am I getting out of all this?—a guinea, and

a guinea—that could go on for ever—and I wrote and cut out my membership. It's nothing against Hampshire. People do that to Texas and Newfoundland. And in any case it was in the same year and about the same time that I cut out my subscriptions to the Royal Society of Canada, and the Authors' Association—even to things that I didn't belong to. But it seemed a dirty trick to have dropped the Hampshire Society and to have fallen out of the Receipts and Disbursements and General Balance.

My family were Hampshire people on both sides, not of course the real thing going back to the Conquest, but not bad. The Leacocks lived on the Isle of Wight where my grandfather had a house called Oak Hill near Ryde, but I gather that he wanted the Island for himself and didn't want his sons to come crowding on to it. That's why they were sent out across the world wherever it was farthest. The Leacocks had made a lot of money out of plantations in Madeira and the Madeira wine trade, so much that my great-grandfather John Leacock had retired and bought the house at Oak Hill. After that nobody in the family did any work (any real work) for three generations, after which, in my generation, we were all broke and had to start work, and work in the low down sense where you work by the hour—a thing that would disqualify anybody in Hampshire right off the bat. My brothers, I think, got 17 cents an hour. I got a cent a minute, but that was as a school-teacher. But I am anticipating and I turn back.

The Leacocks, I say, were in Madeira wine and the wine trade and some of my cousins are still there and still in it. The senior member of the family got out a few years ago a booklet about Madeira wines and the Leacock family and he put into it the fatal sentence—"The first recorded Leacock was a London day-labourer, whose son was brought up at a charity school and went out as



a ship's cabin-boy to Madeira!" Think of it! What can you do after that? It's no use going on to say what a wonderful fellow the ship's cabin-boy was, and how he built up great plantations and ownerships. That's no good. You can't get over that day-labourer stuff. The Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire knows just where to class me.

My mother's family, the Butlers, were much better, though you couldn't really call them Hampshire people as they had not, at the time of which I speak, been in Hampshire for more than a hundred and fifty years. They lived, and do still, in a house called Bury Lodge which is on a hill overlooking the immemorial village of Hambledon, Hants, a village so old that they talk there of the Great Plague of 1666 when so many people were buried in the churchyard as an affliction of yesterday. Hambledon, Hants, is to all people who play cricket and love the game, as Mecca is to a Mohammedan. Here, more than anywhere else, began the sacred game, for there is no other adjective that can convey what cricket means to Englishmen than only the word "sacred." Here on the windswept open space of "Broadhalfpenny Down" was bowled the first ball, the first rushing underhand ball where bowling began. Here men in tophats planned and named the game, designated by a flight of daring fancy the strip of ground between the wickets as the "pitch," indicated the right side of the batter as the "off" side and the left as the "on" side—names taken from the English carriage driving—christened the brave man fielding thirty feet behind the batter's bat as "square-leg" (he needed to be), invented the "over" and the "wide" and the "no ball" and l.b.w.—to be carried round the world later as the abiding bond of the British Empire.

The Butler family were intimately concerned with the beginnings of cricket and in the drawing-room of Bury Lodge are preserved (on blue foolscap paper, gummed on to the firescreens) some of the earliest scores at Broad-

halfpenny Down. When I was lecturing in London in 1921 I mentioned to E. V. Lucas, the famous humorist (also one of the great authorities on cricket) this family connection and the old score sheets at Bury Lodge. I found that he at once regarded me with a sort of reverence. Nothing would do him but we must drive down to Hampshire to look at them. This we did, Lucas supplying the car while I felt that my presence with him was compensation enough. The house was shut up, as the Butlers were in London, but a housekeeper showed us the scores, and then we drove up to Broadhalfpenny Down and stood there in the wind, well, just as people stand on the ruins of Carthage. After that we went down into Hambledon village and to the "pub," where I had all that peculiar gratification that goes with "the return of the native." There were several old men round and it was astonishing what they could remember over a pint of beer, and still more over a quart. I had been away from Hambledon for nearly fifty years, so it enabled one to play the part of Rip Van Winkle. I didn't mention that I had only been there once before, for ten minutes, as a child of six.

Generally the return of the native to his native town (for its old home week or for what not) is apt to be spoiled by the fact that after all he hasn't been away long enough, only ten or a dozen years at most. So when he says, "What's become of the queer old cuss who used to keep the drugstore? When did he die?" they answer in chorus, "He's not dead. He's right there still." In such circumstances never say that you'd give ten dollars to see So-and-so again, or they'll go and bring him.

As I say, my grandfather needed all the Isle of Wight to himself and so when my father married my mother, whose name was Agnes Butler, daughter of the Reverend Stephen Butler, they were promptly sent out to South Africa. That was in 1866-67, long before the days of

diamonds and gold created the South Africa of sorrows that came later. Those were the days of sailing ships, of infinite distances and of long farewells. They went "up country" to Maritzburg in ox-carts and then out beyond it to settle. It was all as primitive then as we see it in the movies that deal with Dr. Livingstone and Darkest Africa. I saw Maritzburg forty years later when its people seemed a mass of Asiatics, the immigrant wave from India that first awoke South Africa to the "Asiatic peril."

Maritzburg in 1867 no doubt appeared singularly quiet, but to those who lived there the whole place, as my mother has told me, was "seething with the Colenso controversy." I imagine few people of to-day remember the name of Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, the mathematician over whose *Arithmetic* and *Algebra* a generation of English schoolboys groaned and whose mild aspersions on the Pentateuch—I think it means the first five books of the Old Testament—opened the way, like a water leak in a dam, to heresies that swept away the literal interpretation of Scripture. Colenso became a sort of test case, in orthodoxy, and in the law as to the government of the Church of England in the colonies, and locally a test case in the fidelity of the congregation. Some people in Natal would allow their children to be baptized by the Bishop and some wouldn't and held them over for the Dean any time the Bishop was away. My eldest brother who was born in Natal got caught up in this controversy and torn backward and forward before he could be christened. But the South African climate proved impossible for my mother, and the locusts ate up their farm, and so the family came home again to Hampshire.

My grandfather then took another big think as to

where he would send them to, and it was in this interregnum of thinking that my father was supposed to be "learning farming" to fit him to be sent to America. There was at that time in England a prevalent myth that farming could be "learned," especially by young men who couldn't learn anything else. So my father seems to have been moved round from one centre to another, drinking beer under the tutelage of Hampshire farmers who of course could drink more than he could, an agreeable life in which a young man was supposed to remain a gentleman even if he acted like a farmer. As those of us who have been brought up on farms know, you can't "learn farming," at least not that way. We could in fact whisper to one another the way you learn it. First of all, as Course No. 1, or First Year Agronomics, you get on to a waggon-load of manure at six in the morning and drive up and down a seven-acre field throwing it in all directions, in fact seeing how far you can throw it. Then you go back for another load. Course No. 2, or Cultivation, involves driving two horses hitched to what is called a set of field harrows up and down a dry ploughed field so as to turn it into a cloud of dust and thistledown. During the driving you shout *Gee* and *Haw* at the horses. They don't know what it means, but they are used to hearing it and they know where to go, anyway. Courses like that carried on systematically over a period of years make a man a farmer.

Of course I don't deny that over this and above it are the real courses in Agriculture such as they teach at Ste. Anne's, P.Q., out near Montreal and at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, both splendid places. Here a student goes at it all scientifically, learning the chemistry of the thing and the composition of soils and all that. Hence when he goes back on to the farm he sees it all with a new eye. He still spends his days driving the manure waggon round a seven-acre field, and driving harrows in a cloud of dust. But it is all different. He now knows what manure *is*. Before that he thought it

was just manure. And he now understands why dust floats and he knows what he is doing when he pulverizes the soil, instead of merely thinking that he is "breaking it up good."

During this period of interregnum my father and mother lived at different places—Swanmore and Shoreham (in Sussex) and then Porchester. Their large family (which ultimately reached eleven in England and Canada) were borne round in this way, only two in the same place of the six born in England. It was from Porchester that my father was sent out ahead of us by my grandfather to Kansas, a place of which my grandfather must have heard great things in the early seventies, though its first charm of the John Brown days was fading.

Porchester is the only place of my childhood days in England that I really remember. I lived there for two years (age  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to  $6\frac{1}{2}$ ) and in a sense it still means the England that is England to me. At the opening of the recent war when the inspiring song, "*There'll Always be an England*," burst upon the world, I set forth this theme as centred for me round Porchester in a magazine publication which I reproduce here.

*The England I Remember*

*There'll Always be an England.*

I imagine that somebody first said that away back in Anglo-Saxon times. The people who heard him say it most likely remarked, "Well, naturally!" and "Poetic chap, eh?"

Yet when I first heard those words sung, they brought back to me a sudden remembrance of the England of my childhood and a poignant affection for it, more than

I knew I had. This, I am sure, happened to many people. . . .

ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND.

This, most certainly, is true of the immemorial village of Porchester in which I was brought up, for which the flight of time was meaningless. But my father's farm in South Africa, as I have said before, was eaten out by locusts and so he and my mother came home where I and other brothers were born. Meantime, my grandfather was consulting the map and picked on Kansas because at that time the railways only got that far. My father went first and we were placed in Porchester so that we couldn't get to the Isle of Wight too often. We were ready to go to America when word came that my father's farm in Kansas had been eaten by grasshoppers (they are the same as locusts). This meant delay while my grandfather looked for something farther still. So we waited on in Porchester, and I had altogether six years of an English childhood that I had no right to have under the rules.

Porchester? Where is it? Right across the water from Portsmouth. What water? Ah, now, that I never knew—it's the water between Portsmouth and Porchester. You could tell it then by the tall masts and yards of the men-of-war, and of the *Victory* swinging there at anchor. . . . Up at the end of it was Paul's Grove, where St. Paul preached to the ancient—ah, there you have me—but to a congregation probably very like my Uncle Charles's congregation in the little Porchester church. . . . The church stood—or it did in 1876, and things can hardly have changed in so short a time—inside the precincts of Porchester Castle. You've seen the Castle perhaps, a vast quadrangle of towers and battlements, and a great space inside for cattle during sieges. The newer parts were built by the Normans but the original part by the Romans. The Normans built the church, but Good Queen Anne "restored" it, with a lot of others, and so, on the wall,

there was a great painted lettering in gilt and faded colours : BY THE BOUNTY OF QUEEN ANNE. You could spell it out from your tall pew by the sunlight falling on the wall through the dancing leaves, while Uncle Charles preached, quietly so as not to wake the Normans, and the people gently dozed.

. . . ALWAYS, AN ENGLAND.

Why, of course, to the people of Porchester. Time left no trace there ; all the centuries were yesterday, St. Paul, and the Castle, and Queen Elizabeth's bedroom, and Uncle Charles and Queen Anne.

. . . WHEREVER THERE'S A BUSY STREET . . .

Busy? Well, I suppose you could call it busy, the village street with the little "common" breaking it in the middle. There was only one of everything : one public-house, one grocery, one rectory (Uncle Charles's), one windmill (Pycroft's), one fly (Peacock's), and so on. There'd been no competition for years. The public-house, the Crown and Anchor, stood where it should, where the streets came together at the "common," and looked as it should in *Father, Dear Father, Come Home with me Now* . . . with red curtains in the windows.

. . . WHEREVER THERE ARE TURNING WHEELS . . .

Pycroft's mill looked just right, standing down on the water a little way from the Castle. The sails of Pycroft's mill moved so slowly they seemed to soar and hover. Tennyson speaks of a "tall mill that whistled on the waste." He fell down there, eh, Pycroft? Pycroft looked the part admirably, all dust . . . and Peacock who had the fly matched it. All the people in Porchester looked like that, each fitted the part. . . . Old General Hurdle coming down the street, a frail, old, soldierly figure, so upright that he quivered on his stick. Take old Grubb, who had been in the navy in the 1914-18 War

(what we called the Great War then), he sat catching periwinkles or whatever they caught, where the Castle moat drained into the sea. He looked it exactly, all tar . . .

All the people, as I say, looked the part, the kind of things despaired of by the movies. I never knew whether Gilbert and Sullivan copied England or England copied Gilbert and Sullivan.

. . . A MILLION MARCHING FEET . . .

I am afraid that would be a large order for Porchester in 1876 . . . a million, well, perhaps it seemed so to us children when swarms of people used to come to the Castle on holidays—I only half recall them—Whit-Monday, something Wednesday, Coronation Day—with Aunt Sally's ginger beer and swings and drunken sailors.

. . . RED, WHITE AND BLUE . . .

The blue, of course, was the sea. As for the "drunken sailors," why indeed shouldn't they be drunk? They were "ashore," weren't they? Those sailors were better drunk than sober . . . scattering pennies and full of fun. Now a soldier was different . . . a low sort of fellow, hanging around public-houses and getting poor girls into trouble. . . . Why isn't he off in Ashantee or some place like that where soldiers belong?

. . . BRITONS, AWAKE . . .

Awake? Well, not too completely. I think of Uncle Charles preaching decorously, quietly, the congregation nodding. I wouldn't disturb that, it has been undisturbed too long. Uncle Charles, I have heard him say it, was singularly fortunate. In Porchester there was no outbreak of "religion." There was no chapel, no open-air preaching, no vulgar confession of sin. No people got sudden "salvation"—they got it gradually, through eighty years of drowsy Sundays. When I was six it all



came to an end. My grandfather found a place called Upper Canada, clean out of reach of a railway. . . .

. . . WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU? . . .

Then came the most vivid memory, saying good-bye to England as a child. . . . We went on board a great ship at Liverpool, a ship with the towering masts and rigging of the grand old days . . . went on board from a hole in the side, it seemed. It was all very wonderful to us, though lots of people, like my mother, cried, because going to America in 1876 meant good-bye.

But for us, the children, it was different, it was all wonderful . . . the crew and all the passengers joined to haul up the anchor. . . . And they sang the song of the departing English, *Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow*, that echoed down the decades. As the words died away on the ear . . . Farewell, England, much as we have loved thee, courage, true hearts, will bear us on our way! . . . the great ship was surging into the darkness under press of sail, heading to what we call "America."

. . . SHOUT IT LOUD: THE EMPIRE TOO . . .

It was all fun for us . . . the wind, the waves, the magnificence of the "saloon." . . . And then the great sheets of ice until the ship stopped. On Sunday the clergyman prayed to have it taken away and it went.

Then came a morning when someone called down the companionway . . . "Come and see America." . . . And there it was, a tall, hard coast of trees and rock, clear and bright in the sunshine, not a bit soft, like England.

. . . IF ENGLAND MEANS AS MUCH TO YOU . . .

It was the Gaspé Coast, and we were entering the St. Lawrence. I understand that one of the members who represents this section in a legislature proposes to break away from England the three million people of English race and birth, to say nothing of the other three million

British, who live in Canada. It would be to blot out, for some, the memories of childhood, and for all, the remembered talk of parent and old people . . . tear up the books that hold the elegies in country churchyards, and hush the sea songs of England on which Tom Bowling's name floats to us down the wind. . . .

Speaking of Porchester I may say that after I had gone down to Hambledon with E. V. Lucas I was so fascinated with the rôle of the returned native that I found time to make a hurried trip to Porchester, to try it out again. When I got there I found my way from the station up (or down, you never know which they call it in England) the straggled street to the village common and to the Father-Dear-Father-Come-Home-With-Me-Now public house of which I spoke. I went into the Crown and Anchor and struck the proper attitude over a glass of beer at the bar. "Nearly fifty years ago," I said (feeling like the Silver King come home), "I used to live in this village. Perhaps you can tell me something about the people I remember."

The barmaid threw her head indignantly in the air, "No, indeed, I couldn't," she said, "the idear!"

I saw that I was mistaken. "Not you yourself," I said, "you weren't born and couldn't remember, but you may have heard of them from your—grandparents."

"Well," she said, mollified, "grandfather's in behind now. You might come in and see him."

I went "in behind" and there was grandfather looking just right, as everything does in Porchester—seated in a chair, snow-white hair, a stick—age, say ninety.

"I thought, perhaps," I said, "you could tell me something of the people I remember here fifty years ago."

"Eh," he shouted.

"Could you tell me anything about my uncle, the Reverend Charles Butler, who used to be the rector here fifty years ago?"

“The Reverend Charles Butler,” he shouted bitterly, “indeed I could! There was the meanest man that ever came to this village. He’d a’ stopped every poor man’s beer, he would, if he’d had his way. Don’t talk to me of the Reverend Charles Butler.”

I decided not to.

So I went out and I managed to find the house where we lived when I was a child in Porchester. But what a poor, humble-looking place! I had no idea that it could have been as poor as that! A little “hall” just wide enough to squeeze through, a room on the left of it, the size of a box—the “drawing-room” I called it at once from memory—and another box behind it. I think my mother had the nerve to call it the “breakfast-room.” I felt hurt and humiliated coming out. I hadn’t realized how used I had become to being well off, to living in comfort and having everything. As I came out I saw that there were some men there, evidently a builder and his “hands.” They told me they were going to knock down the house. I told them to go right ahead.

After that I had no heart to go on and see the castle. It might have turned out to be just nothing as beside, say, the Royal York Hotel in Toronto or the Château Frontenac in Quebec.

It is better not to go back to the place you came from. Leave your memory as it is. No reality will ever equal it.

It is from my Hampshire childhood that I draw my interest in the American frigate *Chesapeake*, of which noble old ship I have a “chunk” on my library table.

Everyone recalls from his school history the immortal story of the great fight between the American frigate *Chesapeake* and the British frigate *Shannon* outside of Boston on June 1, 1813. It is not merely the victory of the *Shannon* that is remembered but the chivalrous nature of the conflict, the ships meeting after a courteous challenge

from Captain Broke of the *Shannon* to Captain Lawrence of the *Chesapeake*. Broke generously offered to send any of his attendant vessels out of range of helping him. The ships were an even match—*Shannon* 1,066 tons, broadside 544 pounds, crew 330; the *Chesapeake* 1,135 tons, broadside 570, crew (about) 400.

The result of the battle was a complete victory for the *Shannon* but with terrible loss on both sides. Lawrence was mortally wounded; Broke so desperately wounded as never to fully recover, though he lived to be an Admiral and only died in 1841.

Now, I have always had a certain personal interest in the *Chesapeake*. I have, as I say, on my library table a "chunk" of very hard wood (teak or mahogany, I suppose) about 8 inches by 3 by 2½ inches, that was originally a piece of the *Chesapeake*. I have had it for nearly seventy years, the kind of thing you never lose if you pay no attention to it, and like the fidelity of an old friend.

When we were leaving England in 1876 to go to "America" we were taken over to the Isle of Wight to see my grandfather, who was naturally delighted: so much so that he gave me from the drawing-room table at Oak Hill this bit of wood and said, "That was a piece of the *Chesapeake*." Written on it in his writing, but now faded beyond recognition, were the words: *A Piece of the American Frigate Chesapeake—captured 1813.*

I always wondered how my grandfather came to have a piece of the *Chesapeake*, and this gave me an interest in the fate of the vessel. But any printed account in the histories merely said that the *Chesapeake* was taken across the Atlantic to England—which is quite true—and was commissioned in the service of the Royal Navy—which is not so. But it has only been of late years when I have been concerned with writing Canadian History that I have been able to get full details of the fate of the old ship. I am indebted here very greatly to the library staff of the Boston Public Library.

. . . . .

The amazing thing is that the *Chesapeake* was taken over to England, and is still there—all the best timbers of the vessel, built in solid as they came out of the ship, went into the making of a mill and are still throbbing and quivering all day as the mill, a hundred and twenty-three years old, still hums in an English village, grinding corn.

The mill is at Wickham—and if you don't know where Wickham is, I may say it's near Fareham—and Fareham? well, close to Porchester—and Porchester?—well, that's where I lived in England. Anyway, all these places are in Hampshire, freely admitted to be (by all who live there) the noblest of the English counties.

So there's the mill, and nobody knows about it. The reason is that people who know all about the *Chesapeake* know nothing of Wickham, and people who live in Wickham know nothing about the *Chesapeake*, though of course they all know about the old mill. If you said, "That mill was built out of the American ship *Chesapeake*, wasn't it?" they'd say, "Ay, like as not!"—meaning that that would be just the kind of thing to build a Hampshire mill out of.

Here is the story, though lack of space forbids full citation of authorities.

After the battle of the 1st June the *Chesapeake* was sailed (or partly towed) to Halifax harbour—a voyage of five days. She entered the harbour in the wake of the *Shannon* on June 6, presenting a terrible contrast of glory and tragedy, pride and honour—gay strings of bright flags of victory flying above battered ports and broken bulwarks, patched up as might be after the havoc of the broadsides.

Judge Haliburton, the famous writer still remembered for *Sam Stick*, went on board. "The *Chesapeake*," he wrote, "was like a charnel house . . . main deck filled with hammocks of the wounded, dead and dying . . . the deck had of necessity (heavy weather?) not been cleaned . . . steeped in gore as in a slaughter-house." The body of Captain Lawrence, who had died on board,

lay on the quarterdeck under the Stars and Stripes. He was buried, with many of his men, in Halifax.

The *Chesapeake*, refitted as might be, was sailed across to Portsmouth. There history loses her with the false lead that the Royal Navy recommissioned the ship. This is not so, nor can I find any definite authority to say that she ever sailed again. She was bought as she stood for £500 by a Mr. Holmes. He broke up the vessel, sold several tons of copper from the sheeting, with all fittings and timber, and doubled his money. The main timbers were pitch pine, new and sound, and some of them were sold for house-building in Portsmouth, but the best of them were bought by a Mr. John Prior for £200 to build a mill. This he duly erected (1820) in the hamlet of Wickham. The main timbers of the deck, built into the structure intact, were (and are) 32 feet long and 18 inches square. The purloins were used, just as they were, for joists.

With that the *Chesapeake* was forgotten and Wickham—it antedates the Norman Conquest—fell asleep again.

Forty years later a descendant, or relation (I cannot trace him), of Captain Broke of the *Shannon* got interested in gathering information. In a memoir which he wrote he quotes a letter from the Vicar of Fareham, date of 1864, with the information given above and the statement that the timbers of the *Chesapeake* (in fact the whole mill) seemed "good for centuries yet."

They talk in centuries in Hampshire.

Then comes another sleep.

Then a *Hampshire Gazetteer and Guide* of 1901 reports that the mill at Wickham made of the timbers of the *Chesapeake* is still intact and in active operation.

Then followed another sleep of the topic till in 1943 I woke it again by writing to the present Vicar of Fareham. I hadn't written sooner because, although I knew the *Chesapeake* was in a mill, I was looking for the mill to be on the Isle of Wight.

So I wrote to the Vicar of Fareham who referred me to

Mr. George Orwell, of Fareham, who has done a lot of antiquarian work, especially in things concerning the Navy and whose writings under the name of Histories are well known to all people who love British Antiquities (very fine people).

Mr. Orwell wrote me to say that the mill is still (April 4, 1943) quite as it was, timbers and all, going strong and likely to see a long while yet.

What ought to be done about it? These timbers of the deck of the *Chesapeake*—rebuilt into their earlier semblance—should have something of the sacred memory of the deck of the *Victory*. Why not buy them and give them to the United States? They should be a gift to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Those who know that place will recall its trophies—the proudest part of the establishment. There swings still afloat the schooner *America*, that won the cup in 1850 something, never recaptured; there is the old *Constitution* and the *Reina Mercedes* and there in the great hall is Perry's flag with his "*Don't give up the Ship*," and much else.

The *Chesapeake* would build into a fine platform, the old deck reproduced, for Mr. Churchill to lecture from.

When I look back on this mid-Victorian England into which I was born and which first stamped itself on my mind, it gives me many things to think about. How deeply set it was in the mould in which England was cast and in which to a great extent it still remains. Side by side with all that is splendid in history and in character is that everlasting division that separates people from one another with the heavy ridges and barriers of class distinction. Here are people born to be poor, and how poor they were. I can remember that when we had done with our tea-leaves old women (the place seemed full of them) would come and take them away to use over again.

There were the poor and there were the half-poor, and there were the respectable people and the genteel people, and the gentry and above them the great people, all the way to the Queen. And they all knew their places.

There was an elementary school called a National School where the children of the poor and of the respectable went at a fee of one penny a week. I can see now that it must have been one of the schools set up under the new Act, as it was then, of 1870, the first statute that ever gave England general primary education. England had got afraid that an illiterate population might mean danger to the nation. They had had the object lesson of the armies of the Civil War in America. The loud laughter of the *London Times* and the haw ! haw ! of the professional British officers had been exchanged for silent admiration and deep respect when the same people realized what it meant to have an army of men every one of whom could read and write, of skilled mechanics who could interpret a printed diagram and private soldiers with the technical knowledge to repair a damaged locomotive and reset a dismantled telegraph line. It had become plain enough that England had to do what one of its statesmen of the moment called "educate its masters," if only for the masters' sake.

That is seventy-five years ago. And strangely enough the wheel has turned a full circle and a similar discussion runs in the current journals of 1944. All through the present controversy over the schools and how to make the public schools public, runs the note of anxiety, are we really finding all the brains of the nation ? All, we need them all ! National brains are the first line of public safety for everybody. There must be no gifted children left too poor for their gifts to give service to the nation. Scholarships, endowments, anything ! We must have them.

It is a wonderful change. Compare it with the sentiment of Gray's *Elegy* in which the poet sorrows for the lack of opportunity that kept people down to the level of



the poor, and buried them in a country churchyard, but sorrows only for their own sakes.

*Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;  
Hands, that the rod of Empire might have sway'd,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.*

With Gray the sentiment is as of a wishful luxurious pity, and has nothing to do with any keen, anxious fear that the nation needs these men and must not bury them unknown. His very phrases show it : “waking the living lyre” is a thing that most of us could postpone for a while.

But, as I say, there was the National School functioning at a penny a week for the poor and the respectable. But for the genteel, no, not if they could reach a little higher, and of course not under any circumstances for the gentry. So two older brothers and I—aged 9 and 8 and 6—went therefore to a Dame’s School with which my academic education began in 1875, not to be completed till 1903 with a Chicago Ph.D. I recall but little of the Dame’s School except the first lesson in geography in which the Dame held up a map and we children recited in chorus, “the top of the map is always the north, the bottom south, the right-hand east, the left-hand west”!! I wanted to speak out and say, “But it’s only that way because you’re holding it that way,” but I was afraid to. Cracks with a ruler were as easy to get in a Dame’s School as scratches down on the Rio Grande.

So, as I say, it was an England all of class and caste, with everybody doing his duty in the state of life into which it had pleased God to call him. But of this later.

## CHAPTER II

### *Life on the Old Farm*

I ENJOY the distinction, until very recently a sort of recognized title of nobility in Canada and the United States, of having been "raised on the old farm." Till recently, I say, this was the acknowledged path towards future greatness, the only way to begin. The biographies of virtually all her great men for three or four generations show them as coming from the farm. The location of the "old home farm" was anywhere from Nova Scotia to out beyond Iowa, but in its essence and idea it was always the same place. I once described it in a book of verse which I wrote as a farewell to economics, which was so clever that no one could read it and which I may therefore quote with novelty now.

The Homestead Farm, way back upon the Wabash,  
Or on the Yockikenny,  
Or somewhere up near Albany—the Charm  
Was not confined to one, for there were many.

There when the earliest Streak of Sunrise ran  
The Farmer dragged the Horses from their Dream  
With "Get up, Daisy" and "Gol darn yer, Fan,"  
Had scarcely snapped the Tugs and Britching then  
The furious Hayrack roared behind the team  
All day the Hay  
Was drawn that way  
Hurled in the Mow  
Up high—and how!

Till when the ending Twilight came, the loaded Wain  
With its last, greatest Load turned Home again.  
The Picture of it rises to his Eye  
Sitting beside his Father, near the Sky.

I admit that within the last generation or so, in softer times of multiplying luxury, men of eminence have been

raised in a sickly sort of way in the cities themselves, have got their strength from High School Athletics instead of at the woodpile and behind the harrows, and their mental culture by reading a hundred books once instead of one book a hundred times. But I am talking of an earlier day.

It was a condition of course that one must be raised on the old farm and then succeed in getting off it. Those who stayed on it turned into rustics, into "hicks" and "rubes," into those upstate characters which are the delight of the comic stage. You had your choice! Stay there and turn into a hick, get out and be a great man. But the strange thing is that they all come back. They leave the old farm as boys so gladly, so happy to get away from its dull routine, its meaningless sunrise and sunset, its empty fresh winds over its fields, the silence of the bush—to get away into the clatter and effort of life, into the crowd. Then as the years go by they come to realize that at a city desk and in a city apartment they never see the sunrise and the sunset, have forgotten what the sky looks like at night and where the Great Dipper is, and find nothing in the angry gusts of wind or the stifling heat of the city streets that corresponds to the wind over the empty fields . . . so they go back, or they think they do, back to the old farm. Only they rebuild it, but not with an axe but with an architect. They make it a great country mansion with flagstoned piazzas, and festooned pergolas—and it isn't the old farm any more. You can't have it both ways.

But as I say, I had my qualifying share, six years of the old farm—after I came out as a child of six from England—in an isolation which in these days of radio and transport is unknown upon the globe.

As explained in the first chapter, I was brought out by my mother from England to Canada as the third of her

six children in 1876 on the steamship *Samatian*, Liverpool to Montreal, to join my father who had gone ahead and taken up a farm. The *Samatian* was one, was practically the last one, of those grand old vessels of the Allan line which combined steam with the towering masts, the cloud of canvas, the maze of ropes and rigging of a full-rigged three-masted ship. She was in her day a Queen of the ocean, that last word which always runs on to another sentence. She had been built in 1871, had had the honour of serving the Queen as a troopship for the Ashanti war and the further honour of carrying the Queen's daughter to Canada as the wife of the Marquis of Lorne, the Governor-General. No wonder that in my recollection of her the *Samatian* seemed grand beyond belief and carried a wealth of memories of the voyage of which I have already spoken. For years I used to feel as if I would "give anything" to see the *Samatian* again. "Give anything" at that stage of my finance meant, say, anything up to five dollars, anyways a whole lot. And then it happened years and years after when I had gone to Montreal to teach at McGill (it was in 1902) that I saw in the papers that the *Samatian* was in port; in fact I found that she still came in regularly all season and would be back again before navigation closed. So I never saw her. I meant to but I never did. When I read a little later that the old ship had been broken up I felt that I would have "given anything" (ten dollars, then) to have seen her.

In those days most people still came up, as we did in 1876, by river steamer from Montreal to Toronto. At Kingston we saw the place all decked with flags and were told that it was "The Twenty-fourth of May." We asked what that meant, because in those days they didn't keep "Queen's birthday" as a holiday in England. They kept *Coronation Day* with a great ringing of bells, but whether there was any more holiday to it than bell-

ringing I don't remember. But as we were presently to learn, "The Twenty-fourth" was at that time the great Upper Canada Summer Holiday of the year, Dominion Day was still too new to have got set. There wasn't any Labour Day, or any Civic Holiday.

From Toronto we took a train north to Newmarket, a funny train it seemed to us, all open and quite unlike the little English carriages, cut into compartments that set the fields spinning round when you looked out of the window. Newmarket in 1876 was a well-established country town, in fact, as they said, "quite a place." It still is. It was at that time the place from which people went by the country roads to the south side of Lake Simcoe, the township of Georgina, to which at that time there was no railway connection. From Newmarket my father and his hired man were to drive us the remaining thirty miles to reach the old farm. They had for it two wagons, a lumber wagon and a "light" wagon. A light wagon was lighter than a lumber wagon, but that's all you could say about it—it is like those histories which professors call "short" histories, they might have been longer. So away we went along the zigzag roads, sometimes along a good stretch that would allow the horses to break into a heavy attempt at a trot, at other times ploughing through sand, tugging uphill or hauling over corduroy roads of logs through thick swamps where the willow and alder bushes almost met overhead and where there was "no room to pass." On the lift of the hills we could see about us a fine rolling country, all woods broken with farms and here and there in the distance, on the north horizon great flecks of water that were Lake Simcoe. And so on, at a pace of four or five miles an hour, till as the day closed in we went over a tumbled bridge with a roaring mill dam and beyond it a village, the village of Sutton—two mills, two churches and quite a main street, with three taverns. My father told us that

this was our own village, a gift very lightly received by us children after memories of Porchester and Liverpool and the *Samatian*. My mother told me years afterwards that to her it was a heartbreak. Beyond the village, my father told us, we were on our home road, another dubious gift, for it was as heavy as ever, with a great cedar swamp a mile through in the centre, all corduroy and willows and marsh and water : beyond that up a great hill with more farmhouses, and so across some fields to a windswept hill space with a jumble of frame buildings and log barns and outhouses, and there we were at the old farm—on a six-year unbroken sentence.

The country round our farm was new in the sense that forty years before it was unbroken wilderness, and old in the sense that farm settlers when they began to come had come in quickly. Surveyors had marked out roads. The part of the bush that was easy to clear was cleared off in one generation, log houses built, and one or two frame ones, so that in that sense the country in its outline was just as it is now : only at that time it was more bush than farms, now more farms than the shrunken wastes of bush. And of course in 1876 a lot of old primeval trees, towering hemlocks and birch, were still standing. The last of the great bush fires that burned them out was in the summer when we came, the bush all burning, the big trees falling in masses of spark and flame, the sky all bright and the people gathered from all round to beat out the shower of sparks that fell in the stubble fields. . . .

This country around Lake Simcoe (we were four miles to the south of it and out of the sight of it), beautiful and fertile as it is, had never been settled in the old colonial days. The French set up missions there among the Hurons (north-west of the Lake) but they were wiped

out in the great Iroquois massacre of 1644 in the martyrdom of the Fathers Lallement and Brebœuf. The tourist of to-day sees from his flying car the road signs of "Martyr's Shrine" intermingled with the "Hot Dogs" and "Joe's Garage." After the massacre the French never came back. The Iroquois danger kept the country empty as it did all Western Ontario. Nor did the United Empire Loyalists come here. They settled along the St. Lawrence and the Bay of Quinte and Niagara and Lake Erie, but the Lake Simcoe country remained till that century closed, as empty as it is beautiful.

Settlement came after the "Great War" ended with Waterloo and world peace, and a flock of British emigrants went out to the newer countries. Among them were many disbanded soldiers and sailors and officers with generous grants of land. These were what were called in England, "good" people, meaning people of the "better" class but not good enough to stay at home, which takes money. With them came adherents and servants and immigrants at large, but all good people in the decent sense of the word, as were all the people round our old farm, no matter how poor they were. The entry of these people to the Lake Simcoe country was made possible by Governor Simcoe's opening of Yonge Street, north from Toronto to the Holland River. It was at first just a horse track through the bush, presently a rough roadway connecting Toronto (York) with the Holland River and then by cutting the corner of Lake Simcoe with the Georgian Bay and thus westward to the Upper Lakes, a line of communication safe from American invasion. It was part of Governor Simcoe's preoccupation over the defence of Upper Canaëla which bore such good fruit in its unforeseen results of new settlement.

So the settlers, once over the waters of Lake Simcoe, found their way along its shore, picked out the likely places, the fine high ground, the points overlooking the lake. Here within a generation arose comfortable lake-shore homes, built by people with a certain amount of

money, aided by people with no money but glad to work for wages for a time, till they could do better. From the first the settlement was cast in an aristocratic mould such as had been Governor Simcoe's dream for all his infant colony. Simcoe was long since gone by this time. He left Canada in 1796 and died in England in 1806. But the mark that he set on Upper Canada only wore faint with time and is not yet obliterated. Simcoe planned a constitution and a colony to be an "image and transcript" of England itself. An established church and an aristocracy must be the basis of it. To Simcoe a democrat was a dangerous Jacobin, and a dissenter a snivelling hypocrite. He despised people who would sit down to eat with their own servants, as even "good" people began to do in Upper Canada; "fellows of one table" he called them and he wanted nothing to do with them in his government. Others shared his views and hence that queer touch of make-believe, or real aristocracy, that was then characteristic of Simcoe's York (Toronto) and that helped to foster the Canadian rebellion of 1837.

So after the first "aristocracy" houses were built on the Lakeshore of Georgina Township settlers began to move up to the higher ground behind it, better land and cheaper. For the lake, for being on the water, most of them cared nothing. They wanted to get away from it. The Lakeshore was cold. It is strange to think that now you can buy all of that farm land you want at about thirty or forty dollars an acre, but an acre down at the Lakeshore is worth say, a couple of thousand, and you can't get it, anyway.

Our own farm with its buildings was, I will say, the damndest place I ever saw. The site was all right, for the slow slope of the hillside west and south gave a view over miles of country and a view of the sunset only



appreciated when lost. But the house ! Someone had built a cedar log-house and then covered it round with clap-board and then someone else had added three rooms stuck along the front with more clap-board, effectually keeping all the sunlight out. Even towards the sunset there were no windows, only the half-glass top of a side door. A cook-house and a wood-shed were stuck on behind. Across a grass yard were the stable, cedar logs plastered up, and the barns, cedar logs loose and open, and a cart-shed and a henhouse, and pigsties and all that goes with a farm. To me as a child the farm part just seemed one big stink. It does still : the phew ! of the stable—not so bad as the rest, the unspeakable cowshed, sunk in the dark below a barn, beyond all question of light or ventilation, like a mediæval *oubliette* : the henhouse, never cleaned and looking like a guano deposit island off the coast of Chile, in which the hens lived if they could and froze dead if they couldn't : the pigsties, on the simple Upper Canada fashion of a log pen and a shelter behind, about three feet high. Guano had nothing on them.

We presently completed our farmhouse to match the growing family by adding a new section on the far side of it, built of frame lumber only with lath and plaster and no logs, thin as cardboard and cold as a refrigerator. Everything froze when the thermometer did. We took for granted that the water would freeze in the pitchers every night and the window-panes cover up with frost, not that the old farm was not heated. It had had originally a big stone fireplace in the original log-house, but as with all the fireplaces built of stone out of the fields without firebrick. As the mortar began to dry out the fireplace would set the house on fire. That meant getting up on the roof (it wasn't far) with buckets and putting it out. My father and the hired man got so tired putting out the house on fire that we stopped using the fireplace and had only stoves, big stoves that burnt hemlock, red hot in ten minutes with the dampers open.

You could be as warm as you liked according to distance, but the place was never the same two hours running. There were, I think, nine stoves in all ; cutting wood was endless. I quote again from my forgotten book.

Winter stopped not the Work ; it never could.

Behold the Furious Farmer splitting wood.

The groaning Hemlock creaks at every Blow.

“ Hit her again Dad, she’s just got to go.”

And up he picks

The Hemlock sticks

Out of the snow.

For light we had three or four coal-oil lamps, but being just from England where they were unknown we were afraid of them. We used candles made on the farm from tallow poured into a mould, guttering damn things, to be snuffed all the time and apt to droop over in the middle. It is hardly credible to me now, but I know it is a fact that when my brother and I sat round a table doing our lessons, or drawing and painting pictures, all the light we had was one tallow candle in the middle of the table. It should have ruined our eyesight, but it didn’t. I don’t think any of us wore spectacles under fifty : just as the ill-cooked food of the farm, the heavy doughy bread, the awful pork and pickles, should have ruined our digestions but couldn’t. Boys on the farm who go after the cattle at six in the morning are in the class of the iron dogs beside a city step.

My father’s farm—a hundred acres, the standard pattern—was based on what is called mixed farming, that is, wheat, and other grains, hay, pasture, cattle, a few sheep and pigs and hens, roots for winter, garden for summer and wood to cut in the bush. The only thing to sell was wheat, the false hope of the Ontario farmer of the 70’s, always lower in the yield than what one calculated (if you calculated low it went lower) and always (except once in a happy year) lower than what it had to be to make

it pay. The other odd grains we had to sell was nothing much, nor the cattle, poor lean things of the pre-breeding days that survived their awful cowshed. My father knew nothing about farming and the hired man, "Old Tommy," a Yorkshireman who had tried a bush farm of his own and failed, still less. My father alternated furious industry with idleness and drinking, and in spite of my mother having a small income of her own from England, the farm drifted on to the rocks and the family into debt. Presently there was a mortgage, the interest on which being like a chain around my father's neck, and later on mine. Indeed these years of the late 1870's were the hard times of Ontario farming with mortgages falling due like snowflakes.

Farming in Ontario in any case was then and still is an alternating series of mortgages and prosperity following on like the waves of the sea. Anyone of my experience could drive you through the present farm country and show you (except that it would bore you to sleep) the mark of the successive waves like geological strata. Here on our right is the remains of what was the original log-house of a settler: you can tell it from the remains of a barn because if you look close you can see that it had a top story, or part of one, like the loft where Abraham Lincoln slept. You will see, too, a section of its outline that was once a window. Elsewhere, perhaps on the same farm, but still standing, is an old frame house that was built by mortgaging the log-house. This one may perhaps be boarded up and out of use because it was discarded when wheat went to \$2.50 a bushel in the Crimean War and the farmer, suddenly enriched, was able to add another mortgage and built a brick house—those real brick houses that give the motorist the impression that all farmers are rich. So they were—during the Crimean War. Later on and reflecting the boom years of the closing 90's and the opening century are the tall hip-roofed barns with stone and cement basements below for cattle and silos at the side, which give the

impression that all farmers are scientists—only they aren't, it's just more mortgages.

Such has been the background of Ontario farming for a hundred years.

Our routine on the farm, as children, was to stay on it. We were too little to wander and even the nearest neighbours were half a mile away. So we went nowhere except now and then as a treat into Sutton village, and on Sunday to the church on the Lakeshore. Practically, except for school, we stayed at home all the time—years and years.

There was, a mile away, a school (School Section No. 3, Township of Georgina) of the familiar type of the "little red schoolhouse" that has helped to make America. It was a plain frame building, decently lighted, with a yard and a pump and a woodpile, in fact all the accessories that went with the academic life of School Section No. 3. The boys and girls who went there were the children of decent people (there were no others in the township), poor, but not exactly aware of it. In summer the boys went barefoot. We didn't—a question of caste and thistles. You have to begin it at three years old to get the feel for it.

There were two teachers, a man teacher and a lady teacher, and it was all plain and decent and respectable, and the education first class, away ahead of the Dame's School stuff in England. All of the education was right to the point—reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, geography—with no fancy, silly subjects such as disfigure our present education even at its beginning and run riot in the college at the top. Things about the school that were unsanitary were things then so customary that even we children from England found nothing wrong. We spat on our slates to clean them with the side of our hand. We all drank out of the same tin mug in the school yard. The boys and girls were together in classes, never outside.

The only weak spot in the system of the little red schoolhouse was that the teachers were not permanent, not men engaged in teaching making it their life work, like the Scottish "dominie" who set his mark upon Scotland. You can never have a proper system of national education without teachers who make teaching their life work, take a pride in it as a chosen profession, and are so circumstanced as to be as good as anybody—I mean as anything around. In the lack of this lies the great fault in our Canadian secondary education, all the way up to college.

So it was with the country schools of 1876. The teachers were young men who came and went, themselves engaged in the long stern struggle of putting themselves through college for which their teaching was only a stepping stone. An arduous struggle it was. A school-teacher (they were practically all men, the girl teachers were just appendages to the picture) got a salary of \$300 to \$400 a year. Call it \$400. During his ten months a year of teaching he paid \$10 a month for his board and washing. I don't suppose that his clothes cost him more than \$50 a year and all his other extras of every kind certainly not more than another fifty. For in those days after necessaries were paid for there was nothing to spend money on. The teacher never drank. Not that he didn't want to, but every drink cost money, five cents, and he hadn't got it. If a teacher did begin to drink and did start to loaf around the taverns it undermined the sternness of his life's purpose as a slow leak undermines a dam. It became easier to drink than to save money: he felt rich instead of poor, and presently, as the years went by, he drank himself out of this purpose altogether, quit school teaching, went north—to the lumber shanties; or worked in a sawmill—living life downhill, marked out still by the wreck of his education as a man who had once been a teacher and still quoted poetry when he was tight.

But most, practically all, stuck right at it saving, say,

\$200 a year towards college. And this is what college cost, college being the University of Toronto. The fees were \$40 a year (say \$60 in medicine) and board and lodging in the mean drab houses of the side streets where the poorer students lived cost \$3.00 a week and washing, I think 25 cents a week. They washed anything then for 5 cents, even a full dress shirt, and anyway the student hadn't got a full dress shirt. College books in those days cost about \$10 a year. There were no college activities that cost money, nothing to join that wanted five dollars for joining it, no caf eterias to spend money in, since a student ate three times a day at his boarding house and that was the end of it. There was no money to be spent on college girls because at that time there were no college girls to spend money on. Homer says that the beauty of Helen of Troy launched a thousand ships (meaning made that much trouble). The attraction of the college girl was to launch about a thousand dollars—added to college expenses.

But all that was far, far away in 1876, and a student's college budget for the eight months of the session, including his clothes, and his travel expenses and such extras as even the humblest and sternest must incur, would work out at about \$300 for each college year. That meant that what he could save in a year and a half of teaching would give him one year at college. Added to this was the fact that in the vacation—the two months of a teacher's vacation or the four months for a college vacation—he could work on a farm for his board and \$20 a month and save almost the whole of the \$20. I have known at least one teacher, later on a leader of the medical profession of Alberta, who put in seven years of this life of teaching to get his college course. But in most cases there would be some extra source of supply, an uncle who owned a sawmill, and could lend two or three hundred dollars, or an uncle over in the States, or an older brother who came down from the "shanties" in the spring with more money than he knew what to do with.

For what could he do with it, except drink or go to college?

So in the end adversity was conquered, and the teachers passed through college and into law or medicine, with perhaps politics and public life, and added one more name to the roll of honour of men who "began as teachers." Some failed on the last lap, graduated and then got married, tired of waiting for life to begin and thus sank back again on teaching—as a high school teacher—a better lot but still not good enough.

But the system was, and is, all wrong. Our teacher with his thirty dollars a month didn't get as much as our old Tommy, the hired man, for he and his wife had \$20 a month and a cottage with it and a garden, milk and eggs and vegetables and meat to the extent of his end (I forget which) of any pig that was killed. A teacher situated like that could be a married man, as snug and respected as a Scottish dominie with his cottage and his nailyard, his trout rod and his half-dozen Latin books bound in vellum—"as good as anybody"—which is one of the things that a man has got to be in life if he is to live at all. The teachers weren't. I never was, and never felt I was, in the ten years I was a teacher. That is why later on I spent so many words in decrying school-teaching as a profession, not seeing that school-teaching is all right for those who are all right for it. The thing wrong is the setting we fail to give it.

Such was our school at School Section No. 3, Township of Georgina, County of York. It had also its amenities as well as its work. Now and again there were school "entertainments." I can't remember if the people paid to come. I rather think not, because in that case they wouldn't come. For an entertainment the school was lit with extra lamps. The teacher was chairman. The trustees made speeches, or shook their heads and didn't. The trustees were among the old people who had come

out from the "old country" with some part of another environment, something of an older world, still clinging to them. Some, especially Scotsmen like old Archie Riddell, would rise to the occasion and made a speech with quite a ring and a thrill to it, all about Marmion and Bruce and footprints on the sands of time. Then the teachers would say that we'd hear from Mr. Brown, and Mr. Brown, sitting in a sunken lump in a half-light would be seen to shake his head, to assure us that we wouldn't. After which came violin music by local fiddlers announced grandiloquently by the Chairman as "Messrs. Park and Ego," although we knew that really they were just Henry Park and Angus Ego. Perhaps also some lawyer or such person from the village four miles away would drive up for the entertainment and give a reading or a recitation. It was under those circumstances that I first heard W. S. Gilbert's *Yarn of the Nancy Bell*. It seemed to me wonderful beyond words, and the Sutton lawyer, a man out of Wonderland.

But going to the country school just didn't work out. It was too far for us, and in rough weather and storm impossible, and it was out of the question for a younger section of the family (the ones in between the baby and ex-baby and the "big boys"). Moreover, my mother was haunted with the idea that if we kept on at the school we might side-slip and cease to be gentlemen. Already we were losing our Hampshire accent, as heard in *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*—not stah, and not star, but something in between. I can still catch it if I am dead-tired or delirious. We were beginning also to say, "them there" and "these here," and "who all" and "most always," in short phrases that no one can use and grow up a gentleman.

So my mother decided that she would teach us herself and with characteristic courage set herself at it, in the midst of all her other work with the baby and the little



children and the kitchen and the servants and the house. Servants of course we always had, at least one maid—I beg pardon, I'm losing my language—I mean one "hired girl" and a "little girl" and generally an "old woman." Top wages were \$8.00 a month, a little girl got \$5.00. There was a certain queer gentility to it all. The hired man never sat down to eat with us, nor did the hired girl. Her status in fact, as I see it in retrospect, was as low and humble as even an English Earl could wish it. She just didn't count.

My mother had had in England a fine education of the Victorian finishing school type, and added to it a love and appreciation of literature that never left her all her life, not even at 90 years of age. So she got out a set of her old English school books that had come with us in a box from England. Colenso's *Arithmetic*, and Slater's *Chronology*, and Peter Parlay's *Greece and Rome* and Oldendorf's new method of French, and gathered us around her each morning for school, opened with prayers—and needing them. But it was no good, we wouldn't pay attention, we knew it was only mother. The books didn't work either—most of them were those English manuals of history and such specially designed for ladies' schools and for ladies who had to teach their own children out in the "colonies." They were designed to get a maximum of effect for a minimum of effort and hence they consisted mostly of questions and answers, the questions being what lawyers call leading questions, ones that suggest their own answer. Thus they reduced Roman History to something like this :

Q. Did not Julius Cæsar invade Britain ?

A. He did.

Q. Was it not in the year 55 B.C. ?

A. It was.

Q. Was he not later on assassinated in Rome?

A. He was.

Q. Did not his friend Brutus take a part in assassinating him?

A. He did.

In this way one could take a bird-like flight over ancient history. I think we hit up about 200 years every morning, and for ancient Egypt over 1,000 years. I had such a phenomenal memory that it was all right for me, as I remembered the question and answer both. But my elder brothers Dick and Jim were of heavier academic clay and so they just, as the politicians say, took it as read.

The *Arithmetic* of Bishop Colenso of Natal was heavier going. After multiplication and division it ran slap-bang into the Rule of Three, and mother herself had never understood what the rule of three was, and if you went on beyond it all you found was Practice and *Aliquot Parts*. I know now that all this is rule-of-thumb arithmetic, meant for people who can't reason it out, and brought straight down from the Middle Ages to Colenso. The glory of the Unitary method whereby if one man needs ten cigarettes a day then two men need twenty, and so on for as many men and as many cigarettes and as long as you like, this had not dawned on the British mind. I think it was presently imported from America.

So my mother's unhappy lessons broke down and we were just about to be sent back to the red schoolhouse when by good luck we managed to secure a family tutor, from whom we received for the next three or four years teaching better than I have ever had since, and better than any I ever gave in ten years as a school-teacher. Our tutor was a young man off a nearby farm, stranded half-way through college by not having taught long enough and compelled to go back to teaching. So my

grandfather from England put up the money (for fear of course that we might come back home on him) and there we were with a tutor and a school-room, ink wells, scribblers, slates, in fact a whole academic outfit. Our tutor was known as "Harry Park" to his farm associates, but to us, at once and always, "Mr. Park" and he ranked with Aristotle in dignity and width of learning. Never have I known anyone who better dignified his office, made more of it, so that our little school-room was as formal as Plato in his Academy could have wished it. Mr. Park rechristened my brother Jim as "James" to give him class, and Dick reappeared as "Arthur." The hours were as regular as the clock itself, in fact more so, since Mr. Park's watch soon took precedence over the kitchen clock, as the "classes" (made up of us four boys and my little sister, just qualified) were as neatly divided as in a normal school. I had to be Class I, but my brothers didn't care. They freely admitted that I was the "cleverest"—as they looked on it as no great asset. For certain purposes, poetry and history, we were all together.

For us "Mr. Park" knew everything, and I rather think that he thought this himself. Ask him anything and we got the answer. "Mr. Park, what were the Egyptians like?"—he knew it and he told it, in measured formal language.

Under "Mr. Park's" teaching my brothers at least learned all that could be put into them and I personally went forward like an arrow. At eleven years of age I could spell practically anything, knew all there was to know of simple grammar (syntax, parsing, analysis) beyond which there is nothing worth while anyway, knew Collier's *British History*, and *History of Literature*, all the geography of all the countries including Canada (the provinces of Canada which had not been in mother's book) and in arithmetic had grasped the unity system

and all that goes with it, and learned how to juggle with vulgar fractions even when piled up like a Chinese pagoda, and with decimals let them repeat as they would.

After Mr. Park came to us as tutor and the little red schoolhouse of School Section No. 3, Township of Georgina, was cut out, our isolation was all the more complete. We practically stayed on the farm. But of course a part of the old farm to children of eight to twelve years old, newly out from England, was a land of adventure; all the main part of it as it sloped away to the south and west was clear fields of the seven-acre pattern with snake fences all round it, piles of stones that had been cleared off the field lying in the fence corners, raspberry bushes choking up the corners but here and there an old elm tree springing up in an angle of the fence as a survival of the cleared forests. Elm trees have the peculiarity that they can do well alone, as no storm can break them, whereas hemlocks isolated by themselves are doomed. Hence the odd elm trees scattered all through this part of Central Ontario as if someone had set them on purpose to serve as shade trees or landscape decoration. Heaven knows no one did. For the earlier settlers trees, to a great extent, were the enemy. The Upper Canada forest was slaughtered by the lumber companies without regard for the future, which in any case they could neither foresee nor control. In the early days the export of lumber was only in the form of square timber—great sticks of wood from 12 to 18 inches each way—not cut up into the boards and deals and staves of the later lumber trade. Hence the trees were squared at they fell in the falling forest and about one-third of the main tree and all its branches burned up as litter to get rid of it. That was the early settler's idea of the bush, get rid of it where he could, and where it lay too low, too sunken, too marshy to clear it. Then cut out the big trees and haul them out, leave the rest of the bushes there

and let farm clearings and roads get round it as best they could. As to planting any new trees to conserve the old ones, the farmers would have thought it a madman's dream. The only trees planted were the straight, fast-growing Lombardy poplars still seen in their old age set out in single or in little rows in front of the early Ontario houses. These owe their origin to the legend or the fact that they act as lightning conductors, a part of Benjamin Franklin's legacy to North America, along with the box stove and much else.

I am saying then that our old farm at its north end fell slap away down a steep hillside at the foot of which began the bush that spread off sideways in both directions as far as one could see ; and directly in front it rose again in a slope that blotted out all view of Lake Simcoe, four miles away. Along the fringes of it were still some of the giant hemlock that had escaped the full fury of the last bush fire, dead, charred and still standing, but falling one by one. The bush as one tried to penetrate it grew denser and denser, mostly underbrush with tangled roots and second growth sprung up after the fires. It was so dense that for us it was impenetrable, and we ventured our way farther and farther in, carrying hatchets and alert for wild cats which I am practically certain were not there, and for bears which had left years and years ago.

We had hardly any social life as we were prevented partly by "class" and mainly by distance from going over to the other farms after dark. To one farm where lived a family of English children of something the same mixed antecedents as ourselves we sometimes went over for tea, and at times all the way to the village or to the Lakeshore Houses. But such treks meant staying overnight.

So mostly we stayed at home, and in the evenings we did our lessons if we had lessons to do and my mother read to us Walter Scott and carried us away to so deep an impression of the tournaments and battlefields of the

Crusade and of the warring forests of Norman-Saxon England that any later "moving picture" of such things is but a mere blur of the surface. We cannot have it both ways. Intensity of mental impression and frequency of mental impression cannot go together. Robinson Crusoe's discovery of Friday's footprints on the sand—read aloud thus by candlelight to wondering children—has a dramatic "horror" to it (horror means making one's hair stand up) that no modern cinema or stage can emulate. Similarly I recall the reading aloud of *Tom Sawyer*, then of course still a new book, and the dramatic intensity of the disclosure that Indian Joe is sealed up in the great cave.

Our news from the outside world came solely in the form of the *Illustrated London News* sent out by my grandmother from England. In it we saw the pictures of the Zulu War and the (second) Afghan War and of Majuba Hill. With it we kept alive the British tradition that all Victorian children were brought up in, never doubting that of course the Zulus were wrong and the Afghans mistaken and the Boers entirely at fault. This, especially, as mother had lived in South Africa and said so.

On one point, however, of British Victorian orthodox faith I sideslipped at eight years old and have never entirely got back, and that too the greatest point in all British history. I refer to the question of George Washington and George the Third, and whether the Americans had the right to set up a republic. It so happened that there came to our farm for a winter visit an English cousin of my father's who had become (I do not know how, for it must have been a rare thing in the 70's) a female doctor in Boston. She used to tell me, while Jim and Dick were mucking out the chores in the barnyard, which was their high privilege, about the United States and the Revolution; and when she saw how interested I was she sent to Boston and got a copy of Col.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Young Folk's (or People's) History of the United States*. There it was, pictures and all—General Gage and the Boston Boys (very neat boys and a very neat General), Washington crossing the Delaware (hard going), Washington taking command at Cambridge. "Cousin Sophy" used to read it out loud to us—a needed rest for Walter Scott—and we were all fascinated with it, Jim and Dick with the pictures and the soldiers but I chiefly from the new sense of the burning injustice of tyranny, a thing I had never got from history before.

Forthwith the theory of a republic, and the theory of equality, and the condemnation of hereditary rights seemed obvious and self-evident truths, as clear to me as they were to Thomas Jefferson. I stopped short at the Queen, partly I suppose because one touched there on Heaven and Hell and the Church service and on ground which I didn't propose to tread. But for me from then on a hereditary lord didn't have a leg to stand on. In the sixty years (nearly seventy) since elapsed I have often tried to stand up hereditary peers again (I mean as members of a legislature) but they won't really stay up for me. I have studied it all, and lectured on it all, and written about it all. I know all about the British idea that if a thing has existed for a long time, and if most people like it and if it seems to work well and if it brings no sharp edge of cruelty and barbarity such as the world has learned again, then it is silly to break away from established institution on the ground of a purely theoretical fault. But I can't get by with the arguments. I broke with the House of Lords, with its hereditary peers and its Bishops voting because they are Bishops in 1879—or whenever it was—and the breach has never been really healed.

People from India have told me that no matter how scientific an education you may smear over an Indian doctor or scientist, put him in any emergency or danger and back he comes to his first beliefs: away goes medi-

cine in favour of incantation and charms, and science abandons its instruments and its metric measurement and hooks back a thousand years to astrology and mysticism. I'm like that with my underlying Jeffersonian republicanism : back I slip to such crazy ideas as that all men are equal, and that hereditary rights (still leaving out the British monarch) are hereditary wrongs.

Occasional treats broke the routine of our isolation on the farm, such as going into Sutton village for the "Twenty-Fourth" (of May) the great annual holiday, or to see cricket matches between Sutton and other places, such as Newmarket, within cricket reach. For up to that time cricket still remained the game of the Upper Canada countryside, living on strongly against the competition of Yankee baseball and dying hard. At present cricket has shrunken in on Toronto and a few larger cities and school centres. But in the 70's and 80's it was everywhere. The wonder is, though, that it could survive at all—it makes such heavy demands—a decent "pitch" of prepared ground without which the game is worthless, an outfield not too rough, and even for decent practice, a certain minimum of players ; while cricket "at the nets" is poor stuff without a good pitch and good bowling, especially if you haven't any nets. Nor can you have a real "match" at cricket without a real side of eleven or something close to it. Baseball on the other hand is quick and easy and universal. It can be played in a cow pasture or behind the barnyard or in the village street : two people can "knock out flies" and three can play at "rolling over the bat", and if you can't get nine for a game, a pitcher, catcher and baseball will do—what's more, the game can be played out in an afternoon, an hour, or a minute. The wonder is that the British settlers in Upper Canada kept doggedly on with their British cricket as against the facile Yankee baseball and the indigenous lacrosse. I am quite sure



that in the township of Georgina no one had ever seen the latter game in 1880.

Rarest and most striking of all treats was to be taken on a trip to Toronto. The new railway which reached Lake Simcoe from the south by a branch line of the Toronto and Lake Nipissing Railway extended from Stouffville to Sutton and Jackson's Point Wharf (on the Lake). It was part of that variegated network of little railways, of varied gauges and plans, all crooked as country roads, all afraid of a hill and all trying to keep close to a steamer dock, each under different ownership, which represents the short-sighted railway building of Ontario. Short-sighted?—and yet I suppose it was hard to see ahead at all, in a community that stumbled and fell with every new onslaught of bad times, and fought stubbornly against its forests and its torrents, half-strangled in its own opportunity.

The completion of the railway and the arrival of the first train was a great event. Much ringing of bells and blowing of whistles—then the train itself arrived by the sash factory and the grist mill. It made a great difference too, with commodities such as coal and oranges seen in Sutton for the first time. But as with most town and village advances of that date, it just went so far and then stopped. Sutton fell asleep again and only woke to the sound of the motor horn and the advent of the tourist, in another world years later.

But for us children a trip on the train to Toronto, a treat that was accorded to each of us about twice in the next three years, was a trip into wonderland—England had grown dim. Toronto, even the Toronto I describe in the next chapter, was marvellous beyond all description.

But the most real of our standing treats and holidays came to us on contact with Lake Simcoe. This grew out of our going every Sunday in summer to the Lake

Shore Church, four miles away. To our farm equipment there had been added a "phaeton" for mother to drive and the kind of horse that is driven in a phaeton, that is born quiet, never grows old and lives on into eternity. The ease and comfort of a phaeton can be appreciated by riding once in a buckboard (just once is all you need), a vehicle that means a set of slats on axles with a seat on the slats. Its motion is similar to that of the new "sea-sickness medicine." A phaeton with steel springs, low entrance and two seats can carry a capacity load and attain a speed, on the level, of six miles an hour. Even at that we walked in turns.

The parish church of Georgina stood on the high bank dotted with cedar trees overlooking Lake Simcoe, and oh, what a paradise the view presented! I have often and often written of Lake Simcoe. I know, with a few odd miles left out here and there, its every stick and stone, its island and points; and I claim that there is in all the world no more beautiful body of water. Writing it up years ago in a Canadian *Geographical Journal* I said:

"The Islands of the Ægean Sea have been regarded for centuries as a scene of great beauty; I know, from having seen them, that the Mediterranean coast of France and the valleys of the Pyrenees are a charm to the enchanted country; and I believe that for those who like that kind of thing there is wild grandeur in the Highlands of Scotland, and a majestic solitude where the midnight sun flashes upon the ice peaks of Alaska. But to my thinking none of those will stand comparison with the smiling beauty of the waters, shores and bays of Lake Simcoe and its sister Lake Couchiching. Here the blue of the deeper water rivals that of the Ægean; the sunlight flashes back in lighter colour from the sandbar on the shoals; the passing clouds of summer throw moving shadows as over a ripening field, and the mimic gales that play over the surface send curling caps of foam as white as ever broke under the bow of the Ægean galley.

“The Ægean is old. Its islands carry the crumbling temples of Homer’s times. But everywhere its vegetation has been cut and trimmed and gardened by the hand of man. Simcoe is far older. Its forest outline is still what Champlain saw, even then unchanged for uncounted centuries. Look down through the clear water at the sunken trees that lie in the bay south-east of Sibbald’s Point. They sank, as others sank before them, a hundred years ago ; no hand of man has ever moved or touched them. The unquarried ledges of Georgina Island stood as they stand now when the Greeks hewed stone from the Pentelicus to build the Parthenon.”

The whole point of our going to Church on the Lake Shore on summer mornings was that we were allowed, by a special dispensation from the awful Sunday rules we were brought up on, to go in for a swim and to stick around beside the Lake for an hour or so. The spot was one of great beauty. The earliest settlers had built a wooden church among the cedar trees and in the very years of which I speak it was being replaced by the Lake Shore Church of cut stone that is one of the notable landmarks of the scenery of the district. It was built by the members of the Sibbald family, one of the chief families of the district, whose sons had gone abroad for service in the British Army and Navy and in India ; and returning (in our day) as old men enriched in fortune and experience built the stone church still standing as a memorial to their mother. A Latin motto (which outclassed me at nine years old) cut in a memorial stone on the face of the tower commemorates the fact. The church was built during two of our summers of church going and swimming. The masons were not there on Sundays, but we could follow its progress every Sunday, in the stones new drilled for blasting, in the fresh-cut completed stones and then in the rising layers of the walls, the upsweep of the tall roof (one Sunday to the next), the glass, the slates and then, all of a sudden as it were, we were singing in it.

Better still was it when my mother a year or two later, 1880, was able to take a "summer cottage" near the church for a holiday of a month or so. "Summer cottage" is a courtesy title. It was an old log building built as a "parsonage" which in time proved unfit for habitation even by the meekest parson. But for a summer habitation it did well enough, and with it went the glory of the Lake and of the return to the water, which we had lost since Porchester. We were like Viking children back to the sea! So will you find any British children, used to sight and sound of the sea, shut off from the water in some inland or prairie town, but exulting to get back to their age-long heritage. So were we with Lake Simcoe!—making rafts of logs and boards before we had a boat, blown out to sea on our rafts and rescued, and thus learning what an offshore wind means—a thing that even to-day few Lake Simcoe summer visitors understand. After rafts a flat-bottomed boat, liberally plugged up with hot pitch; then an attempt at making a sail and discovering that a flat-bottomed boat is no good—and so on—repeating the life of man on the ocean as the human race repeats in the individual its every stage of evolution.

In my case Lake Simcoe was a more interesting field of navigation then than now, more real. It is strange how our inland lakes have deteriorated from the navigation of reality to the navigation of luxury. What do you see now? Motor boats! Power boats! Sailing dinghies built like dishes and used for aquatic displays but having no connection with sailing in the real sense. And all this in any case only a fringe that fills the Lake Shore resorts, crowds round luxury hotels and leaves the open water of Simcoe and such lakes emptier than when La Salle crossed them.

Not so in the 1880's. Navigation filled the Lake. Far out on its waters a long ribbon of smoke indicated a tug with a tow of logs heading for the mills at Jackson's Point. Sailing vessels, lumpy, heavy and ungainly, and nearly as

broad as long, carried quarry stone and heavy stuff from the top of Lake Couchiching to the railway pier at Belle Ewart. At that time the *Emily May* steamer circulated the Lake all day and all night (in her prime days) with double crew, half of it awake and half asleep—two captains, two mates, two stewardesses and two bartenders. The railways bit off her job point by point and place by place; the railway to Sutton and Jackson's Point being the last straw that broke her back. Yet for years after the passenger boats in the real sense had gone, the excursion lived on. *Ho! for Beaverton!* read its placards on the broadside fence; *Ho! for Jackson's Point.* And there it was on a summer morning carrying its sons of England, or its Knights of Ireland, its brass band, its improvised bar, its ladies' cabin as tight shut and as uncomfortable as being at home—all that went with *Ho!* for a day on the water in 1880. And so for years—then came the motor-car and killed all that was left of navigation.

And all this time, although we didn't know, for my mother kept it hidden from us, at intervals my father drank, drove away to the village in the evening to return drunk late at night after we were in bed. And the more he drank the more the farm slid sideways and downhill, and the more the cloud of debt, of unpaid bills, shadowed it over, and the deeper the shadow fell. My mother, I say, hid it all from us for years with a devotion that never faltered. My father as he drank more changed towards us from a superman and hero to a tyrant, from easy and kind to fits of brutality and cruel beatings for my elder brothers. I was small enough to escape from doing much of the farm chores and farm work. But I carry still the recollection of it, more no doubt than Jim or Dick ever did. In fact the sight and memory of what domestic tyranny in an isolated, lonely home, beyond human help, can mean, helped to set me all the more

firmly in the doctrine of the rights of man, and Jefferson's liberty.

By the end of the year 1881 the "old Farm" as a going concern had pretty well come to a full stop. Bad farming had filled the fields with weeds: wild oats, a new curse of Ontario farming spread by the threshing machines, broke out in patches in the grain: low prices cut out all profit: apples rotted on the ground, potatoes hardly paid for digging. There was the interest on the mortgage of \$250 a year, wages not paid, store bills not paid—just a welter of debt and confusion. So my father was led to give it all up and go away to Manitoba, the new land of promise that all the people on the farms were beginning to talk about. The opening of the North-West by the Dominion taking it over had revealed the secret, so carefully guarded for two hundred years, that what had been thought of as a buffalo pasture and a fox range, a land for the trapper to share with the aurora borealis, was in reality a vast bed of deep alluvial soil, black mould two or three feet deep, the gift of the ages, the legacy of the grass and the flowers that had blossomed and withered unseen for centuries. You had but to scratch and throw in the wheat, and such crops would grow as older Canada had never seen! and with no clearing of the land to do, no stubborn fight against the stumps still all around us on the Ontario farms: empty country and land for the asking, 160 acres free under the new homestead law and more if you wanted it "for a song." No phrase ever appealed to the farmer's heart like that of getting land for a song! In the glory of the vision he forgets that he can't sing, and starts off looking for it.

To this was added the fact that there was rail connection now (1878) all the way to Manitoba by Chicago and St. Paul and the Red River route, and that it was known that the new government—which carried the election of

1878 under John A. Macdonald—was pledged to build a Canadian Pacific Railway clear across the plains and over the Rockies to the Ocean. Thus was set up a sort of suction that began to draw people to Manitoba from all the Ontario farms, and presently beyond that from the old country itself, and in particular to Winnipeg, a place that had been a sort of straggled-out-settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company. Fort Garry now broke on the horizon as a town whose geographical site in the bottleneck entrance of the West marked it as a future metropolis. Hence the "Winnipeg boom" and the noise of hammers and saws, and the shouts of the real estate agents, selling real estate all day and all night, and selling it so far out on the prairie that no one ever found it again.

My father was to go to Manitoba not on his own initiative—he hadn't any—but at the call of a younger brother who had gone on ahead and was already riding on the crest of the wave. This was "My remarkable Uncle", to whose memory I have devoted many sketches and even the scenario of a moving picture which I hope will one day move. He had come out to Canada, to our farm in 1878, had captivated the countryside with his brilliant and unusual personality, taken a conspicuous part in the election of 1878 and passed on to a larger local notoriety in Toronto. He scented Winnipeg from afar, was one of the first in, and at the time of which I speak was piling up a fortune on paper, having been elected to the New Manitoba legislature and Heavens knows what.

In my sketches I referred to my father and uncle as going away together, which is an error in the record. My father and presently my brother Kim followed.

So we had a sale at the farm at which, as I have said elsewhere, the lean cattle and the broken machinery fetched only about enough in notes of hand (nobody had cash) to pay for the whisky consumed at the sale.

So my father left for the West, and my mother was left

on the farm with the younger children, and Old Tommy and my elder brothers and I were sent away to school at Upper Canada College. That was for me practically the end of the old farm, though the rotten place hung round our family neck for years, unsaleable. For the time being it was rented to the neighbouring farmer for \$250 a year, the same amount as my mother had to pay on the mortgage. The farmer didn't pay the rent and mother didn't pay the mortgage : all debts in those days dragged along like that. But the year after that my mother moved into Toronto on the strength of a casual legacy from England that should have been hoarded as capital but was burnt up as income. Then my father came back (broke) from the North-West in 1886, and this meant another move back from Toronto to the old farm ; but I was not in it, being a boarder at Upper Canada College. Things went worse than ever for my father on his return to the farm—a shadowed, tragic family life into which I need not enter. I always feel that it is out of place in an autobiography to go into such details. The situation ended by my father leaving home again in 1887. No doubt he meant to come back, but he never did. I never saw him again. My mother lived on at the old farm, because it was unsaleable, for four more years, with eight children to look after as best she could on about \$80 a month and with Old Tommy and his wife as bodyguard. Tommy's wages had not been paid for so long that he couldn't leave, but anyway he didn't want to. In his old-fashioned Yorkshire mind wages due from the aristocracy were like shares in the National Debt. My elder brothers Jim and Dick had both left home for good, both to the West, Dick into the North-West Mounted Police and Jim in the wake of my remarkable uncle. That made me, my father being gone, the head of the family at seventeen. But since I was away at school and college and then teaching school, I was only at the farm in holidays and odd times. I at last got rid of the rotten old place on my mother's behalf



simply by moving mother off it and letting it go to the devil, mortgages, creditors and all. I don't know who finally got it. But for me the old farm life ended with my going to Upper Canada College in the beginning of the year 1882.

## CHAPTER III

### *My Education and What I Think of it Now*

I CAME down to Toronto from our old farm and entered Upper Canada College as a boarder in February 1882. My two elder brothers, Jim and Dick, had been sent on ahead (I don't remember why) the November before. So from this time on, for seventeen years and a half, as a schoolboy (boarder or day), or as a student, or teacher, or as both college student and teacher together, Toronto was the city I lived in ; and it has retained all the detail of remembrance and the peculiar charm of the past which goes with one's own city. Nor did I see any other, anyway, for about ten years.

Toronto was then just in its final stage of comfortable and completed growth as a prominent centre of life and industry, intercourse and arts, before the coming of the electrical age brought the rapid transit and communication that was to turn it into something ten times greater ; to foster suburban growth, bring great industries to the fringe of the city itself, feed the country in part from the city as its base and turn all such provincial towns into metropolitan centres. Toronto to-day, we admit, is ten times the size it was then. Yet perhaps in a certain aspect the advantage is not all with the new as against the old. Individual life, now lost in the mass, perhaps felt larger.

I have written a description of the Toronto of those earlier days in a book of mine on *Canada* which was distributed as a private gift book and did not reach the hands of the public, and from which therefore I may fittingly quote in these pages :

“ In Upper Canada, henceforth Ontario, Toronto was a commodious capital city of 60,000 inhabitants. Its streets were embowered in leaves above which rose the

many spires of the churches. Its wooden slum district was herded into the centre and, like poverty itself, forgotten. Where the leaves ended a sort of park land began and in it stood the University of Toronto, secular and scientific, but housed in Norman architecture of beauty unsurpassed. To the west, more rural but less beautiful with earthly beauty, was Trinity College, founded in protest against the existence of secular Toronto. But down below, along the water-front, was a business district, built like a bit of London, all of a sky-line and with cobblestones rattling with cabs. The new railways sliced off, as everywhere in Ontario, the shore line, vilified with ash-heaps and refuse. All over Canada between the vanishing beauty of nature and the later beauty of civic adornment, there extended this belt of tin cans and litter.

“Just above the railway lines rose the red-brick Parliament buildings, the red-brick Government House flew its flag, and over the way the red-brick Upper Canada College set itself to make scholars and gentlemen as good as real ones. Guarding the harbour entrance was the Old Fort, its frame barracks of the same old pattern and roof-slope that had already gone round the Empire, its ramparts crumbling, but its ponderous old guns in embrasures still looking feebly dangerous. The tone of society was English at the top, but the barber shops spoke American. There was profound peace and order and on Sunday all bells and Sunday-best. It seems, as most places do, a pleasant place in retrospect. At least it was cheap. The Chair at Toronto that Professor Huxley tried in vain to get, carried a salary of £400 and meant an ample living.

“From the business district the shops ran for half a mile up Yonge Street and, beyond that, Yonge Street ran thirty-five miles to Holland Landing where water communication began. It had a tavern to every mile and plenty of grain wagons to keep them busy. The main railway ran through from Montreal to Sarnia-Chicago. But from the half-dozen little railway stations of the

Toronto of early Confederation days, there radiated, like the fingers of a hand, half a dozen little railways with various gauges, reaching out north to the lumber woods—Huntsville, Coboconk, Haliburton—and north and west to the lake ports of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay. Along the stations of these railway lines the horse and buggy and the lumber-wagon took up the traffic. General stores, each a post-office with a near-by blacksmith shop, arose at the cross-roads, and if there was also a river with a waterfall, there appeared a sawmill and a grist-mill, and presently, as the farms multiplied, a village. Then the village became a little town, with not one but rival stores, a drugstore, a local paper and a cricket club. In it were four churches and three taverns. One church was of the Church of England, one Presbyterian, while the Roman Catholics, Methodists and Baptists divided the other two. On the map of Ontario, Protestantism was everywhere, but Roman Catholicism ran in zig-zags. The three taverns were one Grit, and one Tory, and one neither. Many things in Ontario ran like that in threes, with the post-office and the mail-stage alternating as the prize of victory in elections. The cricket club is now just a memory, gone long ago. Thus the little Ontario town grew till the maples planted in its streets overtopped it and fell asleep and grew no more. It is strange this, and peculiar to our country, the aspect of a town grown from infancy to old age within a human lifetime.”

Upper Canada College, to describe it more narrowly, occupied all the space lying along King Street and extending from Simcoe St. to John St. and backward to Adelaide St. I have no idea how many acres this meant but there seemed lots of it; room for spacious gardens and big chestnut trees and such in front, the school building, a large square red-brick structure of three stories with ample windows, occupying the centre and flanked right and left with the masters' houses, square, separate, com-

fortable houses, with one at the left end of the row of buildings more commodious and with a large fenced-in garden beside it which constituted the principal's residence. Some of the boys at that time were housed in masters' houses, but the bulk of them were in a building that stood farther still to the left : the Boarding House, red-brick, two stories high, shaped like the letter T, but with much more cross-piece to the T than the upright. One end of the cross-piece was the Old Wing made up of rooms each holding four boys, the Nurseries they called them. The other end, still called the New Wing and only about ten years old, was cut into rooms holding two boys each. In the Old Wing there lived two resident masters with the boys, one on each floor. Each had a comfortable sitting-room and a bedroom and the services of a waiter to serve his evening supper. These of course were junior unmarried masters, and their position was adequate and comfortable to that status. It had grown to be the custom that young men held this position after graduation in Arts, and studied Medicine while active as resident masters. A number of men who were later among the distinguished medical men of Ontario served this apprenticeship to aid them in their medical course.

The senior boys lived in the New Wing under the care of the Senior resident master who occupied a permanent position, had a suite of rooms, a waiter of his own and lived in what seemed to us, as schoolboys, magnificent luxury. This was the position held for a whole generation by "Gentle" John Marland, M.A., Oxon., famous in the history of the school. The upright of the T was filled with a large dining-room and over it a large night study. There was a smaller dining-room across the far end of the New Wing, but it was only used for midday dinner when a certain number of day-boys took their dinner at school and the space in the main dining-room was insufficient. All the boys from the "Nurseries" went into night study from seven to nine (I think it was), but the senior boys studied in their rooms.

Boys were not allowed to leave the school grounds except on Saturday and Sunday, but there was a little "tuck shop" called The Taffy on the street behind the school (Adelaide St.) to which leave was given every afternoon. The boys went over on lists of half a dozen at a time for twenty minutes drawn up by the drill sergeant. One could do oneself very well with five cents a trip—three cents for pop drunk out of the bottle and two cents for two doughnuts or cakes.

The school at that time was at the height of its reputation and popularity. There were very few private schools of any size in the province except the once famous school of Dr. Tassie in Galt, and the only "rival" school in a real sense was Trinity College School, Port Hope. This had been founded in the interest of the Church of England with a special view of educating the sons of its clergy and the sons of members of the Church who distrusted the "godlessness" that they saw spreading over education in Toronto. All who know the city will recall its long story of friction as between various degrees of godliness and godlessness. Governor Simcoe and his aristocratic settlement at Muddy York were all for the Church of England. But the members of the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Churches couldn't be ignored: nor presently the Methodists and the Baptists. Hence it was hard to find a way, even if one granted full freedom of worship, of reconciling the claims of the different Protestant sects and varieties. This applied especially to the division of the vast area of public land (one-eighth of it) originally set aside when the province was created (1791) for the support of the Protestant Clergy. The difficulty applied also to all creation of public education, notably that of a university. Make it a part of the Church of England and half the province would be against it. Make it suit all the Protestants at once and you got it so broad that to the true Churchman it appeared flat—trampled to the ground. Thus it was that when the provincial university was at last put on a wide basis as

the University of Toronto, a seceding body headed by the vigorous Bishop Strachan, heir to the Simcoe tradition, founded Trinity University. Upper Canada College all through its early years, in fact till 1891, was financially, and by its endowments, united with the University of Toronto. Hence came the formation of Trinity College School, Port Hope, to offset this connection with ungodliness. It was at the time the only rival. Ridley College (separating low-church godlessness from high-church godliness) came later, as did also St. Andrews, separating I forget what from what except perhaps the crude ugliness of the Upper Canada College of 1891 from its own rural beauty—a school built by people who knew what a school was as compared with people who just took a guess, starting from a deaf-and-dumb asylum or a penitentiary.

So the school on King Street was, I say, at the height of its reputation and prosperity in 1882. There were about a hundred boarders and over a hundred day-boys, but of course the boarders were, and thought themselves, the school. They had never introduced the division of play hours and work hours specially adapted for Warden, as in British schools with playtime in the best of the afternoon and school and study time in the worst. School ended at three and all the day-boys went home and the boarders could play till tea-time. But this division was not specially made for the sake of the day-boys, but by the custom of the country. People forget, anyway, that darkness falls on autumn and winter play-grounds far earlier in Great Britain than in the more southerly latitude of Toronto.

The old school as I see it was a fine, decent place, with no great moral parade about it, no moral hypocrisy, but a fundamental background of decent tradition. I have elsewhere described what I have called the struggle of the school to make us gentlemen—or even Christian gentlemen—with the conclusion that it couldn't be done.

We always looked on it as a false hope ourselves. I think it must have been Dr. Arnold of Rugby who first said that it didn't matter whether the school was a school of a hundred boys or of one boy, but it must be a school of Christian gentlemen. Since then all headmasters of boarding-schools have made that announcement in the Assembly Hall, but they fail to put it over. Certainly it failed with us at Upper Canada : we knew it was well meant but outside the realm of practical life. But the moral tone was good. There was little, indeed none, of that hideous bullying which has been the curse of many English schools : nothing that I ever saw or knew about, of that brutal beating, flogging of boys by masters just one layer short of criminal insanity. There was none of the " fagging " of little boys as servants for the seniors in which many British people seem to exult as a rare feature of school life, but which I personally have never been able to understand. Church and religious service there was, but not too much of it, and the little there was was formal and impersonal. We had Sunday school each Sunday morning, consisting (for Church of England boys) of reciting the collect for the day : but by the time the master had read an opening prayer and heard all the collects then, I think, Sunday was " all " and he read a benediction. All boys went to church according to their parents' preferences. The Church of England boys, the majority, needed two churches, St. George's nearby, up John Street, and the Cathedral along King Street. There was a master in charge, but they didn't go in a flock. Presbyterians went to St. Andrew's and Methodists went somewhere else. Among all the wonders there were only three or four Roman Catholics.

But the morality of the school lay in the ideas that guided it, being of course the ideas of the decent families from which we came. We didn't lie—except in the sort of neutral zone where lying didn't count, such as in making up a list for leave to go to the Taffy (the tuck shop). There was no stealing and indeed very little to steal.



Pocket money was recommended as 25 cents a week for junior boys, 50 cents for seniors. The era of "new rich", of school-boy luxury, of ostentatious parents, had not yet come.

It has been a singularly fortunate thing for Canada that the foundation of Upper Canada College and presently of other private schools on the same plan has never created any disturbing division of education by a cross-wise division of social classes such as vexes England now. As everybody knows, the problem of the "public" schools (Eton, Harrow, Rugby and a hundred less-known others, apparently called public schools because that is the last word that any stretch of language could apply to them) rises on the horizon as one of the great post-war problems of England. Till yesterday, as it were, in spite of the successive advances of political rights, nominal political equality, England remained a country profoundly based on class, and accepting it. Landed property, hereditary rights, social class and the privileges and posts of government held in accordance with it, was the real basis of British Administration in spite of all the expansion of legal rights from the Reform Act of 1832 and onwards.

The public schools of England were a part of it, had grown up as a part of it, and can only be thought of in that light. Generations of people, not rich, but adhering to the class, gentlemen with a grip all the tighter for the forces tugging it away, clung to the idea of sending their boys to a public school, no matter what the sacrifice; a public school, the old school tie; and then off if need be for British Columbia or Matabeleland. There was often much in it that meant out of sight out of mind. Parents in an English rectory who said that "Jack was doing well in Manitoba" would have felt less sure of it if they could have seen Jack sleeping in straw as the ostler of a livery stable. But for others a little higher up or more fortunately connected, the "public schools" and

the school tie presently meant the civil service, the Foreign Office, the vast administrative range reserved, not by law but by practice, for gentlemen.

All this is breaking up in England in the new world now shaping. All the wealth of the old hereditary classes available for endowed schools and pious foundations is just nothing as beside the national fund of public money available for buildings, apparatus and equipment, etc., of public schools in the real sense. The lean kine have eaten up the fat. The penny-a-week National School of my Porchester days has grown to the vast science college of to-day, based on the people's money and itself only a part, in co-operation and competition with the state education of America and the outside world.

What then are they to do? Just have one set of schools in England all maintained by the State? But if so, asks the country rector and the retired colonel, are you sure that you would turn out gentlemen? Leave it all alone to the open competition of pounds, shillings and pence, people paying for what they want different from a State school, or else going without it? But in that case few public schools could survive—Eton and Harrow and such, but the bulk, not. Certainly they could not survive if they tried to adapt their education to the new demands of practical science, engineering, aeronautics, without which any school is left behind mumbling Greek. The "classics" held their place as the equipment for a ruling class. That is all over. No class can rule that can't understand the science that holds in its hands the life and death of the world.

Such is the English public school problem, a part of the problem of a classless society. Luckily for us the problem is not ours. Give our people money enough and they will take a chance on what class you put them in.

So, as we say, it was a good thing that the foundation

of Upper Canada College and its fellow private schools did not create a line of class division running through the schools of the province, as between schools for gentlemen and schools for other people. The reason lay in the difference of circumstance as between Upper Canada and England. In Upper Canada, from the days of the Loyalists onwards, all the sensible people were advocates of schools. Those who came from Massachusetts and New York knew what they had left behind, as did those who migrated from Scotland. Hence there grew up in the province an excellent system of public elementary and presently public high schools, and they got better and better as time went on. Then the high schools in the larger towns took on more equipment and a bigger staff and turned into Collegiate Institutes. As against this in England there was no public elementary education worthy of the name till the Act of 1870, and even after that the system was still governed by the fact that in the eyes of most people a Board School was no place for a gentleman's son.

But in Canada, gentlemen or not, people, even well-to-do people, living in the big towns mostly saw no reason why they shouldn't send their sons to High School, where the teaching was excellent and the companionship corresponded pretty much to what they got themselves in their social life. The thing was true also the other way round. Many of the boys sent to Upper Canada were not sent there because they were specially rich or specially gentlemanly but because, as in the case of my brothers and myself, they lived in out-of-the-way places and there was nothing else to do with them.

All this got truer and truer as time went on, as education became less and less classical, as science made greater and greater demands on public money for premises and apparatus. Then came the Great War, and the splendid record of boys from High Schools and Colleges obliterated any surviving notion of the private schools as the home of an officer class. The case of the Royal

Military College at Kingston, founded in 1876, stands by itself. It was, and is, a Technical School devoted single-mindedly to the profession, with an *esprit de corps* and a pride of its own that in no way interferes with other affiliations and affections.

So then there only remains the question, is a boarding-school any good anyway, except for boys whose homes are isolated from day-schools? Is there anything of value in the life and experience of a boarding-school that a boy cannot get in a day-school? It is a question that has been put to me hundreds of times. And I think that within proper limitations and understanding the answer is in favour of the boarding-school. I say limitations and understanding. For I would never agree with the British people of the older type who think a boarding-school (one made for gentlemen) so necessary that they would sooner send their sons to a bad one than to none at all. The harm of a bad boarding-school, an immoral place, outweighs a hundred times all the shortcomings (after all only negative) of a day-school. Parents should never send their boys to a boarding-school unless they are assured of it on the side of a decent moral life. A rotten school does harm that nothing can ever remedy. So also in a less vital sense does a snobbish school, one whose aim is to take in money (from those who can pay it in potsful) and turn out gentlemen—as far as boys can be made so by expensive clothes, expensive habits, premature luxury and exotic accents.

Leaving out the rotten schools and the snobbish schools, the decent boarding-school has certain disciplines in life to offer, salutary and useful, not to be got elsewhere. One is the value of the break from home, of being compelled for the first time to stand on one's own feet. It is in choking down the sobs of homesickness that we first learn how much home has meant, and how fond we are

of it, and the humbler and more dilapidated the home the more suffocating is the sob of affection for it. With the break from home we learn a whole lot of new values, as for instance that of the friend in need, the decent fellow who shows the new boy where everything is and where to put things away : first thing you know you are talking to him about your home and how your mother had warned you not to pack your books the wrong way into your trunk ; and he says that about half his stuff got bashed up coming on the train coming down, and so there you are two fellow adventurers, both smashed up by railway baggage men. How eagerly a new boy at school reaches out for such contacts of friendliness, like the shoots of a young plant on hard ground ; how quickly he responds to a kind accent in a master's tone, to a hand upon his shoulder ; with what penetration he sees that the old drill-sergeant, even if half tipsy, isn't half bad, and what encouragement he finds in a half-wink and a " cheer up " from the jolly old janitor. Then as the days go by, and the weeks go by, and he begins to settle into the place and have his part in it, what a new life and pride ! Something about him as it were that is his, that he has made, a new integument about him like the shell put on by a crab.

It is this new integument—call it if you like this new fellowship—that gives the peculiar meaning to boarding-school friendship, even as the years go by and it all turns into retrospect, to broadening companionship and acquaintance. It is a commonplace, as often repeated as it is true, that the friendships made at boarding-school are different in kind, deeper in meaning, than ordinary friendships. And how they last ! I am not thinking here of the school friendships of men who were at school together and owing to the good luck of circumstances spent their life side by side. I am thinking rather of those who were boys together at school and for uncounted years, for long decades, never saw one another, life passing separately for each of them : yet bring them casually

together after twenty years, after forty if you like, and the passage of the years is just as nothing, the call of the past bridges it in an instant.

Such has often been my experience, meetings with boys of the old school whom I had neither seen nor much thought about for half a lifetime. It was after one of my lectures in a great American city, a lecture to be followed by a reception, that they told me that there would be a Mr. Lyon at the reception who said that he had been at Upper Canada College with me fifty years before. Did I remember him? Remember him? What a ridiculous question! Remember Eph. Lyon, three years senior to me, one of the stars of the First (Cricket) Eleven—a big, striking fellow, as a boy I put him at over six feet, say six and a half—in a cricket blazer, walking back from the wickets to the marquee scoring tent at the corner of the college cricket ground, amid the burst of applause that greeted his score of thirty not out? And I, a college junior, not even fit for the third eleven! Remember him? No, the only thing was the compliment that he remembered me.

So there he was sure enough in the crush of the reception, one of those stand-up-and-talk affairs where one lady was asking me what I thought of Galsworthy's *White Monkey* (I hadn't heard of it) and another telling me that I ought to have gone on lecturing another half-hour. But for me Lyon was the feature of the reception. I admit that fifty years had altered him. He had turned from a Canadian school-boy into an American business man. He had lost about a foot in height and most of his width. He said the lecture was fine and that he never came to them, and then he asked me what became of Old Gentle, and I told him that all the old school buildings had been knocked down and the ground remade and rebuilt into great square blocks, and we stood there in the dust and memory of the falling school house, the wind from the chestnut trees of the college garden blowing in our faces. All about us was the babble of Galsworthy's *White Monkey*

and literary discussion, but the call of the years had carried us beyond it.

Or, similarly, I recall how one day at my club a message came to me to say that a gentleman from Arizona was downstairs in the lower hall who said he had been at school with me fifty years ago. I went down and there he was, sure enough. Who would he be? Why, Jimmy Douglas, of course; who else could he be? We were in form 2A together and in the old boarding-house together in 1882. "Well, Jimmy!" I said, as I asked him whether he remembered that he had said to me in 2A that he believed a fellow didn't need algebra. Evidently he hadn't needed it in Arizona, solid and prosperous, rugged and simple without it, and, as memory cleared away the haze from his features, unchanged since twelve years old.

Another time, in my club also, a man said, "Let me introduce my cousin,"—and I exclaimed as I shook hands with what looked like a tall, very dignified and formal gentleman, but which I knew wasn't, but was just a school-boy in disguise, "Why! Hullo, Friday!" He laughed. It is amazing how quickly the barriers break down. "Friday all right," he said, "but no one has called me that for forty years." "You remember," I said, "how you entered Upper Canada College alongside of a boy from Coburg called Crusoe, and after the master had written down Crusoe's name, he said to you, 'I suppose you must be Friday'?" With that the scene rose before us, the typical master's joke, that goes such a long way with a class, the subservient laughter, and afterwards in the playground the nickname *Friday*, plastered on and there for keeps.

All that, I say, is apropos of the question, what is there in a boarding-school?—to which the answer is that there

is a heap. Incidentally, though I forgot to mention it before, in my day a boarding-school still carried the advantage that it gave athletics, games and the life surrounding them. This exclusive aspect is gone in our present age, when athletics and sports are universal, and the new and wholesome worship of health, strength and fitness a dominant idea of the day. Yet even in athletics the bond of union for the boarding-school is always closer and more real.

For me my first initiation into boarding-school life and into the valley of tears of homesickness in February 1882 was brief enough. I entered at an awkward time scholastically though it fitted the financial quarters of the year, because all the subjects had been begun and for the moment I didn't fit in anywhere. The class in algebra had begun it at New Year and I hadn't had any, so the master in charge said to one of the boys, "McKeown, take this boy to the back of the room and explain to him what Algebra is." McKeown did so, and I don't believe that even the great Arabian scholar, Ibn Ben Swot, who invented Algebra and gave it its Arabic name, could have put it more exactly where it belonged, as mystery, than did McKeown of Form 2A in 1882. McKeown set out his Todhunter's *Algebra* and some bits of paper on a desk. He opened Todhunter at a page marked examples and all spotted with  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$ , mixed with figures. I had never seen Algebra before. "Now," said McKeown, "you take  $x$ ," and he wrote it down. "We'll say it's 10." "Is it?" I said. "Say it is," said McKeown. "Then you see  $x + 1 = 11$ ." "But," I persisted, "how do you know  $x$  is 10?" "I don't," said McKeown, "say it's 12 if you like." "No, no," I said. "I only meant how much is  $x$ ?" "Oh, I don't know," said McKeown, and of course that is exactly what Ibn Ben Swot would have said, only McKeown felt ashamed of ignorance and Ibn Ben exulted in it. Indeed he would



have explained that the whole point of Algebra is that it enables us to deal with unknown quantities, so much of this and so much of that, and find out all sorts of results connected with it, without giving them any single fixed meaning.

I spent three or four days in such class exercises, and in standing up, utterly homesick, and chorusing out declensions and conjugations after the old-fashioned system of the day, and in living through clattering meals that I could hardly eat for homesickness, and in night study, and in the nursery bedroom with my two brothers, and then the fourth or fifth day brought it all suddenly to a close. I woke up in the morning with a headache and my stomach as red as a lobster, and that was scarlatina. So the Lady Matron of the boarding-house took me in charge, and packed up a bag of my things and said, "And now come and see what a nice little house we have out behind the school!" It didn't look to me like a nice little house, in fact it looked just like a brick coal-shed converted into two rooms as a "sanatorium," which is just what it was. This was before the days of isolation hospitals and trained nurses. So there I was established in the sanatorium under the care of an old dame, a kinder and a cleaner version of Mrs. Gamp. My illness was nothing and was over in a day, and then the next day somehow my mother turned up and I didn't care how long I stayed isolated, drawing pictures and having her read out loud to me.

At the end of so many weeks I went back to the old farm, and in the intervals of convalescence went up and down to the red school twice a week, learning Latin. After Easter I went back to Upper Canada, but in less than no time it had all changed, all began to feel familiar and easy. The lessons were to me a mere nothing because they had shoved me a class down and I knew it all, and with that I began to make a few timid friendships, and to feel proud of walking with my friends down King St. all in college cricket caps (dark blue and white) and hearing people say as they passed, "Those are Upper

Canada boys." Oh, my ! Eh what ! I remember how my bygone friend, Chic Sale, that great artist of the comic, told me that the first time he heard someone say in a hotel rotunda, "Look, that's Chic Sale !" he threw his head up so high with pride that he tripped his left foot behind his right and made a sort of stage fall into the air. Chic had it to perfection. That is exactly how my twelve-year-old associates and I felt when someone said "Upper Canada boys !" Then came the springtime and the cricket season of May and June. The college grounds all beautiful, great days on Saturday afternoons, cricket matches and heroes, and receptions with great quantities of ice cream and cakes ; and then, ecstatic beyond wonder, the close of the term, the school breaking up in a torrent of oratory exhorting us to be gentlemen, packing trunks and off to take the train to go home for the holidays. My brothers and I went down to the little old Toronto and Nipissing Station at the foot of Berkeley St. two hours before the train was due to be made up, and "fooled around" among the cinderhead beside the bay, waiting to start home, and there wasn't a dull minute in all the two hours.

We came back as boarders that autumn, and after that, as I said before, I stayed on at Upper Canada, passing all through the school as a boarder and as a day-boy and finally as a boarder again. My brother Jim dropped out to go to my remarkable Uncle in Winnipeg, and Dick presently grew so tall that they couldn't keep him there any longer. Dick couldn't learn anything by any known academic process. They promoted him out of the first form into the second on the ground that he was nearly six feet high, but they refused to carry him beyond six feet. So Dick dropped out and back to the old farm now occupied only by old Tommy, the hired man. Then presently there came the North-West Rebellion of 1885 which brought after it that autumn an outbreak of placards calling for recruits for the North-West Mounted Police. Dick ran true to form, made his way to Ottawa,

was accepted and then went off to the Regina barracks. My younger brother Charlie filled in in his place at Upper Canada as a day-boy alongside of me.

I look back to the education I received in those years and I find in it plenty to think about. It was what is, or was, called a splendid classical education, as it was for a couple of hundred years in England and America looked on as the mainstay of national culture, the keystone in the arch of civilization ; and before that in England it was the only kind of education, embedded deep in theology and so intimately connected with the Church that it was inseparable from it. Any form of education not connected with the Church was held to belong to the devil, as witness the education for which Oxford in its infant years imprisoned or secluded Roger Bacon for ten years. There was the Church's education and the devil's education. In the long run the devil's education has won out. Any nation whose leaders are not trained in it will no longer survive ; any nation whose life is not based on it, whose people are not equipped with it, cannot last a generation. In other words the "survival quality" that was attributed to the old classical education has passed away, or is visibly passing away with the generation of the present leaders.

People who admit they know nothing of the history of education among English-speaking peoples may tolerate a few words of explanation. All through the Middle Ages the only education (we are speaking broadly) was that of the Church. It was carried on in Latin. When the modern age began, say about A.D. 1500, and printing multiplied books, education widened and included a lot of what had been the education of the Greeks and Romans ; such as the philosophy of Aristotle, which in no way contradicts the teaching of the Church and could be read side by side with it, and the great poems and plays of the Greeks, of Homer and the tragedians, and those of Rome,

such as Virgil's account of how Æneas escaped from the fall of Troy and founded the Roman nation, and the great histories, Thucydides' *History of Greece*, and the works of Livy and Tacitus and Julius Cæsar in Latin, of Demosthenes and of Cicero. All this made such an imposing body of literature, especially when set off in the new glory of print on vellum, that there was in vernacular English, or indeed in any vernacular, nothing like it at all. It was so to speak the world's literature, containing all the wisdom of the world. Even when people in England such as Shakespeare began to write things that were better, no one knew it or admitted it. Many people still don't. A Greek professor, especially if growing old and apt to sit under a tree and fall asleep over Theocritus, will tell you, of course, that Greek literature is unsurpassed. Nor can you contradict him, since you don't know it, except by telling him that the Chinese classics are better still.

So here then was the education that went with the rising glory of England and the earliest beginnings of the United States. Oddly enough it carried with it a fringe, that kept growing and expanding, of Mathematics and Physics that had not been part of the education of the Greeks at large. The Greeks abhorred anything practical (just as Oxford a hundred years ago tried to ignore "stinks," meaning chemistry) and they never had any decent system of calculation by numbers on paper, so that Greek mathematics was queer odd ingenious stuff, as if one worked out puzzles for puzzles' sake. It was complicated and difficult enough, as when they speculated on the kind of curves made by slicing through a cone (conic sections), an enquiry carried on "just for fun" in their time. Only one part of their Greek mathematics, the art of field measurement, or geometry, was especially developed into a complete and rounded form, particularly in Egypt, in the great Greek centre of learning in Alexandria. This was because in Egypt with each annual flood of the Nile land measurement by sight lines had a special importance. Hence the

treatise of Euclid came into our education intact and stayed there till into the present century.

To what the Greeks had of Mathematics the new English classical education as it got consolidated, after, say, A.D. 1500, added all that went with the wonderful system of calculating by giving figures a "place value" (so that for example the figure two may mean two, or twenty, or two hundred). We are so accustomed to this that we take it for granted and no longer see how wonderful it is. The Greeks and Romans and all the ancient nations fooled round with it and got very close to it with the method of counting of beads on strings, etc., but they never learned how to put it on paper and so make the figures add and subtract and multiply in our present marvellous and simple method of columns and places. It was the Hindus who worked this out; but the Arabs put the cap on it by inventing the use of the figure zero, the round O for nothing that means everything.

Luckily for English education, mathematics developed side by side with classical education not as an equal partner but as an adjacent. This was partly due to the genius of the nation, which tends to produce men of exception as seen in Napier, who invented logarithms, Isaac Newton, who invented the Calculus and went in an effortless way beyond all known boundaries, and Halley, who invented Isaac Newton by keeping him at work. Nor could even Halley keep him at it for good. It is odd that Newton, who lived to a great old age, was all done with science relatively early in life, pursued no more discoveries, and felt proud to be in Royal Service as the Master of the Mint.

But what made mathematics for England was its connection with navigation. When the era of colonial expansion brought England on to the seven seas, navigation by means of mathematical astronomy became the peculiar privilege and pursuit of the British. The Portuguese and the Spanish had only known the beginnings of

it. Columbus was really, in spite of some tall talk on his part, quite ignorant. He merely threw a chunk of wood overboard to see how fast the ship was going. The English forged ahead. The Elizabethans "took the sun." Isaac Newton himself explained that longitude at sea could be accurately known each day at noon as soon as someone could invent a clock to keep time at sea. Even so, the Admiralty prize of £10,000 went begging till late in the eighteenth century. But with the use of chronometers and sextants and the compilations of astronomical tables worked out on shore and applied at sea, and ingenious mathematical tables of logarithms to apply them with, British navigators led the world. It was the British government that sent out astronomers with captains to observe the transit of Venus in the South Pacific in 1769. After which the use of mathematics got mixed up with the glory of Old England and Britannia ruling the waves, and no scheme of English education was complete without it. Not that English schools took to it gladly. We are told (in the Memoirs of General Lyttleton) that even at Eton the study of mathematics was tolerated rather than appreciated as late as the 60's of the last century.

In all this I am not wandering from the point. I am explaining where I got my Upper Canada College education. Well, that's where it came from, from the theologians and the classical scholars and Isaac Newton and the Nautical Almanac.

But the thing that especially consolidated the position of the Classical Education in England, as it presently did also in America, was the discovery, by experience, that it was a great training for leadership. This applied particularly to a nation which had grown not democratic, but parliamentary; a nation where oratory in the legislature counted for more and more, and where forensic oratory in free and open courts was one of the great highways to success and political préferment.

To this was added presently the power of the Press, the

value of the written word and the persuading paragraph, things for which the classical education had, and still retains when most else is gone, a commanding eminence.

Side by side with classical education, in a position that has slowly grown from the lowest to the highest, grew up medicine and medical education : from its earliest beginnings in black art and barbers' surgery with its red and white rags : out of the mists of astrology and the incantations of superstition : out of empirical remedies and old wives' tales, till with the age of science it began to build on definite organized truth, and on knowledge gathered from the facts of dissection and the observations of anatomy. But medicine was no part of the education of a cultivated man, and till far down the nineteenth century the social status of a doctor other than a court physician was dubious and humiliating.

Science remained for the few, for the investigators, for the Royal Society founded under Charles II, a factor in the national advance of England second only to the Royal Navy. The list of the great names in science, Priestley, Faraday, Lyell, Darwin, lies outside of the orbit of academic education.

Such was the classical education. It is my opinion that the world moved it on just in time, and that England especially was only saved in the nineteenth century from degenerating into intellectual stagnation by the fact that other forces in the nation, clear outside of its scholars and all that they stood for, pursued science for science's sake ; promoted invention, applied it to industry and transport and presently—by the dead weight of circumstance and opinion—thrust it into the schools and colleges.

A chief trouble with the classical scholarship was its infernal conceit. The typical classical scholar developed under encouragement into a sort of pundit. He knew it all—not part of it, all of it. What he didn't know wasn't college. The phrase was used long after by Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, but it might have been used by

any of them from Dr. Busby of Westminster, in the days of Charles II, down to their last octogenarian successors of yesterday. They knew it all. That is to say, they knew nothing whatever of medicine and would have roared with laughter over their own ignorance of it, with a neat Latin quotation to cap it. They knew nothing whatever of the geographical and geological globe about them, replacing it with an intimate knowledge of the Ægean Sea as of 500 B.C. They knew nothing of modern languages, regarding them as a thing for couriers or dragomen. They knew nothing of the investigations of natural science, had no vision as to where it was leading, knew nothing of its application to industry, nothing of industry itself, nothing of finance ; in fact, looked at in a proper focus, all that they did know was nothing as compared with the vast portentous knowledge that was rising on the horizon of a changing world.

Even for literature and the drama, all that goes with the republic of letters, their point of view was turning hopelessly astray by their persistent tradition that of course Latin and Greek literature was far superior to that of our own day. To say this in A.D. 1500 was to state a plain truth. To say it in A.D. 1900 was to talk pure unadulterated nonsense.

The old classical education had at least the advantage that it was hard and difficult, with no royal road. It was as hard as ever a teacher liked to make it. For witness, call in anyone who has studied Greek moods and tenses or tried to translate the Greek Dramatists into something intelligible. In all this it was miles above a great deal of the slush and mush which has in part replaced it, the effortless, pretentious study of things that can't be studied at all, the vague fermentations that tend to replace stern disciplinary work when education is all paid for and free for all and popular and universal, provided that it is not made difficult.



The classical curriculum had also the advantage, to be rightly or wrongly used, that it lent itself admirably to competitive study, to examinations, to marks, to prizes, to going up and down in class. It was from that aspect that I made my Upper Canada College education even less beneficial than it need have been, accentuating its faults by utilizing its weakness. We had at Upper Canada College the system whereby each day's class consisted mainly of questions and answers, that is, either questions on home work done the night before or on something done at sight in class. The boys sat all alone one side, or all across the front of the room. If the master asked a boy a question and he couldn't answer it was passed on, "Next! Next!" till somebody did answer. The boy who thus answered correctly moved up above the ones who had failed to answer. Theoretically, but very rarely in practice, a question might be asked of a boy at the top of the class, and be passed on "Next, Next" with increasing excitement all the way to the bottom boy of the class, who might answer correctly and "go up ahead" in one swoop. Hence the system had in it a certain element of sport, something of the attraction of a horse-race. At least it kept the class from going to sleep and it made the class do the work and not the teacher. It always seems to me that in a lot of the revised education of to-day, which quite rightly undertook to modify the severities, the rigour, the physical punishment and the needless difficulties of the older teaching, the mistake is made in the contrary direction. Everything is made too easy. The teacher has to "sell" the subject to the class, and in trying to make everything clear and simple it is forgotten that there are some things that can't be made clear and simple because they are by nature difficult and complex.

For me the old-fashioned system of going up and down, and trying to move up to the head of the class and stay there, proved altogether too congenial and attractive and helped to give a false bias to my education. In the junior

form, the first and second, I took my studies easily, didn't bother whether I went up or down, and got a very good place without trying for it. But from the third form on I got more and more drawn into study and overstudy, till presently I filled all my time outside of school as well as in. After the third form, by this continuous industry, I ranked first in everything except mathematics ; and after the fourth form first in everything, by learning by heart in mathematics every possible thing that would let itself be learned by heart.

Study by this pattern knocked all the reality out of certain subjects. History for me just turned into an underlined book of which I knew by heart all the underlined tags, headings and dates. I knew them then, and I still know all the clauses of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, and all sorts of dates and lists, and all kinds of headings. The reality of history gradually was lost from sight behind this apparatus of preparation for examinations.

The very thoroughness of the old classical system made it still worse suited for modern education.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Teaching School*

I SPENT ten and a half years of my life (February 1889-July 1899) in teaching school, and I liked the last day of it as little as I liked the first. As a consequence I have spoken and written very often and very bitterly about school-teaching and the lot of the school-teacher. Looking back on it all I think I ought to retract about one-half of all I said, for I think now that half of the fault was with me, and only half with the profession as such. Even at that it seems to me a shame that school-teaching cannot be organized as a profession which a person can enter as a life-work, and in which success should bring at least the main part of what success means in the other learned professions such as medicine, law and the church. As it is, school-teaching offers too much at the beginning, too little as the years go by. The initial salary is better than anyone could hope to gain in his opening years of law or medicine. The final salary is nowhere beside the great prizes the other professions offer. It is true that in the other professions they may fall by the way, lawyers without a case and medical men forced out of their profession by lack of opportunity and glad to earn a living in any other kind of way. In teaching very few fall by the way ; very many rise out of it ; but those who remain in it for a lifetime find as the years go on that it gives them less than what is fair, less than what is commensurate with other pursuits.

There are certain things without which the life of a person who has grown up in cultured surroundings and received a cultivated education is not properly complete, does not stand on a fair level with other lives and opportunities. Every career should look forward to marriage as a thing that can in due course and time be accepted

with all that it brings in the way of children and a home, without the pinching and semi-poverty that reduces it to a status not good enough to rank with that of other professions. With marriage should go a sufficient command of money to allow for the amenities of life, to permit one to belong to a club, to buy, within reason, books, etc., furniture and house things, to enjoy art and the theatre, and such special holiday "blow outs" as punctuate the monotony of life's routine. Most necessary of all is money enough to launch one's children in the world.

Any man who has that much need ask for no more. Granted that much of ease and affluence, the rest depends on himself, on what kind of mind and personality he has. The trouble with our school-teaching in Canada is that up to now it does not offer these things. Hence its characteristic features, too much at first, too little later. An in-and-out profession through which a series of bright young men pass on to something better, and in which a certain number of young men, too dull or too devoted, remain for ever. The running stream leaves its deposit as it flows on, but is the deposit gold or mud?

In my case I went into school-teaching with my eyes wide open, as into something temporary on the way to a real career. To go into teaching was a matter of sheer necessity. My education had fitted me for nothing except to pass it on to other people. And as I have explained, my mother's finances had come to a full stop with the final exertion of getting enough money to give me the one year of full undergraduate status at the University, for which my scholarship of \$100 was quite inadequate. Meanwhile, as my father had vanished into space, my mother was still on the old farm with eight children younger than me to look after, and with an income of, I think, \$80 a month to do it on. Of my two older brothers, Jim was in Winnipeg with some small job in the Court House but quite unable to send money home, and

Dick in the North-West Mounted Police had nothing to spare from his pay. How my mother managed in the ensuing years before any of us could help her I do not know. I imagine the answer is that she drifted into debt and stayed there. Even when we could presently give her money it was merely applied over the surface of the debt below, like a warm growth of Arctic flowers in the sun over cold frozen muskeg.

I found out by asking those who knew, that my college status as a third-year undergraduate, for I had taken the first and second years in one as already explained, would entitle me to teach in a High School or Collegiate Institute, provided I put in three months as a teacher in training. This new feature was still quite recent, as was the first instalment of that qualification in "education" (so-called) superadded to the academic qualification of time spent and examinations passed at the University. From the modest three months of technical education as a qualification for teaching, the requirement has now been lengthened in Ontario, as it has in most similar jurisdictions in Canada and the United States, to one year. It thus represents as much as 25 per cent of the academic qualification itself. I have always thought, and still think, this is out of all proportion. I have always had a very low opinion of the educational qualification, too low I am sure, always looking upon it as about 10 per cent solid value and 90 per cent mixed humbug and wind. I have always felt that the only way to learn to teach is to go and do it, just as Mr. Squeers, immortalized by Dickens, taught his pupils to spell *windows* by going and cleaning them. In so far as the educational qualification helps to close the profession and keep out superfluous numbers, I am convinced that the same time and money spent on an extra academic year would be more to the point.

I sent in my application and was duly assigned in September of 1888 to a group of half a dozen men and women teachers allotted for three months' training to the Strathroy Collegiate Institute, Strathroy being in Western Ontario, beyond London.

So in due course I got on the train and went to Strathroy. Apart from trips up and down to Sutton, it was my first railway journey. I had a wooden trunk tied with a clothes-line and something called a valise—I forget whether of imitation straw or of imitation something else. It is the kind of baggage I still use. I have never risen to the luxury of aristocratic baggage as a mark of status. For years I was too poor to buy it, and when I could I didn't any longer care for it. I think that Dr. Johnson once said something like that in a letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, about having a literary position. I feel just as he did about having a pigskin valise: "had it been early it had been kind, but now I am known and do not need it." If it is true that a man is known, as is indicated in romantic novels, by his baggage, then my valise places me every time.

So, as I say, I arrived at Strathroy. I left my trunk at the station and walked up the street and presently I saw a sign, *Rooms with Board*, and went in and took a room with board. I think the price was \$3 a week. I went upstairs and unpacked my valise and wrote a letter home saying, "Dear Mother, I arrived at Strathroy all right, but the boarding-house I am in looks a pretty rotten place, so I don't expect to stay long." Then I went down to supper. After I had finished it I met the landlady coming downstairs and she said, "If you find this boarding-house such a rotten place I guess you better not stay in it," so I was on the street again, less 25 cents, moving on to the next sign *Rooms with Board*.

That was the beginning of my contact with boarding-houses, which spread intermittently over many years and

from which presently I found much food for reflection. Some readers may recall my *Boarding-House Geometry*, in which was laid down the axiom that all *Boarding-Houses are the same Boarding-House*, and the postulate that a *bee line* may be made *from any one boarding-house to any other boarding-house*. No doubt the origin of those truths reaches back as far as Strathroy.

When I duly found a boarding-house (across the lapse of years I quite forget it and where it was) and had entered the Teachers' School next day I found it easy beyond words after the hard study to which I was habituated. The little group of teachers-in-training moved about the school, listened to sample lessons (in no wise different from the lessons and classes we had all taken for years) and presently were entitled to stand up and "take the class" themselves under the supervision of the teacher.

In doing this I learned on the side a lesson on how not to be funny, or the misuse of a sense of humour, which lasted me all my life and echoed back to me in a strange way nearly thirty years later. The principal of the Strathroy Collegiate was Mr. James Wetherell, the well-beloved "Jimmy" Wetherell whose memory is still dear to the heart of a thousand pupils. He seemed to us old at the time, as all adult people do to the eyes of eighteen, but he must have been relatively young, for he lived on and on, still in harness when the Great War came, and died at a ripe age later. He was a fine scholar, his chief subject, at least the one he like best to teach, being English. But he had acquired, as most scholars do if absorbed in their work and exulting in the exposition of it, little tricks of speech and manner all his own and all too easy to imitate. I had at that time a certain natural gift of mimicry, could easily hit off people's voices and instinctively reproduce their gestures. So when Jimmy Wetherell, half-way through a lesson in English, said to me most courteously, "Now will you take the lesson over at that point and continue

it." I did so with a completeness and resemblance to Jimmy's voice and manner which of course delighted the class. Titters ran through the room. Encouraged as an artist I laid it on too thick. The kindly principal saw it himself and flushed pink. When I finished he said quietly, "I am afraid I admire your brains more than your manners." The words cut me to the quick, I felt them to be so true and yet so completely without malice. For I had no real "nerve," no real "gall." It was the art of imitation that appealed to me. I had not realized how it might affect the person concerned. I learned with it my first lesson in the need for human kindness as an element in humour.

Now when this happened there was in the class somewhere on a back bench a boy of thirteen whose name was Arthur Currie, who had entered the school that autumn. He was destined to become one of the celebrated men of our Canadian Dominion, Arthur Currie, later on General Sir Arthur Currie, Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Overseas forces of the Great War, the victor of Vimy Ridge, a really great man. I had occasion to know it, as I served under him for the thirteen years during which he was Principal of McGill. I used in those years in public speeches to refer to the parallel fact that Aristotle had taught Alexander the Great of Greece, and to say that in my opinion Aristotle had nothing on me. And since like all other speakers I prefer an old joke to a new, I worked this one overtime for thirteen years.

As a matter of fact I didn't know General Currie as a boy at Strathroy School, but, with his usual and phenomenal memory, he recalled me. When he came to McGill I went, as in duty bound, to pay my respects to him in his office and I said, for I had just been reading as had everybody his full biography in the newspapers, "I think, General Currie, I must have had the honour of teaching you when I was a teacher in training at Strathroy in 1888." He gave me a closer and more scrutinizing look. "Why, yes," he said. "I recognize you now. . . You



were the young man to whom Jimmy Wetherell, the principal, said that he admired your brains more than your manners."

The work of the Teachers in Training Course was easy and agreeable and companionable. Hard it was certainly not, and it was useful provided that the quantity was kept down to the proportions then existing and not extended out of all reason, as I think it to be to-day. As examination work we had to study two or three books, one on school management with discussion of such things as ventilation, etc., and one on the outline of the history of education. This last was very interesting but a little of it went a long way. I should think that any trained student could get all that he needed of the history of education in a week of reading, I mean as far as its utility in actual teaching goes. Beyond that he could study it till he was grey with increasing interest to himself. The trouble with so many of our new curriculum subjects is that they confuse what is agreeable reading for old men with what is necessary reading for young ones. As I see it the whole of sociology lies in this field, a wonderful subject of reflection for riper years but hopelessly artificial as a class study for youth.

The training school ended with examinations, a school entertainment and good-bye and goodwill all round. I found myself a qualified Secondary School teacher of the province of Ontario and a specialist in Latin, Greek, French, German and English. I presume that I still am.

Being a specialist is one thing, getting a job is another. So I found myself back at the old farm with nothing to do but send in applications for such teaching jobs as I could hear of or find advertised in the papers. Among other things I had the honour of being an applicant for a job on the staff of the newly and not yet opened Bishop Ridley College, at St. Catherine's, a school that has since

traced a long and honourable record of over half a century. I doubt very much whether my application, to use an upstate expression, caused any headache to the trustees, seeing that my application for the position of modern language master went in alongside of that of H. J. Cody, the successful applicant, who had just taken his degree in Arts that year. Cody had had a phenomenal record, universally first in everything, so that in his year the lists in all the languages as in English and History began (1) H. J. Cody and should have added—and the rest nowhere. He began here that long and distinguished life of service to the Church and to education which sees him now President of the University of Toronto. I remember by the way when we, his college contemporaries, heard that Cody had gone into the Church, we looked on it as a case of a good man gone astray. We realized the success he was thus renouncing as a great criminal lawyer, or criminal politician, for his college eminence was so outstanding that he could easily have reached out for any of the great prizes of life. There was no other way for any college contemporary to escape competing against Cody except to take a dive clear into another faculty, and even at that he would be apt in medicine to come up alongside the similar record of Llewelyn F. Barker, later on the famous Dr. Barker of Baltimore, who was always first in every class in each subject. I remember that years later I asked Barker if this was literally true and he told me that there had been an exception, that once he had been put into third class, and that in the very subject which he regarded as his best and on which he had written voluminous examination answers, all, he was certain, correct. Barker told me further that very soon after the occurrence, when he had come to know the examiner in question as a fellow doctor and fellow examiner, he asked him if he recalled how and why the third class happened. "Most certainly," answered the examiner. "I put you in third class because I wanted *answers*, not a whole damn book." Those who

know the vagaries of examiners will realize the truth of the story. Barker carried the bitterness of it throughout the years and never forgave the injustice. He was fond of telling the story, and at his death it appeared in many of the notices written of his career.

Meanwhile I was trying in vain in January 1889 to get a job in a school. Unexpectedly I got one at the beginning of February through the good offices of an old friend, the "Mr. Park" who had been for some year our tutor on the old farm. Park, after his tutorship ended in 1881, had gone back to college, finished his course in Arts and had gone into teaching. At this time he occupied the position of headmaster of Uxbridge High School. He wrote to me to say that a modern language teacher was needed at the school and if I applied for the post he didn't doubt that his recommendation would get it for me. This turned out to be true, and in due course I drove over to Uxbridge and found myself installed as teacher of modern languages in the bright new red-brick High School that had recently been added to the town's attractions.

Uxbridge was then a town of about 1,500 people, situated nowhere in particular on the high ground between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe: one of those agricultural centres that grew up around a grist-mill and a sawmill when the settlers moved in, grew to a certain extent and then planted trees in the street to replace the shattered forests and fell asleep under the trees. Uxbridge, as its name shows and as the adjacent township of Brock indicates, belongs among the settlements that followed the Great War (once so called) when the Battle of Waterloo and Lord Uxbridge as a Waterloo hero and General Brock's heroic death at Queenstown Heights were memories of yesterday. Around the town were settled a fine class of British, and as beside my village of Sutton its main street with a flood of light from the shop windows looked quite metropolitan. It had the usual equipment of taverns and churches, but was a clean bright orderly

little place, dull as ditchwater but quite unaware of the fact.

From the old farm to Uxbridge was a distance of eighteen miles. To-day, travelling in a motor-car over gravelled roads, there is hardly time to get well settled in the car before the trip is over. But in 1889 it was a real pilgrimage, not to be done there-and-back in a day, up and down over one sandhill after another, in winter through hill cuttings blocked with snow, in spring among sunken roads covered with spring floods. Nowadays of course all such distances have shrunk to nothing ; Toronto Sunday trippers run out to and beyond Uxbridge to fish in the streams, or drive through Uxbridge (apart from the Main Street) without noticing that it is there. Such as it was the town became my home for the next half-year, and I owe it all the gratitude that goes with the payment of a first salary.

I had no trouble with teaching from the very start, no difficulty in doing it, no question of discipline. There are certain people who from the moment they step into a class-room present themselves as easy marks to pupils inclined to disorder, who even provoke disorder among pupils inclined to silence and attention. I remember such among those who taught me at Upper Canada College, as does everyone else among those who taught him at his school. Very generally the recollection of such incompetents is among the fondest memories retained across the years. Pupils or students look back to the memory of "old Billy," or whoever it was, who couldn't keep order, with a singular gratitude, with a laughing memory that is all attention. Such incompetents cannot be trained out of it. They are hopeless from the start. I remember (years later than Uxbridge) how General Currie at McGill undertook to explain the principles of class discipline to a young incompetent teacher attached to my department whose students were turning his class-room into a bear garden. "Mr. Smith," said the general, "you can't keep order. Now listen, you were a

soldier in my army, weren't you?" "Yes, sir." "In France, weren't you?" "Yes, sir." "Well, then, can't you take the first of these miserable young — (General Currie here used his own private vocabulary) who starts trouble in the class out on the campus and try to kill him?" "Yes, sir," said Mr. Smith. Yet within another month or so the class had Mr. Smith beaten to a standstill. He had to give up teaching and was out in a cruel world without resources. I have often wondered what would have happened if Mr. Smith had murdered a McGill student on the campus. But no doubt General Currie was right. The mere intent to murder, the murderous look was all that was needed. Poor Smith couldn't command it.

At Uxbridge I didn't have to murder or threaten to murder any of my pupils. Instinctively I went at class order in the right way, and when you know how it is very simple. It is the beginning which counts. Face the class. Begin talking to them at once. Get to business, not with one of them but with all of them. Talk: don't mumble. Face them: don't turn your back. Start work: don't get fumbling about with a class list of names and a roll call, which you may pronounce correctly or may not. Leave all that till later. Start work, and once started they are lost as far as disorder goes. In fact they won't expect any. Above all, don't try to be funny; feeble teachers attempt a footing of fun as a means of getting together. The real teacher only descends to fun when he has established a sufficient height to descend from.

So there I was with my class, all bright and easy with Pass Matriculation French out of Pass Matriculation French book rippling merrily around. As I was only just turned nineteen the senior pupils were nearly as old as I was, one or two perhaps quite as old, and one at least a good deal older. He was preparing for the ministry; and with my help he ultimately got there. The others in the senior class were preparing for Pass Matriculation

into the University of Toronto, Arts, Science or Medicine. Of these, my first pupils, local pride in Uxbridge still honours the memory of Colonel Sharpe, who gave his life in the Great War.

The teaching of Matriculation French and German was easy to me because I had been trained in exactly that kind of stuff. In reality it belonged to that futile and worthless brand of teaching French in Ontario which has so long disfigured the otherwise high standard of the province. It was based purely and simply on the final goal of a worthless examination consisting of translating English into French and French into English. Observe the result. Pronunciation didn't matter. Whether I pronounced well or ill, and whether my class pronounced still worse or rather better, was of no consequence. There was no test in pronunciation, no requirement of reading out loud. Nor did it matter in the least whether they understood French when they heard it spoken. There was no test in dictation, no question and answer, nothing but written French—dead as a dead language. On the other hand, there was a regular egg-dance of ingenuity in translating verbal phrases and such back and forward—things like “Give him some of it : do not give him any of it. Speak to me of them : do not speak to me of them”—and so on, endlessly. Anybody who has ever learned to translate in this way will never be able to speak or use French. The English words crowd into his mind. What he does is to think in English and translate into French. In German things are not so bad. The two idioms being so similar, translation, if one will let it do so, keeps tending to merge into actual use of language.

The whole fault with Ontario French arises in the Provincial examination and floods back to the source from that, like water checked by a dam. Once introduce dictation as a test of comprehension, and reading aloud as a test of pronunciation, and the whole thing would alter. As it is, Ontario French isn't in it with French learned out of a phrase book, one with pronunciation

given by those who know it. In any case language for use can only be learned word by word and phrase by phrase. We learn to say *carte blanche* by saying *carte blanche* : learning off a list of feminines won't help.

But there is my class waiting. I must get back to them.

My salary was \$700 a year and seemed a lot of money, \$59.33 a month. In a way it was a lot of money. Board in Uxbridge in 1889 was \$12.00 a month, washing about \$2.60. All the clothes I would need in a year would represent about \$100 or \$8.00 a month, drinks (meaning, say, a couple of glasses of beer a day, at 5 cents a glass) about \$2.50 a month, the bars being closed on Sunday. That was all the necessary expenses, and all the remaining money was extra. One hardly knew what to do with it. There were of course no moving pictures, no soda fountains, no motor-cars, no paid dances, no slot machines, none of the hundred and one odd expenses that make the life of young people to-day one continuous expenditure of money big or little. I forgot tobacco in my list above. Call it a plug of "T and B" once a month at 25 cents.

I felt so rich on receipt of my first salary that I hired a "livery rig" (charge \$1.00 for the trip), a cutter, and drove over to the old farm, one afternoon to go there and back the next. I have always hated the care of horses from my early recollections of chores on the farm, but of course I could, like anybody else, drive a horse if I had to. I remember that a wild blizzard came on that evening with big snowdrifts, and that I turned into a farmhouse half-frozen to thaw out, or to thaw the horse out, I forget which. When I got home I gave \$10 of my salary to my mother, the first instalment of relief to her finances, seeming like the first relief of Lucknow. It proved to be only the first of plenty, for as the years went by my brothers and I were able to give her help ; and then, when two or three of us became well-off, we were able to banish all her money perplexities and give her everything she needed. The long evening of her life, for she lived to be ninety, paid her back dividends on her past devotion.

The cottage beside the river which my sister Rosamond built for her use at Sutton remains—a marvel of beauty of site and scene which even the passing motor tourist pauses a moment to admire. My mother lived there in a network of perpetual correspondence and casual visits from children and grandchildren, her house a sort of family centre, a No. 10 Downing St., reaching out across the continent. She was so habituated to being in debt that, manage as she would, mother always carried a little cloud of debt along with her. But it made no difference. We wiped it off the slate every now and then and let it go at that. Perhaps after all there is more in raising a large family, in spite of all that it entails, than many young women of to-day are inclined to think.

I worked away contentedly enough at Uxbridge. But of course the situation carried with it the drawback that, as I reckoned it, I was getting nowhere. I had dropped out of college and saw no way to get back and finish the two years towards my degree. To try to save money to do so on my High School Salary would have taken years and years. To settle down and try to make my life and get married and live on a High School salary was a thing I never thought of for a moment. I tried to do a little odd study at my college books but did not get very far, and in any case teaching every day from nine to four was sufficiently tiring to leave little energy for anything else. Teaching like anything else is immensely tiring to a novice, later on it gets less and less so in proportion to one's ability to teach. But it is never easy, except to people who can't teach at all or don't try to.

On such terms I finished out my first half-year at Uxbridge and went up to Lake Simcoe for those summer holidays beside the Lake which have played such a large part in my life for over half a century. My mother had again rented the old parsonage, the ancient tumbledown habitation of the first parson of Georgina of which I spoke



before. I had also a sailboat acquired in Toronto a year or two before from a remnant of my mother's temporary affluence and my father's temporary gains of the Winnipeg boom. It was what was called a double lugger, but I put it into a higher class when I brought it to Lake Simcoe by getting a local farmer boat-builder to convert it into a single-masted sloop. Operations of this sort, which sound as if they ought to cost a couple of hundred dollars, then represented only about five dollars plus the price of a little paint. That was the first of a series of sailboats of varying sizes and rigs which I sailed on Lake Simcoe and its sister lake Couchiching, from those days until now.

The marvellous thing about the good old summer time of those days was how little it all cost. I remember some years ago at my present country house in Orillia a medical man, a contemporary of mine, explaining to a group of people how he and another medical student used always to take a six weeks' holiday of summer camping and that all it cost them was twenty-five dollars each. The up-to-date auditors could scarcely believe it, but my medical friend was easily able to prove and over-prove it. He and his fellow-students owned between them a canoe and a tent and blankets. So there was their lodging for nothing. For food they had a certain amount of canned beef and canned salmon, which along with fish that cost nothing but the easy catching represented a meal bill of, say, ten cents a day each. For milk they went to farmhouses along the lake and got all they wanted at five cents a quart, and the farm people felt so mean at charging anything that they "threw in" a lot of vegetables: or they bought vegetables and the farm people felt so mean that they threw in the milk: and if the campers came back a second day the farm people threw it all in. So there was their board. For light they had a coal-oil lantern at twenty-five cents a month. As to drinks, it is astonishing how little young people (not old soaks) drank before the days of prohibition: an odd

glass or two of beer when in reach of a bar, at five cents a drink, and a bottle of rye whisky at seventy-five cents a quart for first-class liquor, carried along in the canoe for a "snifter" in the evening. Calculated this way one wonders how the two medical students could spend as much as twenty-five dollars each on their trip.

In the good old summer time of those days our chief diversions were boating, sailing, swimming and above all lawn tennis, newly introduced and all the go. Swimming never took the form of mixed bathing except for a few "sissies" who might care for it. Girls in those days when they went into the water were equipped from top to toe with bathing caps, full bathing suits more voluminous than their ordinary dresses, and bathing stockings and bathing shoes. "Swimming" for them just meant getting wet with their clothes on. Ordinary young men of wholesome minds looked on girls in the water as a damn nuisance. But for tennis they came into their own, since we all played so indifferently and had so little idea of the smashing game that tennis could turn into, that any girl who could stand up beside the net and prevent the ball from hitting her in the face did well enough for a partner. Here again was a cheap game. The grass court cost little trouble to make, no expert work and people made it for themselves. The net cost three dollars and lasted for ever, and the balls never got lost since we hunted them till after dark rather than lose them. As yet no one had ever heard of golf, not in that part of Canada, except as a sort of crazy game played in Scotland by knocking a ball around among sand-hills which forbid any other exercise.

But compare again the cost of our lawn tennis of the 90's and the cost of the golf of forty years later which drove it out. Golf meant a high cost to make the premises and build a clubhouse and fence, high annual dues; with that, suburban fares, green fees, caddy fees, tips, at least one meal at the clubhouse on account of the distance from home. In the pre-war days I knew of many people

in Montreal who found that they had all that they could do to keep up their annual golf subscription without attempting to go out to the club and play. Yet in Scotland and in England, where golf links were clipped by grazing sheep, where the "clubhouse" was just such a small building as might serve to drink Scotch whisky in, or smoke a pipe in a rainstorm, golf was carried on for years and years at an annual subscription in ordinary country places of five dollars (one guinea) a year. Many people have told me of cases of minor revolution when the subscription was moved up to two guineas. But very likely for all I know the game may have been over-swamped by wealth and by the pretence of being rich that has swamped out for us in America so much of the inexpensive amusement of the past.

The good old summer time of 1889 being ended, I went back with deep regret to my teaching job, with no particular prospect in front of me. And then unexpectedly things began to open up indeed, and in less than a month altered my whole outlook. It is possible that the market for teachers had taken a favourable turn, or it is possible that I had made a hit as a teacher and that this one or that one may have spoken of me to someone else, but at any rate, quite unexpectedly and unsolicited, I got an offer to come to Napanee High School at a salary of \$900, an increase of \$200 in pay. By all the ethics of the teaching profession the Uxbridge trustees should have let me go, or raised my salary. It is among the few redeeming points of the teaching profession that a school is not supposed to stand in a teacher's way: what is a temporary inconvenience to the school may mean a life advancement for the teachers.

The Uxbridge trustees didn't see it that way: they proposed to hold me to my contract. Looking back on it as I see it now, they felt that they had got a good article cheap and meant to hang on to it. They were, or most

of them were, a poor lot. So they refused to let me go, and I had to accept it with the best grace I could and stick at my work.

Then right on the heels of this came a real offer, one that meant for me light out of darkness, salvation out of disaster. Upper Canada College needed a junior master at \$700 a year and offered me the job if I was free to take it at once. This would mean of course that I could go on with my college course towards a B.A. degree. For the residence requirement in those days was not strict, involved no actual roll call of attendance and in any case, since the Upper Canada School day finished at three o'clock, I would take odd lectures that came at four or five. What it all meant to me I can find no words to describe.

But the Uxbridge trustees hardened their hearts and again they refused to let me go. No doubt they were more than ever impressed with what a fine cheap bargain they had picked up. But this time the refusal was too bitter for me to sit down under it. I asked leave to come and talk to the trustees in person. They consented, and I went down to an evening's meeting of the board of trustees and laid my case before them, with something, I imagine, like impassioned eloquence. I tried to show them how much it meant to my future. I took up no other aspect of it. I had no precedents to quote, no usage, no real argument, just how much it meant to me. It didn't seem to touch them. The Chairman explained the difficulty of getting a new teacher when the term was already three weeks old, and that seemed likely to be the end of it: when to my surprise an elderly trustee who hadn't spoken—his name was Britton and I am glad to honour it—hit the board table with his fist and said, "Damn it, gentlemen"—or words to that effect—"let that boy go. Do you think you can keep a boy of his ability in a place like Uxbridge?" With that the situation was saved: on a sudden inspiration I asked them to give me a week to find them a teacher and they consented.

The situation, I say, was saved. For it so happened that "my remarkable Uncle," E. P. Leacock, was on one of those visits to the East by which he eluded his creditors in the West, and I was able to enlist his services on my behalf. I have written elsewhere of my remarkable Uncle and of the phenomenal career that made him one of the notable figures of the spacious days of the Winnipeg boom. He amassed a great fortune, on paper, went up like a rocket and came down like a stick but with the more varied and graceful descent of a parachute. I wrote to him in Toronto and he set to work at once with characteristic energy, interviewed the Principal of Upper Canada and obtained a few days' delay, and in those days with the aid of the teachers' lists and a flood of telegrams (there was as yet no general telephone) he unearthed a teacher, a modern language teacher. It is true that his candidate when produced looked far from modern and short on language, indeed I believe the good old man was hauled out of retirement, but he filled the bill and I was free.

PART TWO

A Last Miscellany

CHAPTER I

*Are Witty Women Attractive to Men?*

SLAVES MURMUR to one another in their chains. They whisper what they think of their masters. In the same way the generality of men, being enslaved by women, whisper, when in safety, what they think. Slave No. 1 in his Club murmurs to Slave No. 2 that women have no sense of humour. Slave No. 2 agrees, and Slave No. 3, overhearing from his armchair, says quite boldly, "They certainly have not." After which quite a colloquy ensues among the slaves. But when the wife of Slave No. 1 asks at dinner what was the talk at the Club, he answers, "Oh, nothing much." Yet his inmost feeling is that women have no sense of humour, and if a woman is witty, she has somehow come by it wrongly. He daren't speak right out, but I will speak for him.

Having been asked to answer the question, "Are witty women attractive to men?" I answer decidedly, "No." Having said this I dodge behind the Editor and explain it.

There are, of course, a lot of immediate qualifications to be made to it. In the first place, are witty people in general attractive to anybody? Not as a rule. They get tiresome. It is terribly hard to be witty without getting conceited about it. I used to be very witty myself, till I learned to be careful about it. People don't like it. There are two things in ordinary conversation which ordinary people dislike—information and wit. Most people—most men at any rate—like to gather up information out of the *Digests*, which are the passion of the hour. But they won't take it from you. You're not a

*Digest.* So, too, with wit. They've learned by experience that if they laugh at one thing, they'll have to go on. . . . So if this applies to men with men, it applies all the more to men with women. Luckily women don't go in for information; or, if they give it, it is so incorrect as to be harmless.

In the next place, it goes without saying that some witty women are attractive to some men. This, by a happy disposition of providence, happens to all kinds of women, like attracting unlike. Hence witty women always have silent husbands. That's why they got married. There is a particularly decent type of man who finds it restful not to have to talk. When, in his youth, he meets a girl who talks all the time, that exactly suits him. He doesn't have to say anything. Ten years later you'll see them enter a drawing-room together. The host says to the man, "Looks like an early winter," and he answers, "Certainly does!" The host says, "Have a cocktail," and he answers, "Certainly will." By that time his wife has started in on the conversation; he doesn't have to talk any more. People commonly call this type an adoring husband. He isn't. His wife is just a sort of firescreen. The real adoring husband over-talks his wife, over-dominates her, pays with unexpected presents for easy forgiveness of his ill temper, and never knows that he adored her till it is too late, because now she cannot hear it. . . .

We will add another qualification, that one reason why some men don't care for the society of witty women is because of their own egotism. They want to be *it*. A wise woman sitting down to talk beside such a man will not try to be witty. She will say, "I suppose you're just as busy as ever!"

All men, you see, have the idea that they are always busy, and if they are not, a woman can soon persuade them that they are. Just say, "I don't see how you do it all," without saying what all is.

Another very good opening for women sufficiently

self-possessed is to say, "Well, I hear you are to be congratulated again!" You see, there is always something; either the office staff gave him a stick last month, or the Rotary Club elected him an Elder Brother. He'll find something. If he doesn't, then say to him that if he hasn't heard of it yet, you are certainly not going to tell. Then don't see him for a month, till the Firemen's Benevolent Union has elected him an Honorary Ash Can. He'll get something if you wait.

So you see there are ever so many ways for women to make a hit without trying to be witty.

Nor have women, themselves, any particular use for witty men. Instinctively they admire courage, though unhappily courage often goes with brutality and savagery. In the next degree they admire the courage of character of strong people on whom one can rely. But intellect comes last. Unhappily, women also have their superficial admirations, things they *fall for*—it's too bad, but they do. Women are apt to fall for a poet, for anything with long hair and a reputation. Round him they cluster, searching his thoughts. He probably hasn't got any. But wit, in all the procession, comes last, with only a cap and bells behind it.

Another thing is this. By this very restriction of their province of humour, women are saved from some of the silly stuff that affects the conversation of men. Take puns. They have pretty well died out now. The last of the punsters is probably dead, or in hiding. But many of us can still remember the social nuisance of the inveterate punster. This man followed conversation as a shark follows a ship, or, to shift the simile, he was like Jack Horner and stuck in his thumb to pull out a pun. Women never make puns; never did; they think them silly. Perhaps they can't make them—I hope not.

Nor have women that unhappy passion for repeating funny stories in order to make a hit, which becomes a sort of mental obsession with many men. The "funny story" is a queer thing in our American life. I think



it must have begun on the porch of the Kentucky store where they whittled sticks all day. At any rate, it has become a kind of institution. It is now a convention that all speakers at banquets must begin with a funny story. I am quite sure that if the Archbishop of Canterbury were invited to address the Episcopal Church of America, the senior bishop would introduce him with a story about an old ducky, and the Archbishop would rise to reply with a story about a commercial traveller. These stories run riot in our social life and often turn what might be a pleasant dinner into an agonized competition, punctuated with ruminating silence. Women keep away from this. They like talk about people, preferably about themselves, or else about their children, with their husband as a poor third, and Winston Churchill competing with Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek for fourth place. It may not be funny but it's better than darkies and commercial travellers. . . .

There is also the most obvious qualification to be made in regard to women's sense of humour in general and women's wit in particular, that of course individual exceptions, however conspicuous, do not set aside the general rule. There is no doubt that at least one of the most brilliant humorists of the hour in America is a woman. Many would say, *the* most brilliant. Such a faculty for reproducing by simple transcription the humour of social dialogue has, it seems to me, never been surpassed. But one swallow doesn't make a summer, though one drop of ink may make all humour kin.

The truth is that the ideal of ordinary men is not a witty woman, but a *sweet woman*. I know how dangerous the term is, how easily derided. Sweetness may easily cloy into sugariness, or evaporate into saintliness. A saint with hair parted in the middle, with eyes up-lifted, may be all right for looking out from the golden bars of heaven, but not so good for the cocktail bars below.

And yet, I don't know. A saint can kick in sideways anywhere.

It might easily be objected that all such opinions about sweetness in women are just left-over Victorianism, half a century out of date. Witty women, it will be said, may have seemed out of date in the stodgy days of women's servitude, but not now. The men and women of to-day—or call them the boys and girls—mix on an entirely different plane. All the old hoodoos and taboos are gone. All the girls smoke. They use language just as bad as any the men care to use. They drink cocktails and give the weaker men the cherry. In other words, they can curse and swear and drink—they're real comrades. In point of physique, they may not be equal to the men, but after all they can drive a car and fly a 'plane and telemark all over hell on skis—what more do you want?

So why shouldn't a girl of that type, the new girl who has conquered the world, be witty if she wants to? What more charming than a witty girl, half-stewed, as compared with a girl half-stewed and silent as a toad full of gravel?

To all of which I answer, "No, no, it's just an illusion!" There are no new girls, no new women. Your grandmother was a devil of a clip half a century before you were born. You telemark on skis; she cut ice in a cutter. You only knew her when she was wrinkled and hobbling, reading the Epistle to the Thessalonians in a lace cap and saying she didn't know what the world was coming to. The young have always been young, and the old always old . . . men and women don't change. It took thousands, uncounted thousands, of years to make them what they are. The changes that you think you see lie just on the surface. You could wash them away with soap and hot water.

But now I'll tell you another thing. All this new era of ours of emancipated women, and women in offices and women the same as men, is just a passing phase,

and the end of it is already in sight. A great social disaster fell on the world. The industrial age built up great cities where people lived, crowded into little boxes, where there was no room for children, where women's work vanished because they were dispossessed, where national population was kept going by additions from God knows where, and national safety was jeopardized by the increasing scarcity of our own people. . . . We had a close shave of it.

Then came the war in the air. . . . It has bombed the industrial city out of future existence. They know that already in England. The bomb is decentralizing industry, spreading the population out. They will never go back. This will mean different kinds of homes, homes half-town, half-country, with every man his acre. . . . Everyone's dream for a little place in the country, a place to call one's own, will come true. Socialized up to the neck, the individual will have its own again under his feet.

And the children? There must be four or five for every marriage. It is the only path of national safety, safety by the strength and power of our kin and kind, bred in our common thought and speech and ideal. Without our own children, the wave of outside brutes from an unredeemed world will kill us all. Later, we can redeem the world, but we must save ourselves first. . . . Everybody will know that. In re-organized society the nation's children will be the first need, the main expense of government. Women who see to that need see to nothing else. . . . That will be done in the home, for there will be no paid domestic service except contract labour by the hour from the outside, labour as good as ladyship, wearing a gold wrist watch and a domestic college degree. . . . But the main thing will be the home and behind it the long garden and trim grass and flower and vegetable beds, and father trying to plant a cherry tree from a book.

When England has been bombed into the country,

America will follow. Our cities will go, too. . . . No one will *live* in New York any more than miners live in a coal mine.

So the world will be all different. One little century will do it. Even half a century will show the full outline of it. Surviving on . . . surviving on into this altered world will be the queerest old set of left-over creatures, as queer as our left-over Victorians, only queerer. These old women will be happy and alert and self-assertive, but they will still not know how to fry an egg or repeat a nursery rhyme, for they only had three-quarters of a child each. . . . The boys and girls of twenty will think them very funny. . . . But my! Won't they be witty when they get together and cackle.

So that, you see, is why I don't think witty women are attractive to men. You don't see the connection? Well, perhaps you remember Molière's play called *The Doctor by Accident* (*Le Médecin Malgré Lui*) where the supposed doctor, called in to diagnose a case, gets off a vast rigmarole about nothing in particular and adds at the end, ". . . and that is why your daughter has lost her speech." You see, he didn't know anything about it.

Possibly it was like that.

## CHAPTER II

### *Living with Murder*

I AM a great reader of detective fiction. That is, I have been, up to now, but I see I shall have to give it up. It begins to affect one's daily life too much. I am always expecting something sudden, something sensational to happen, such as that a criminal will "burst around the corner" on the run and I shall immediately have to "time" his burst.

They always *time* everything in the stories so as to have it ready for the evidence.

That is why I now find myself perpetually "timing" myself all day, so that I can swear to everything.

For instance, I went down to dine three or four days ago with my old friend Jimmy Douglas at his house. He lives alone. This by itself would make any reader of crime fiction *time* him. I paused a moment at the lighted doorway before ringing the bell and noted that my watch said 7.0 p.m. A street clock just visible down the street, however, marked 7.2 p.m. and a half. Allowing my watch was one minute slow I was thus able to place the time fairly accurately as at 7.1 and a quarter.

What did I do that for? Well, don't you see—what if I rang the bell, received no answer, and at length pushed the door open (it would yield quite easily) to find Jimmy Douglas lying prone in the doorway? That would settle the time, wouldn't it?—and, what if he were still warm (he would be, good fellow), that would settle just how warm he was.

So I rang the bell. The Chinese servant who answered the door showed me noiselessly into the lighted sitting-room and motioned me to sit down. The room was *apparently* empty. I say *apparently*, because in the stories you never know. If Douglas's body was lying hunched

up in a corner (you know the way they hunch them up) my business was to take care to look up in the air, round the room, everywhere except in the right place to see him.

I did this and I had noticed that there was an ormolu clock on the mantel (there always is) and that it stood at 7.04 p.m., practically corroborating my previous estimate.

I was just checking it over when Douglas came in.

I noticed his manner at once and could only describe it as extremely normal, even quiet, certainly I would say free from any exhilaration. Whether this was a first effect of arsenic poisoning, or just from seeing me, I am not prepared to state.

We had a cocktail. Douglas left two distinct fingerprints on the glass. I held mine by the rim.

We sat down to dinner at 7.30 p.m. Of this I am practically certain because I remember that Douglas said, "Well, it's half-past," and as he said it the ormolu clock chimed the half-hour. A further corroboration is that the Chinese servant entered at that moment and said, "Half-past seven!" I gather therefore that the hour was either seven-thirty or possibly a little before or a little after it.

At any rate—not to make too much of details—we sat down to dinner. I noticed that at dinner Douglas took no soup. I attached no importance to this at the time, so as to keep it for afterwards. But I also took care on my part to take no fish. This of course in the event of arsenic poison would at least, by elimination, give a certain indication of how the poison had been administered. Up to this point the Chinese servant's manner was quite normal, in fact, Chinese.

I am not able to say whether Douglas took coffee after dinner: I slipped up there; I had got talking, I remember, of my views on Allied Strategy and for the time forgot not only to time him but to notice what he ate. This makes an unfortunate gap in the record.

Douglas, I noticed, however, seemed but little inclined to talk after dinner. I was still unfolding to him my views on Allied Strategy in the war but he seemed unable to listen without signs of drowsiness. This obviously might be due to arsenic poisoning.

I left at nine, having noticed that Douglas roused up with a slight start as the ormolu clock struck, and said, "Nine! I thought, I thought it was ten."

I drove home in a taxi; and can easily identify the taxi, even if abandoned in a stone quarry, by a mark I made in the leather. I can identify the taxi-man by a peculiar scar.

That, as I say, was three days ago. I open the newspaper every morning with a nervous hand, looking for the finding of Douglas's body. They don't seem to have found it yet. Of course I don't know that he lost it. But then it is never known that a body is lost until someone finds it.

One thing is certain, however. I am all ready if they do. . . . If any news comes out I can act at once. I have the taxi-man, and the fingerprints and the ormolu clock—that's all you need usually.

### CHAPTER III

#### *What Can Izaak Walton Teach Us?*

EVERYBODY—OR at least everybody who goes fishing, and the rest don't count—knows the name of Izaak Walton. Many of them would also remember that he was called the Father of Angling and that he wrote a book called *The Compleat Angler*. This is acknowledged to be one of the world's books. Only that the trouble is that the world doesn't read its books, it borrows a detective story instead.

So it may not be without interest to outdoor people, anglers, men of the bush and streams and such, to turn over again the pages of the old volume and see what Izaak Walton can teach us. This especially, if we can catch something of the leisurely procedure, the old-time courtesy and, so to speak, the charming tediousness of people with lots of time, now lost in our distracted world.

Izaak Walton, let us pretend to remember, was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1593) but lived so long and so peacefully—old fishermen never die, they merely fade away—that he only passed away at the age of ninety at the end of the Stuart period. People reading *The Compleat Angler* would take him for a country gentleman. But he wasn't. Indeed in the phrase of the times he wasn't a gentleman at all. He came to London from the little town of Stafford and in London he kept an ironmonger's shop in the very heart of the town.

It was so small a place that there was hardly room to turn round in, certainly not with a fishing rod, for it was only six feet by seven feet six inches. But it must have been a grand little place from which to dream of



the woods and meadows around Stafford and to let the noise of the city die on his ear till he could catch the murmur of the babbling streams. . . . Thus you may see to-day, if you have the eye for it, many an imprisoned incomplete angler working at a desk with the sound of a waterfall in his ears, or selling across a sporting-goods counter the tackle that he never has the good fortune to use. Walton says that fishermen are the Lord's own people, and no doubt he's right. "The primitive Christians," he remarks, "were, as most anglers are, quiet men and followers of peace." He undertakes to prove it from the fact that four of the Apostles actually were fishermen, and these four taught all the others to fish. Thus worked Izaak Walton till he was over fifty years old.

But, oddly enough, he made money, and soon was able to move to larger quarters on Fleet Street. Ironmongery was evidently all the thing in the days of the English Civil War. So when the great battles were over and there was peace, iron peace, under Oliver Cromwell, Izaak Walton gave up his London life, and bought himself the thing of which all anglers dream, a little place in the country, his own country, and all his dreams came true.

From then on, for some forty years, Izaak Walton spent a life of leisure, or of leisure broken with leisurely activity. At times he was on his own little place, at times he wandered about the country, a welcome and indefinite guest, an old man who never grew older, who had said good-bye to the world and its troubles and to whom Roundhead and Royalist were all one. Especially he sought, and was welcome in, the homes of the clergy. He had been greatly assisted in his London days by famous Dr. John Donne, Vicar of St. Dunstan's. Both his wives, for he married twice, were of clerical families; he seems to have borne married life easily as a basis (as with some among us now) from which to go fishing. For his last twenty years he wandered and fished alone.

When he died he left his little place to the poor of the parish.

He wrote his *Compleat Angler*, so to speak, while angling. The first edition of it was mainly thought out in his Fleet Street days, the fruit of odd holidays and chance journeys. But later, with copious leisure and larger experience, he kept finding new things to put into the book, new verses, new jests and even new people.

As even casual readers remember, *The Compleat Angler* is built up on talks between various characters. They meet and go fishing together and they talk—or they can't go fishing, so they talk; or they come in from fishing, and they talk. Some of us do it still. And in among the talk they have so many pleasant cups of ale and draughts of the "best barley wine," that it's a pleasure to be with them; plenty to smoke, also, from the long pipes of the period, for tobacco, in spite of King James I, had now come into its own. Indeed, the comfortable entertainment begins in Chapter I, page 1, paragraph 1, of the *Compleat Angler*. An angler, PISCATOR, accosts two travellers on the road with the words:

"You are well overtaken, Gentlemen! A good morning to you both. I have stretched my legs up Tottenham Hill to overtake you, hoping your business may occasion you towards Ware, whither I am going this fine, fresh, May morning."

"Sir," replies one of them, "I, for my part, shall almost answer your hopes; for my purpose is to drink my morning's draught at the Thatched House in Hoddesden. . . ."

So away they wander together, talking of fishing, so that the three miles to Hoddesden seems nothing, and there they are at the Thatched House, and must needs all enter together "for a cup of drink and a little rest."

What fisherman, then or now, could pass a Thatched House?

Thus it was with the freshness of the morning; but

equally so with the pleasant weariness of the evening after a long day.

“Come, hostess, where are you? Is supper ready? Come, first give us drink and be as quick as you can, for we are all very hungry. . . . Come, hostess, more ale . . . and when we have supped, let’s have your song !”

The early people in these wayside talks were a fisherman, PISCATOR, and a traveller, VIATOR. But later on Izaak thought it a good idea to let the second man be a huntsman VENATOR and then he put in a third who was called AUCEPS which we understand to mean a falconer, a man who hunts birds with birds. Time has dropped him clean out. To-day we should have to make him an AIRMAN. That is probably exactly what Izaak Walton would have done, for he kept on putting in new things and new people till death made a final edition.

You ask perhaps, I hope not with impatience, what we can learn from Izaak Walton. Why, don’t you see we’ve learned a lot already ; that fishing is the Apostles’ own calling ; that fishing must be carried on in an atmosphere of goodwill and forbearance ; that the longest story must never seem prosy ; that a cup of ale beneath a tree is better than a civic banquet, and an old familiar song from a familiar singer outclasses grand opera.

And you can also learn, or learn over again, the peculiar and manifold charm of our English language. For what Izaak Walton writes is sufficiently like our own speech to be familiar, and sufficiently unlike to have a quaintness of its own. He has a chapter, for example, which he entitles, *How to fish for, and to dress, the Chavender, or Chub*. A witty English writer of to-day was so impressed by the conversion of the everyday chub, into the romantic chavender that he followed it up with a gallop of analogous synonyms :

*There is a fine stuffed Chavender,  
A chavender, or chub,  
He decks the rural pavender,  
The pavender, or pub,  
Wherein I eat my gravender,  
My gravender, or grub.*

And so on, amazingly. But I must not further trespass on the good nature or the copyright of Mr. St. Leger, whose complete poem may be found in the fascinating little anthology, *The Comic Muse*.

All these things you can learn from Izaak Walton. But if you ask what you can learn of the technique of fishing the answer is that you can't learn anything at all. The apparatus of the modern expert, the mechanisms of reels—all these have left good old Izaak two centuries and a half in the rear. All that he can teach is the *spirit*; yet the performance in the long run rests on that.

To take an example. Nowadays we always connect trout-fishing with the art of casting flies—an exquisite art indeed when at its highest. What more beautiful than a cast far across a wide stream to where the broken water round the end of a sunken log marks where a trout must lie? What more beautiful indeed except the ensuing leap of the foolish trout itself, a victim of its own delusion. It is an art that, personally, I can envy but not share; I can never catch anything that way except willow trees

But at least I have the consolation that Izaak Walton is in my company. He knew very little about casting flies and that was not his ordinary method of catching fish, anyway. He caught them, as I do, and perhaps you, with anything they would eat, taken off anything they would eat it on.

This seems odd in view of the long discussion in the *Compleat Angler* on fly-fishing and how to do it and how to make flies. The discussion, moreover, has its setting in one of these charming sylvan scenes—under a sycamore tree with wine and a snack of food—which are the very inspiration of the book.

“It is now past five of the clock,” says Piscator, meaning *five in the morning*, “we will fish till nine; and then go to breakfast. Go you to yon sycamore tree and hide your bottle of drink under the hollow root of it; for about that time, and in that place, we will make a brave breakfast with a piece of powdered beef and a radish or two that I have in my fish bag. We shall, I warrant you, make a good, honest, wholesome, hungry breakfast.” But as a matter of fact Izaak Walton did not himself write the discussion of the “making and using of flies” which follows. He knew that he ought to have something of the sort in his book so he got a fellow angler to write it in, thereby lifting his friend Mr. Thomas Barker to an immortal seat beside himself. Mr. Barker was by trade a cook and may have aided also in the hints on cooking fish (“dressing the chavender”) that are freely inserted in the *Angler*. Mr. Barker is also said to have been a “humorist”; he may have helped with the jokes.

But all agree that when it comes to fishing with worms, grasshoppers and frogs, Izaak Walton was a past master. There is comfort here for those who suffer, as I do, from the insolent superiority of men who refuse to use “bait.” Izaak used nothing else. Indeed many who knew very little about his book have heard the quotation from it about the use of a frog as bait—“Use him as though you loved him, that is, harm him as little as you may possibly, that he may live the longer.” The implication of a slow death behind the apparently kindly words is one that might make the coldest-blooded frog boil with indignation.

But the point is that Izaak Walton was out to get the

fish. In the same way he and his friends were fond of using little floats, tied to sticks or anchored in the stream. This with us is viewed among good sports as the last resort of ignoble minds. Indeed, the game laws forbid that kind of fishing to all except Indians on a reservation. But to Izaak and his friends it represented the very best of sport and the rarest of opportunity. They had only to choose a grassy sward beneath a spreading sycamore, among whose roots babbled the passing stream, to fix their floats, pour out a cup of ale, light a long pipe and open a discussion on the Gospel of St. John or listen to Mr. Barker tell in his own humorous way how to cook a carp—and there you were. Leave the rest to the frog.

Indeed, Izaak Walton is willing to go a little further with “bait” than the stomachs of more degenerate anglers could tolerate. He specializes on worms, distinguishing earthworms from dug-worms, worms found in excrement and in dead flesh such as the maggot or gentle worm ; to which are added lobworms, brandling worms for which we search in cow-dung, “horse-dung being somewhat too hot and dry for that worm.” Beside which an artificial fly on a bit of cardboard seems singularly clean and attractive.

Such dainty considerations are nothing to Izaak. He is out for fish. Indeed, he'll go further if we let him. “If you desire,” he says, “to keep gentles, that is maggots, to fish with all the year, then get a dead cat and let it be fly-blown ; and when the gentles begin to be alive and to stir, then bury it and them in soft moist earth but as free from frost as you can ; and these you may dig up at any time you intend to use them.”

And there you are. But if you don't care to prepare the bait in this fashion, then Izaak explains to us a method of preparing the water, of any likely pond, so as to make

it attractive. "You are to throw into it," he directs, "either grains, or blood mixed with cow-dung or with bran; or any garbage as chicken guts or the like."

If you are going to be an angler the thing is to be a complete one.

One might think that at least the discussions on cooking would be helpful, especially to us in war and post-war days when we want to make the most of all kinds of food, and turn even coarse fish into something edible. The carp itself, the very fish which the *Compleat Angler* helps us to turn into a dainty dish, is very commonly thrown away with us in Canada as worthless, or else—if I may say it without offence—exported to the United States. Izaak Walton, I say, shows how to turn it into a dainty dish, and no doubt succeeded in doing it. But his process is quite beyond us. Here is the recipe.

"Put the Carp in a kettle; take sweet marjoram, thyme and parsley, each a handful; a sprig of rosemary and another of savoury; put them into two or three small bundles, and put them to your Carp with four or five whole onions, twenty pickled oysters and three anchovies——"

So far that's only about three dollars' worth of stuff, and you could gather it up in about a week but wait—

"... pour on your Carp enough claret as will cover him" (lucky carp) "and season your Carp well with salt, cloves and mace, and the rinds of oranges and lemons——"

—we're up now to about ten dollars—

"—That done, cover your pot and set it on a quick fire till it be sufficiently boiled. Then take out the Carp; and lay it, with the broth into the dish—and pour upon it a quarter of a pound of the best fresh butter, melted and beaten with half a dozen spoonfuls of the broth,

the yokes of two or three eggs and some of the herbs shred ; garnish your dish with lemons and so serve it up. And much good do you ! ”

I think so too.

Thus lived and wandered Izaak Walton from middle age to old age and then on to immortality. Especially was he welcome, we are told, “in the families of the eminent clergy of England of whom he was much beloved.” Their kindness was returned. It was Izaak Walton’s secondary interest, in the pauses of his leisure, to write biographies, or perhaps, eulogies of his departed friends and benefactors, lay or cleric. Here belong Sir Henry Wotton, Dr. John Donne, Bishop Sanderson and others. Their names, once known, now half-forgotten, still float down the stream of time with the *Compleat Angler*.



## CHAPTER IV

### *Andrew Macphail*

I AM not attempting to write here a biography of Andrew Macphail. That must be left for other and worthier hands, inscribing a larger page. I am not qualified for the task. I never knew him during the earlier and more strenuous days in which his career was made ; I never knew him in his home on " the Island," the environment most congenial to his temper ; and I never had the honour of that war service which illustrated his middle age and earned him his fitting knighthood. It will remain for someone intimate with these phases of his career to write for us presently a full and worthy biography of Sir Andrew Macphail, undoubtedly one of the most outstanding and distinctive personalities that our country has known.

But till such a task is undertaken it is fitting that those of us who enjoyed his long friendship and companionship should record our tributes to his memory.

I first knew Andrew Macphail nearly forty years ago when I came to McGill, as nothing and nobody in particular, in the unstable equilibrium of a " sessional lecturer." On the strength of a few random excursions into the kingdom of letters I was honourably admitted to membership in the old Pen and Pencil Club, and there I first knew Andrew. He was my senior by some five years, and already an established and recognized man, the first arduous period of his career gone by, his life enlarged and tempered by marriage and fatherhood, and shadowed already by that premature bereavement that lay large across it.

From the first Andrew Macphail seemed to me, as he still does, one of the most distinctive personalities I have ever known. In his outward semblance he wore, then

as always, an air of gloom and deliberation, carried not as a pose, but as the native expression of a mind always heavy with thought that did not of necessity break to the surface in voluble expression. It was as a shadowed pond with shifting shades but no ripples. What Andrew really thought of life in general I didn't know, and never knew, and I doubt if he did. He carried with him from his hereditary background and his upbringing, a stern, set frame of beliefs and traditions from which he was unwilling to depart : he always hated idle scoffing, cheap rationalism, one might almost say, reason and logic itself, and he always loved the sterner ideas of conduct that went with the illumination of older beliefs. If there had been no Westminster Catechism, Andrew would have invented it for himself.

The old Pen and Pencil Club of forty years ago, in which I first knew Andrew, used to meet every other Saturday night in Edouard Dyonnet's studio, under the Fraser Institute on Dorchester Street. It was made up as a sort of half and half of painters—who certainly could paint, as later recognition has shown—and of writers who were at least challenged to prove themselves by reading something they had written not less than once in six weeks. On the roll of the artists were such well-known names as those of Robert Harris, William Brymner, Maurice Cullen—to name only those now gone. The writers included dear old "Uncle" George Murray, whose memory is still carried as a garland by generations of Montreal High School boys ; Paul Lafleur, chivalrous as knighthood and touchy as a sensitive plant ; Jack McCrae of "Flanders Fields," admitted just when I was, whose works being poetry, had the signal merit of brevity.

It was the routine of the Club that the artists should first show to us their latest work. We, of the "pen" class, like George the Third with the British Constitution, admired where we couldn't understand, and took a more than equal vengeance by reading aloud our current writings. Our poets, Jack McCrae and John Logan

(a tear to his rugged memory), made but a small demand. A very little poetry goes a long way. But Andrew and I were the chief sinners. I can still call up a vision of the kindly club, drawn up in a horseshoe of armchairs, the room darkened, and apparently getting darker all the time, listening to the measured tones of an essay-writer reading his essay, with the full consciousness that even when he had finished another essay-writer would pick up the torch. Somnolence gained them; they tied themselves in knots in their chairs; or broke from the ranks to dive behind the curtains where the whisky and soda was.

This fellowship in evil brought Andrew and me together. It was characteristic of him that the more the listeners suffered the better he liked it. His attitude was that no one should show him pictures without his striking back. He was fond of saying—he loved an epigram—that a really good essay always put people to sleep. Those who remember Andrew Macphail will bear me out as to how characteristic such a saying was. You couldn't tell whether Andrew really meant it, or just said it. I don't think he knew. He just coined these things out of his lower consciousness and palmed them off on his upper. Again and again I have heard Andrew get off such judgments to plain business men, to the man in the next seat at a dinner, or a casual visitor at the club—to the great perplexity of the listener.

Witness this example. Speaking of the latest sermon at his church, Andrew said (to a casual friend we were with): "Edgar Hill gave us a great sermon on the poor this morning." "Is that so?" said the listener, making conversation, "what did he say about them?" Andrew answered, "He gave them hell!"—then uttered a deep sigh and no further information. I knew, but of course the man didn't, that underneath in Andrew's mind were deep thoughts about the merits and defects of the poor, which he didn't propose to bring to the surface. He let it go at that. He loved mystification.

Most people, most writers, are terribly touchy if their meaning is mistaken. Not so Andrew. Much of his humour was of that truly Scottish kind which is best when least shared.

This love of epigram, of shaded meaning, trained Andrew in the course of years to an exquisite exactness of words. He never wrote careless English. The last essay that I know of from his pen, his appreciation of the most recent *Life of General Lee*,<sup>1</sup> is fascinating, not as reflecting General Lee or his biographer, but as reflecting Andrew Macphail. You feel as you read it that it is the writer, not the topic, that fascinates. This literary interest he often brought to an intense focus in single sentences, terse and final. Consider the opening of his essay on General Wilson. "The Irish have always had a sure instinct in murder." Who wouldn't go on, after reading that? The plain man feels like saying—"An instinct in murder, eh? Have they really?—you don't say so!—tell me more about that." Such sudden beams of illumination are among the best part of Andrew's literary work. There is neither space nor occasion here to catalogue the long and interesting list of all he wrote. Much of it was spent on topics of mere ephemeral interest, as the rise and fall of Conservatives and Liberals, or at best of an interest that time must soon dim, but all of it was illuminated with this peculiar quality of salient phrase and pointed epigram.

It is naturally in connection with the bygone *University Magazine* of 1907 onwards, that one chiefly recalls Macphail's literary career. Full justice has still to be done to the great service which he here performed for Canadian letters. The magazine was a transformed resurrection of an older college publication, that had died from sheer bulk, the kind of literary dropsy that attacks the writing of professors. It was proposed—no doubt Principal Peterson fostered the idea—to found a magazine as learned as its predecessor but more sus-

<sup>1</sup> *Queen's Quarterly*, Spring, 1938 (Ed.).

ceptible to common sense in the length of the topics and the "availability" of its articles. The magazine was to be conducted by some sort of board—I think perhaps I was on it—I don't remember. But it didn't matter, for the "board" was virtually swept aside by Andrew, as you brush away the chess pieces of a finished game. Historians recall to us the first meeting of General Bonaparte in 1799 with the Abbé Siéyès and the others who were to be the joint government of France under the new "consulate." As they came out the Abbé remarked to a colleague, "Nous avons un maître"—and with that the "joint-stuff" ended. So it was with Andrew. After a meeting or two, the magazine became and remained Andrew Macphail. Like all competent men who can do a job and who know it, he had no use for co-operation. We, his colleagues, were invited occasionally to have Scotch whisky in Andrew's queer little library and then some more Scotch whisky with cold beef in his beautiful big dining-room. That was all the co-operation he wanted : and in this we met him (I am sure I did) more than half-way.

On this frail support, with a diligence such as only a man bred to hard work can maintain, with a taste found only in a scholar but mated to the discrimination of a journalist—thus, and with one hand ever in his generous pocket, Andrew Macphail carried the *University Magazine* to a place second to nothing of its type. Only those of us who knew him well could tell what unremitting work this labour of love entailed.

But it was not only by his literary work that Andrew Macphail, in the fuller years of his career, obtained the high consideration which fell to his lot. He had his part and place, as much as he could ask, in everything that was social, public, or ceremonial. Andrew seemed so different from other men that his presence seemed to lift an occasion out of the commonplace. Introduced to strangers, he made an instant impression. Those of us who had to entertain, in public or in private, a visiting

celebrity at once sent for Andrew : just as one sends for the doctor ; and no celebrity could "celebrity" him. He treated them as a man used to horses treats a new one. It always seemed amazing to me that he could handle them so easily. Rudyard Kipling came to Montreal. Andrew had him tamed in half an hour, took him over to his house and then put him upstairs to write a speech. "Has Kipling come?" asked a next-entering visitor, in the awestruck tones we used for celebrities in the days before the Great War gave us our own. "He's upstairs," Andrew said. "I told him he ought to *write* his speech for McGill ; he's writing it." From this beginning, incidentally, dated the long friendship, the mutual service and the mutual esteem of these two men.

I am not qualified, as I have said, to talk of Andrew's boyhood in the country, his early years of school and farm life, in days when rural Canada offered little more than a pioneer life with few alleviations. The Canadian countryside in those days was dark and solitary, and life there had little converse and less amenity. Yet it bred, unconsciously, a love of the open air, of early hours, of the remembered stillness of the woods and the unceasing breaking of the sea. This, to people lucky enough to get out of it, as both Andrew and I had been, was coloured with the mellow hues of retrospect. Adversity that has long since gone by, leaves a sweet memory for luxury to linger on. And for people like Andrew and myself our country upbringing became a source of pride and a bond of sympathy and, as the years drew on, something of an affectation. It is hard in such cases to know where reality ends and attitude, or at least self-deception, begins. Andrew at any rate could push reality hard, much harder than I ever could. He could speak of buttermilk (over a glass of whisky and soda) with wistful relish, and talk of long drinks of maple sap out of its wooden trough—a beverage little better in reality than a solution of sawdust and dead flies. It became with

Andrew a sort of whimsical make-believe that everything in the country was right, and everything in the city wrong. The only real boots were made by country cobblers: homespun clothes fitted better than the tailored product of the city: and so forth, till the thing verged on burlesque and Andrew himself would start to laugh at it. In all this, as in so much else, I am certain that he never quite knew what he believed and what he didn't; but underneath it was a deep-seated feeling that the real virtue of a nation is bred in the country, that the city is an unnatural product. From this point of view Andrew, though frequenting the rich in his daily walk of life, was never quite satisfied of their right to be. Towards plutocrats, bankers, manufacturers and such, he felt a little bit as a rough country dog feels towards a city cat. He didn't quite accept them. Andrew would have made a fine radical if he hadn't hated radicalism.

Andrew Macphail's death came to those of us who were his friends with a shock as of something that could not be. It had not seemed that he could die. Always he had kept his sorrows and his ailments to himself. In the thirty-seven years I knew him I never heard him once refer to what I know had been the greatest sorrow of his life. His damaged sight he faced with equanimity and dismissed with scorn. He never complained because he hated complaint. Those of us of weaker temper carried our troubles to Andrew but never were asked to share his. Few people knew of his removal from his Island to Montreal. To most of us the news of his death came, sudden and unbelievable, for the moment holding even sorrow numb. Even now it is hard to think that he is gone. As I write this page I recall how generous was his praise of things I wrote, how quick he was to send his scribbled lines of congratulation over this or that, and how much I valued them. And now this, these sentences of appreciation and affection that I would wish him most to see—this he cannot read.

There is a well-worn rubric of the Church that runs,

“while we have time . . .” Andrew’s death makes me think of it—the pity that we cannot, while we have time, value one another better. We do not see till it is too late. The light has gone.



## CHAPTER V

### *Gilbert's "Bab" Ballads*

IT IS a great change from the secluded woodland of *Wonderland* to the open scenes, the noise and the combat of the "Bab" Ballads. Here are the breezes of the sea, the thunder of guns, the clash of swords and the thud of the executioner's axe. In Alice's *Wonderland*, the characters just fade away and disappear. In the "Bab" Ballads, they are thrown into the sea, knocked on the head, or cut clean in two with scimitars of exquisite sharpness and their remains fed to sharks or boiled up by enthusiastic cannibals. In the most "popular" of the ballads, meaning the one that the plain people have liked best, *The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell,"* one character eats all the others, one by one. "Mr. Gilbert," says a penetrating critic of to-day, "shows a sort of cruelty. . . . In fact, he cared little about the feelings of others." Very little, one would think, if he boiled them alive and chopped them up, as one famous ballad puts it, "particularly small." The same critic, however, adds that Gilbert was a "full-blooded, impatient Englishman," which explains the whole thing.

But there are other differences between *Wonderland* and the *Balladland*: the people in *Wonderland* have no names. They are all generalizations—the Mad Hatter, the Red Queen, or fictions like Humpty Dumpty and Tweedledee. But in the *Ballads* they are all real people, with names and rank. Here are Captain Reece, R.N., and Captain Parklebury Todd; here is the Reverend Simon Magus—people you might meet in London any day. The scholarly world is represented by Gregory Parable, LL.D., and here is little Annie Proferie who kept a small post office in the neighbourhood of Bow—just what she would naturally do. Anyone guesses at once, as Gilbert

admitted in advance, that Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus McClan was a Scotchman. The whole setting is intended to show that we are dealing with real life, simply presented. Even the outsiders, not English, are equally convincing. Alum Bey is a proper Turk. The name of King Borria Bungalee Boo certainly indicates him as a "man-eating African swell." Yet in spite of all these features of normality, these home touches, so to speak, the world of Gilbert's "*Bab*" *Ballads* is just as topsy-turvy as the world of Alice's *Wonderland*.

Let us see how it originated.

The name of W. S. Gilbert is known to most people to-day only as the larger half of Gilbert and Sullivan, a combination now as familiar as Damon and Pythias or Lea and Perrins. But, in reality, Gilbert had already achieved quite a celebrity in London before the resounding and prolonged triumph of the Savoy Operas.

W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911) was born a gentleman—a matter that must have been a permanent satisfaction to him. His father was a surgeon in the Royal Navy and later a novelist, a fiery, peppery old gentleman who went around trying to give editors a thrashing and offering to throw people out of the window—in short, right out of the "*Bab*" *Ballads* alongside of Captain Parklebury Todd who "couldn't walk into a room without ejaculating, 'Boom!'" Gilbert went to the kind of private school called, in England, a public school, and was to have been sent up, or down, whichever it is, to Oxford. But the outbreak of the Crimean War led him to take a quicker training at King's College, London, in order to get a commission in the army. Just as he finished it, the war ended. So Gilbert got neither Oxford nor war and turned off sideways to the bar. At the bar he acquired that wealth of legal phrases which adorned all his works and broke into song again and again in the operas—"When I went to the bar-as-a-very-young-man, said I to myself, said I."

Gilbert had, in all, twenty clients in five years. One,

a Frenchman, acquitted, threw his arms around Gilbert's neck in court and kissed him. Another, a woman pick-pocket, convicted, threw her book at him in disgust. Another, an Irishman, prosecuted by him, kept shouting, "Sit down, ye devil, sit down!"

So Gilbert gave up the law and turned to art and humour and was an immediate success. His mock-heroic ballads and the drawings he made for them became the leading feature of *Fun*, the new comic journal that was running *Punch* hard in the 'sixties. They were signed *Bab*, which had been a childish nickname for Gilbert himself, and so when published as a book, they appeared as the "*Bab*" *Ballads*—first in 1869, and then enlarged, and reprinted, and recollected and so around the world.

Hence W. S. Gilbert was already quite a celebrity in London long before the Gilbert and Sullivan operas turned celebrity to glory. But in a way it was not altogether an enviable celebrity. Gilbert from all accounts was a singularly disagreeable man, self-important and domineering, rating everybody else as poor trash. By good rights, great humorists ought to be gentle, agreeable people to meet, with a breadth of view and a kindly tolerance of trifles—such as they show in print. Mostly they are not. Charles Dickens, in spite of a boundless energy and exuberance of fun, was an intolerable egotist who had to be "it" all the time, who supplied sob-words and slow music for the fathers of broken homes and smashed his own with an axe. Mark Twain, though good, easy company when young, became, so some people tell us, intolerably boring in old age. Lewis Carroll was a sissy, and Gilbert was a bully, over-conscious of his own talent.

Thus Gilbert used his, this singular talent, to point the barbs of his retorts and jokes. Very funny to read, they are, these retorts and repartee. But some of them must have cut people to the heart.

"What did you think of my Hamlet?" asked an

actor friend in the first flush of his pride in his new part. . . . "Excellent," said Gilbert, "funny all through, but never vulgar."

A barber cutting Gilbert's hair once bent over his ear to murmur, "When are we to expect anything further, Mr. Gilbert, from your fluent pen?"

"What do you mean, sir, by fluent pen?" snapped Gilbert. "There is no such thing as a fluent pen. A pen is an insensible object. And, at any rate, I don't presume to enquire into your private affairs; you will please observe the same reticence in regard to mine."

Anyone who could thus snub a barber out of his one privilege, would strike a child . . . though, as a matter of fact, Gilbert wouldn't. He was friendly and companionable with children, just as he was an excellent host and a generous supporter of charitable things. He kept his quarrels for his own world, and for the law courts, where he lived in litigation. . . . "The judge," he said, in writing of one of his lost actions, "summed up like a drunken monkey. He's in the last stage of senile decay." After Sir Edward Carson won a case against him, Gilbert made a point of cutting him dead.

As a result, Gilbert's life was filled with bitter quarrels. There were some people he wouldn't speak to for ten years; others were on the twenty-year list. As his old age drew on, a strange repentance seized him, especially as the former friends, put on the silent list, began to pass into a silence longer still. As each died, Gilbert was all contrition, with flowers sent to hospitals, looking for old ties to rebind, the egotism all paled out of him. He could have made a wonderful *Ballad* out of it—*The Contrite Playwright*.

But all that was far away at the time of which we speak.

But to understand the "*Bab*" *Ballads* we need not only to understand Gilbert himself but to see in its proper perspective the period in which he wrote.

This was the period of the Great Peace, after 1815, that was going to last for ever ; everybody knew it, and the Crystal Palace proved it. There might be wars as a matter of distant adventure, like the Crimean War ; or wars in suitable out-of-the-way places like Ashanti ; and among crazy European revolutionists. But, for England, war had been removed for ever by Trafalgar and Waterloo. There sat the right little, tight little island, snug behind the waves, and you couldn't get at it. "The English," wrote a very witty person of the time in referring to the new misty German philosophy, "are supreme on the sea, the French on the land, and the Germans hold the supremacy of the air." How strange it sounds now.

In this safeness and snugness, with outside protection and internal order and personal liberty guaranteed, all values shifted. The things that seemed so vital before—religion that people burned for, liberty that people hanged for, defence that people died for—began to be taken for granted. They were all embodied in the policeman, the magistrate, the M.P. and the justices of the peace. With the sole proviso of keeping the poor in the proper place, if need be by shooting them, the government had nothing to do. Hence the whole apparatus of government, British constitution and all, began to seem amazingly funny, especially because of all its forms and its feathers and its fuss, its Beef-eaters and Yeomen of the Guard.

In fact, to clever men like young Dickens and young Gilbert, it was really a huge joke, just a scream. Take the Royal Family, with its multiplying household and its German regularity and parsimony.

The Queen she kept high festival in Windsor's lofty hall,  
And round her sat her gartered knights and ermined nobles all,  
There drank the valiant Wellington, there fed the Wary Peel,  
While at the bottom of the board Prince Albert carved the veal.

Carved the veal ! Pretty funny, eh ? And, of course,

the statesmen and the cabinet, chasing one another in and out of office, were just as funny—what was it Dickens called them? Coodle, and Doodle and Foodle! . . . and the Members of Parliament always making speeches and laying their hands on their heart! . . . and the army, now there *is* something to laugh at! all drooping plumes and dangling swords! What did they think they were out to kill, anyway? And the House of Lords, all in robes doing nothing, and the clergy all in gaiters doing less. Let's have a song about the House of Lords which, throughout the War, did nothing in particular and did it rather well! And let's make up comic verses about the Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo.

All these things seemed out of date! We can see it all better now. A generation that has seen the world swept back into barbarism by two world wars can see reality again. Why, these mean the things—this funny Parliament, this comic magistrate, even Coodle and Doodle—the things that people die for.

But not being able to see it, the world seemed all topsy-turvy.

We left out the navy above. Was it comic or real? They weren't quite sure. The sea lies close to the British heart. Even Gilbert was an amateur Yo-ho yachtsman of the coast. Hence the England of this epoch never knew whether to admire the navy, or to laugh at it like the army. And the government never knew whether to improve its lot and feed and warm it decently or whether to "give it every day at least six dozen lashes," as Gilbert gave to Joe Golightly.

So Gilbert took the navy both ways. Here belongs the famous ballad of *Captain Reece*, Commander of *The Mantelpiece* that turned later on into the opera *Pinafore*. Captain Reece represents that fatal pelting of the seamen under the new philanthropy in which the real old blue-water school saw the approaching downfall of England, the scuttling of the ship.

## CAPTAIN REECE

Of all the ships upon the blue,  
 No ship contained a better crew  
 Than that of worthy Captain Reece,  
 Commanding of *The Mantelpiece*.

He was adored by all his men,  
 For worthy Captain Reece, R.N.,  
 Did all that lay within him to  
 Promote the comfort of his crew.

If ever they were dull or sad,  
 Their captain danced to them like mad,  
 Or told, to make the time pass by,  
 Droll legends of his infancy.

A feather bed had every man,  
 Warm slippers and hot-water can,  
 Brown windsor from the captain's store,  
 A valet, too, to every four.

Did they with thirst in summer burn?  
 Lo, seltzogenes at every turn,  
 And on all very sultry days  
 Cream ices handed round on trays.

Kind-hearted Captain Reece, R.N.,  
 Was quite devoted to his men;  
 In point of fact, good Captain Reece,  
 Beatified *The Mantelpiece*.

This idyllic situation culminated in the happy idea of marrying all the crew to Captain Reece's sisters, cousins and aunts. Even the captain was not forgotten.

The boatswain of *The Mantelpiece*,  
 He blushed and spoke to Captain Reece:  
 "I beg your honour's leave," he said,  
 "If you would wish to go and wed,  
 "I have a widowed mother who  
 Would be the very thing for you—  
 She long has loved you from afar,  
 She washes for you, Captain R."

And the curtain falls on a happy and united family crew.  
 Such a picture must have another side. The navy was

not all human kindness and new philanthropy. There was still the same old brutality to denounce where some ferocious martinet got his evil way, flogging his crew into submission. Tennyson denounced this in his own melodramatic way ; Gilbert showed how topsy-turvy it was ; in fact, turned it into fun. Which helped more to abolish it ?

Tennyson begins :

He that only rules by terror  
Doth a grievous wrong,  
Deep as hell I count his error.  
Let him hear my song.

and goes on to tell of a brutal ship's captain whose men took vengeance on him in a naval engagement by curling up and dying on the deck without fighting. It sounds a little bit like the Chinese system of getting even with an enemy by committing suicide on his doorstep.

Now let us see how Gilbert does it. The Admiralty have heard about *The Mantelpiece* and are horrified at Reece's leniency. A new commander, Sir Berkely, a martinet, is sent to take over :

Sir Berkely was a martinet—  
A stern, unyielding soul—  
Who ruled his ship by dint of whip  
And horrible black-hole.

When first Sir Berkely came aboard  
He read a speech to all,  
And told them how he'd made a vow  
To act on duty's call.

Then William Lee, he up and said  
(The Captain's coxswain he) :  
" We've heard the speech your honour's made,  
And werry pleased we be.

" We don't pretend, my lad, as how  
We're glad to lose our Reece ;  
Urbane, polite, he suited quite  
The saucy *Mantelpiece*.



“But if your honour gives your mind  
To study all our ways,  
With dance and song we’ll jog along  
As in those happy days.

“I like your honour’s looks, and feel  
You’re worthy of your sword.  
Your hand, my lad—I’m doosid glad  
To welcome you aboard!”

Sir Berkely looked amazed, as though  
He didn’t understand.  
“Don’t shake your head,” good William said,  
“It is an honest hand.

“It’s grasped a better hand than yourn—  
Come, gov’nor, I insist!”  
The Captain stared—the coxswain glared—  
The hand became a fist!

“Down, upstart!” said the hardy salt;  
But Berkely dodged his aim,  
And made him go in chains below:  
The seamen murmured “Shame!”

A sailor who was overcome  
From having freely dined,  
And chanced to reel when at the wheel,  
He instantly confined!

And tars who, when an action raged,  
Appeared alarmed or scared,  
And those below who wished to go,  
He very seldom spared.

E’en he who smote his officer  
For punishment was booked,  
And mutinies upon the seas  
He rarely overlooked.

In short, the happy *Mantelpiece*  
Where all had gone so well,  
Beneath that fool Sir Berkely’s rule  
Became a floating hell.

This intolerable situation very naturally led the crew  
to shoot Sir Berkely. The Admiralty on hearing the

news of his death realized the wrong that had been done and restored the noble Reece to his command.

But Gilbert's topsy-turvy navy would, of course, not be complete without a picture of the life and sorrows of the common seaman. This is given to us in the pathetic story of Joe Golightly, who had fallen hopelessly in love at a distance, an immeasurable social distance, with the daughter of the First Lord of the Admiralty. Having no other way to voice his love, Joe sang it on board his ship to the mournful thrumming of a guitar :

*The moon is on the sea,  
Willow !  
The wind blows towards the lee,  
Willow !  
But though I sigh and sob and cry,  
No Lady Jane for me,  
Willow !  
She says, "'Twere folly quite,  
Willow !  
For me to wed a wight,  
Willow !  
Whose lot is cast before the mast" ;  
And possibly she's right,  
Willow !*

His skipper (Captain Joyce)  
He gave him many a rating,  
And almost lost his voice  
From thus expostulating :

"Lay out, you lubber, do !  
What's come to that young man, Joe ?  
Belay !—'vast heaving ! you !  
Do kindly stop that banjo !

"I wish, I do—oh, Lor' !—  
You'd shipped aboard a trader:  
Are you a sailor, or  
A negro serenader ?"

But still the stricken cad,  
Aloft or on his pillow,  
Howled forth in accents sad  
His aggravating "Willow !"

Stern love of duty had  
 Been Joyce's chiefest beauty :  
 Says he, " I love that lad,  
 But duty, damme ! duty !

" Twelve years' black-hole, I say,  
 Where daylight never flashes :  
 And always twice a day  
 Five hundred thousand lashes ! "

But Joseph had a mate,  
 A sailor stout and lusty,  
 A man of low estate,  
 But singularly trusty.

Says he, " Cheer hup, young Joe,  
 I'll tell you what I'm arter,  
 To that Fust Lord I'll go  
 And ax him for his darter.

" To that Fust Lord I'll go  
 And say you love her dearly."'  
 And Joe said (weeping low),  
 " I wish you would, sincerely ! "

That sailor to that Lord  
 Went, soon as he had landed,  
 And of his own accord  
 An interview demanded.

Says he, with seaman's roll,  
 " My Captain (wot's a Tartar)  
 Guv Joe twelve years' black-hole,  
 For loving your darter.

" He loves Miss Lady Jane  
 (I own she is his betters),  
 But if you'll jine them twain,  
 They'll free him from his fetters.

" And if so be as how  
 You'll let her come aboard ship,  
 I'll take her with me now."—  
 " Get out ! " remarked his Lordship.

That honest tar repaired  
 To Joe, upon the billow,  
 And told him how he'd fared :  
 Joe only whispered, " Willow ! "

And for that dreadful crime  
 (Young sailors, learn to shun it)  
 He's working out his time :  
 In ten years he'll have done it.

The most celebrated of all the nautical ballads is the one mentioned above, *The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell."* It is a ballad of shipwrecked sailors, as sung by the solitary survivor. They had been driven to cannibalism and had eaten one another, one by one, till only this man is left, but he, as he himself says, embodies all the others. The topic is certainly gruesome, yet it was thought roaring fun for half a century. It became a standing literary reproach against Mark Lemon, the editor of *Punch*, that when Gilbert wrote *The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell,"* he wouldn't accept it. The joke was supposed to be that the editor of *Punch*, of all papers, didn't know humour when he saw it. Looking back on it, we don't feel so sure. Gruesome things, if they are to be humorous, must never show actual detail. We remember Lear's comic pictures in which people are cut neatly into halves, but of course with no trace of blood, and no sign of emotion except surprise. We recall out of *Alice in Wonderland* how in the Jabberwocky poem :

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
 The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
 He left it dead, and with its head  
 He went galumphing back.

But Gilbert in the *Nancy Bell* not only puts in details that won't bear actual visualization, but seems, so to speak, to "feature" them; this is especially true of the climax of the poem; only two survivors are left—the cook, naturally kept as long as possible by acclamation, and one seaman. The cook prepares the boiling pot.

. . . He boils the water, and takes the salt  
 And the pepper in portions true  
 (Which he never forgot), and some chopped shalot,  
 And some sage and parsley too.

That's all right. We can stand for them because it isn't real. It's as harmless as Mark Twain's *Cannibalism in the Cars*. But notice what follows. The surviving sailor steals a march on the cook and tips him into the pot.

And he stirred it round and round and round,  
 And he sniffed at the foaming froth ;  
 When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals  
 In the scum of the boiling broth.

And I ate that cook in a week or less,  
 And—as I eating be  
 The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,  
 For a vessel in sight I see.

The survivor is saved, but at the price of an internal burden that weighs him down for ever.

The poem, I say, seemed great fun to a whole generation and more. I remember hearing it read aloud at a country schoolchildren's entertainment in darkest Ontario in 1878. It called forth rounds of laughter. The more they ate one another the better we liked it. Not so now. I think the Great War killed the *Nancy Bell*—the new actuality of the horrors and sufferings of the sea, of the agonies of wounded men thirsting or starving in open boats—no, the topic is off.

Very different is Mark Twain's *Cannibalism in the Cars*, as accomplished by a group of western congressmen, snowed in by a mountain blizzard—but done with the scrupulous regard for legislature procedure that robs it of all offence.

After the navy came the Church. Mr. Gilbert's cruel tendency to make fun of bishops and curates had broken out long before Lewis Carroll complained of the *Pale Young Curate* in the *Sorcerer*. The "*Bab*" *Ballads* are filled with clerical characters. Nevertheless, there were clear limitations as to how far fun could go in this direc-

tion. In Gilbert's England, even when made topsyturvy, you must not ridicule the doctrines of the Church ; funny verses about the Resurrection or the Holy Communion wouldn't go. But you might laugh all you liked at queer clerical characters and satirize odd clerical usages.

And here a very peculiar distinction had grown up in the current humour of that day. It was not "the thing" to make fun of the Church of England or to ridicule its doctrines. But it was all right to ridicule the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. It was all right to laugh at relics and indulgences and pardons because these things were really funny, being superstitions. It was all wrong to laugh at the Holy Communion of the Church of England because this was a sacred mystery. Indeed, at a certain point, such ridicule became blasphemy and the law would deal with it. Even for people who didn't believe much, it was "bad form" to make fun of the Church. But you could have all the jokes you liked about fat friars and drunken abbots and juggling priests and hocus-pocus. Take this for example. It comes in the description of a dinner given in a monastery by the Abbot to the Devil, who had wickedly assumed the deceptive form of a pretty lady visitor :

She pledged him once and she pledged him twice  
And she drank as lady ought not to drink ;  
And he pressed her hand 'neath the table thrice  
And he winked as Abbot ought not to wink.

And Peter the Prior and Francis the Friar  
Sat each with a napkin under his chin ;  
But Roger the monk got excessively drunk  
So they put him to bed and they tucked him in.

Roaringly funny, isn't it ? I am sure that Lewis Carroll, who found it very wicked of Mr. Gilbert to make fun of bishops and curates of the real Church, would have doubled up with laughter over Roger the monk getting excessively drunk. But how would it be if the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury gave the dinner and the Bishop of Ripon was as full as a pippin and the Bishop of Bath was more than half? No, that wouldn't be amusing at all because it would be making fun of men whose sacred calling removes them from all humour. Such was the peculiar way in which the Anglican pot laughed at the Catholic kettle. Indeed, the author of the above verses was himself a clergyman, the Reverend Richard Harris Barham (1788-1845), a man much respected for his piety, his kindly life and his antiquarian knowledge. But when he picked up the pen as Thomas Ingoldsby and wrote the *Ingoldsby Legends*, a book of mingled humorous verse and droll legend, that was very different. He, it was, who wrote the still surviving *Jackdaw of Rheims*, the story of the unhappy bird which stole the cardinal's ring and so encountered the full explosive blast of a curse of the Church of Rome, which knocked all its feathers sideways.

This queer attitude towards "Romanism" was, like the other things, a survival. The days had gone when people died in the flames at Smithfield for Protestantism; or when Roman Catholic priests were hunted down as criminals, and witches burned with universal approval. But the smouldering ashes were there still, deep down, still are. Hence, even with active persecution gone and practical rights granted by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, it was quite in order to make jokes on Roman Catholic idolatry. It was like kicking a dead dog that might not be quite dead.

With which we can open our "*Bab*" *Ballads* again and see where we are in regard to the Church of England itself. Here is the Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo, a very merry character, hailing evidently from what were, in Gilbert's day, the Cannibal Isles, but, in ours, sunk far below that. The Bishop amuses his curé of dark souls with conjuring tricks. That was all right and very funny, being only in the Colonies. The Bishop had left his flock and made a visit to London. On his return he was horrified to find

that during his absence rough sailors had landed on Rum-ti-Foo and taught the natives all sorts of dreadful profanity such as "bother!" and "blow!" They had reverted to their native Pacific Island dress, or lack of dress :

Except a shell—a bangle rare—  
A feather here—a feather there—

The Bishop, of course, is greatly concerned and devotes himself with true missionary zeal and self-sacrifice to the redemption of his flock.

The Bishop's eyes with water fill,  
Quite overjoyed to find them still  
Obedient to his sovereign will,  
And said, "Good Rum-ti-Foo!  
Half-way I'll meet you, I declare:  
I'll dress myself in cowries rare,  
And fasten feathers in my hair,  
And dance the 'Cutch-chi-boo!'"

And to conciliate his see  
He married Piccadillilee,  
The youngest of his twenty-three,  
Tall—neither fat nor thin.  
(And though the dress he made her don  
Looks awkwardly a girl upon,  
It was a great improvement on  
The one he found her in.)

The Bishop in his gay canoe  
(His wife, of course, went with him too)  
To some adjacent island flew,  
To spend his honeymoon.  
Some day in sunny Rum-ti-Foo  
A little Peter'll be on view;  
And that (if people tell me true)  
Is like to happen soon.

So much for the labours of the Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo. One doubts if it was calculated to advance the cause of missionary enterprise. One may compare it with Dickens' Mrs. Jellyby (in *Bleak House*) and her labours for the natives of Borrioboola-Gha. One may compare



it, too, with the grim picture of Somerset Maugham's *Rain* that has gone around the world as story, play, and picture. I rather think I prefer the Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo to anything we have now.

Equally merry on the surface but deeply satirical below is another church picture, *The Reverend Simon Magus*. Here the satire is directed only against the usages, not against the doctrines, of the Established Church. It begins :

A rich advowson, highly prized,  
For private sale was advertised ;  
And many a parson made a bid ;  
The Reverend Simon Magus did.

We must pause a moment to explain what an advowson is, or rather was, in Gilbert's time, for the right it carries has been greatly modified by later statutes. It meant the right of "Presentation to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice"; that is, the right, in plainer language, to name (practically to appoint) a clergyman to a particular position fallen vacant. This was a form of property. It originated centuries ago out of various gifts given to the Church which carried a *quid pro quo* or, shall we say, a string on them. The right could be bought or sold, even at auction, and in the case of a rich benefice it carried a high price. It is only fair to admit that the right could not be exercised by a lunatic or a Roman Catholic; still less by a Roman Catholic lunatic. Here the universities of Oxford and Cambridge stepped in and took the place of the lunatic. It is fair, also, to admit that the bishop of the diocese might object to the person presented as not fit to be a clerk in holy orders. In which case the owner of the advowson could come back at him with a writ of *quare impedit* (why is he stopping me?) and the proposed clerk could join in with a *duplex querela*—that means a side kick—and the whole matter drift slowly sideways towards the Court of Chancery. We don't have fun like that in newer countries.

So now one can understand Gilbert's delight in Simon Magus' dickering with an agent for the advowson . . .

A rich advowson, highly prized,  
For private sale was advertised ;  
And many a parson made a bid ;  
The Reverend Simon Magus did.

He sought the agent's : " Agent, I  
Have come prepared at once to buy  
(If your demand is not too big)  
The Curé of Otium-cum-Digge."

" Ah ! " said the agent, " there's a berth—  
The snuggest vicarage on earth ;  
No sort of duty (so I hear),  
And fifteen hundred pounds a year !

" If on the price we should agree,  
The living soon will vacant be ;  
The good incumbent's ninety-five,  
And cannot very long survive.

" See—here's his photograph—you see,  
He's in his dotage." " Ah, dear me !  
Poor soul ! " said Simon. " His decease  
Would be a merciful release ! "

The agent laughed—the agent blinked—  
The agent blew his nose and winked—  
And poked the parson's ribs in play—  
It was that agent's vulgar way.

The Reverend Simon frowned : " I grieve  
This light demeanour to perceive ;  
It's scarcely *comme il faut*, I think :  
Now—pray oblige me—do not wink.

" Don't dig my waistcoat into holes—  
Your mission is to sell the souls  
Of human sheep and human kids  
To that divine who highest bids.

" Do well in this, and on your head  
Unnumbered honours will be shed."  
The agent said, " Well, truth to tell,  
I *have* been doing very well."

“You should,” said Simon, “at your age ;  
But now about the parsonage.  
How many rooms does it contain ?  
Show me the photograph again.

“A poor apostle’s humble house  
Must not be too luxurious ;  
No stately halls with oaken floor—  
It should be decent and no more.

“No billiard-rooms—no stately trees—  
No croquet-grounds or pineries.”  
“Ah !” sighed the agent, “very true :  
This property won’t do for you.

“All these about the house you’ll find”—  
“Well,” said the parson, “never mind ;  
I’ll manage to submit to these  
Luxurious superfluities.

“A clergyman who does not shirk  
The various calls of Christian work  
Will have no leisure to employ  
These ‘common forms’ of worldly joy.

“To preach three times on Sabbath days—  
To wean the lost from wicked ways—  
The sick to soothe—the sane to wed—  
The poor to feed with meat and bread ;

“These are the various wholesome ways  
In which I’ll spend my nights and days :  
My zeal will have no time to cool  
At croquet, archery, or pool.”

The agent said, “From what I hear,  
This living will not suit, I fear—  
There are no poor, no sick at all ;  
For services there is no call.”

The reverend gent looked grave. “Dear me !  
Then there is *no* ‘society’ ?—  
I mean, of course, no sinners there  
Whose souls will be my special care ?”

The cunning agent shook his head,  
"No, none—except"—(the agent said)—  
"The Duke of A., the Earl of B.,  
The Marquis C., and Viscount D.

"But you will not be quite alone,  
For, though they've chaplains of their own,  
Of course this noble well-bred clan  
Receive the parish clergyman."

"Oh, silence, sir!" said Simon M.,  
"Dukes—earls! What should I care for them?  
These worldly ranks I scorn and flout,  
Of course." The agent said, "No doubt."

"Yet I might show these men of birth  
The hollowness of rank on earth."  
The agent answered, "Very true—  
But I should not, if I were you."

"Who sells this rich advowson, pray?"  
The agent winked—it was his way—  
"His name is Hart; twixt me and you,  
He is, I'm grieved to say, a Jew!"

"A Jew?" said Simon, "happy find!  
I purchase this advowson, mind.  
My life shall be devoted to  
Converting that unhappy Jew."

But observe how different is the treatment of the Roman Catholic Church. All of its doctrines, except where they are identical with those of the Established Church of England, are a fair mark for ridicule. Nothing is too sacred, not even the confessional and the forgiveness of sins. Take as evidence the *Ballad of Gentle Alice Brown*, in which Gentle Alice confesses her sins to Father Paul and receives an easy absolution.

It was a robber's daughter, and her name was Alice Brown,  
Her father was the terror of a small Italian town;  
Her mother was a foolish, weak, but amiable old thing;  
But it isn't of her parents that I'm going for to sing.

As Alice was a-sitting at her window-sill one day,  
A beautiful young gentleman he chanced to pass that way;  
She cast her eyes upon him, and he looked so good and true,  
That she thought, "I could be happy with a gentleman like you!"

And every morning passed her house that cream of gentlemen,  
She knew she might expect him at a quarter unto ten;  
A sorter in the Custom-house, it was his daily road  
(The Custom-house was fifteen minutes' walk from her abode).

But Alice was a pious girl, who knew it wasn't wise  
To look at strange young sorters with expressive purple eyes;  
So she sought the village priest to whom her family confessed,  
The priest by whom their little sins were carefully assessed.

"Oh, holy father," Alice said, "'twould grieve you, would it not,  
To discover that I was a most disreputable lot?  
Of all unhappy sinners I'm the most unhappy one!"  
The padre said, "Whatever have you been and gone and done?"

"I have helped mama to steal a little kiddy from its dad,  
I've assisted dear papa in cutting up a little lad,  
I've planned a little burglary and forged a little cheque,  
And slain a little baby for the coral on its neck!"

The worthy pastor heaved a sigh, and dropped a silent tear,  
And said, "You mustn't judge yourself too heavily, my dear:  
It's wrong to murder babies, little corals for to fleece;  
But sins like these one expiates at half-a-crown apiece.

"Girls will be girls—you're very young, and flighty in your mind;  
Old heads upon young shoulders we must not expect to find,  
We mustn't be too hard upon these little girlish tricks.  
Let's see—five crimes at half-a-crown—exactly twelve and six."

But Alice now confesses to her improper conduct in connection with the young sorter. Father Paul is, of course, horrified at the idea of the robber's daughter falling in love outside of the bandit class into respectable society. That kind of thing would mean the end of crime and confessional fees. However, it all ends happily. Father Paul communicates at once with Robber Brown who goes after the young sorter without delay.

He traced that gallant sorter to a still suburban square ;  
 He watched his opportunity and seized him unaware ;  
 He took a life-preserver and he hit him on the head,  
 And Mrs. Brown dissected him before she went to bed.

Observe the last line.

*Mrs. Brown dissected him before she went to bed.*

This is another example of that apparently open "brutality" which offended Mark Lemon when the *Nancy Bell's* cook was tipped into the pot, boiled and eaten ! Here we have Mrs. Brown, sitting quietly at her dissection, carefully separating the *os femoris* from the *patella*, and laying aside the articular cartilage for later disposal. This sounds very horrible if you really think of it. But the point is you don't think about it. We have a sort of compartment in our minds, evolved for our protection, to keep actuality and fun apart. I admit that if you push too hard on the partition it will give way. The boiling of the cook is at too high pressure for most of us. I remember, also, the story of a funeral of a locomotive engineer who had been scalded to death. The clergyman spoke of him to the mourners as "our 'steemed friend." That, I always found a little bit thick—with steam.

But good Mrs. Brown and her dissection may pass for another reason ; namely, the excellence of the phrase, "before she went to bed." The "*Bab*" *Ballads* and the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are filled with those happy phrases which people loved to quote, though probably few people could explain just exactly why. The point here is the beautiful domesticity of the phrase. It belongs in family life. It suggests one of those domestic tasks which no good housewife likes to leave undone overnight. She always gets all her dishes washed and her kitchen tidy every night. And so good Mrs. Brown felt that she must get her dissecting done "before she went to bed."

Probably many people will agree that the most sustained effort, the most finished satire and the most

exquisite flow of verse in the "Bab" *Ballads* is found in the poem *Etiquette*. This was not one of the original ballads of *Fun*. It was written years later for a Christmas number of the *Graphic*. But Gilbert himself gathered it into the large volume of early ballads and later songs which he collected in 1897 as the "Bab" *Ballads, etc.*

I was about to say that here at any rate, we have a poem with none of those disfiguring details of horror of which we have just spoken. But I notice on looking again that the poem starts off with the wholesale drowning of an entire ship's company, including the owners. Still that's nothing. It's not the point of the poem and, as Gilbert himself says, they were all insured.

The underlying satire of the poem turns on the aloofness of English manners, the impossibility of knowing anybody that you don't know. But its great merit lies in the smooth perfection of its lines, which seem so effortless and so inevitable, the last word in comic verse.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Common Sense and the Universe*

#### I

SPEAKING LAST December at the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and speaking, as it were, in the name of the great 100-inch telescope under his control, Professor Edwin Hubble, of the Mount Wilson Observatory, California, made the glad announcement that the universe is not expanding. This was good news indeed, if not to the general public, who had no reason to suspect that it was expanding, at least to those of us who humbly attempt to "follow science." For some twenty-five years past, indeed ever since the promulgation of this terrific idea in a paper published by Professor W. de Sitter in 1917, we had lived as best we could in an expanding universe, one in which everything, at terrific speed, kept getting farther away from everything else. It suggested to us the disappointed lover in the romance who leaped on his horse and rode madly off in all directions. The idea was majestic in its sheer size, but it somehow gave an uncomfortable sensation.

Yet we had to believe it. Thus, for example, we had it on the authority of Dr. Spencer Jones, the British Astronomer Royal, in his new and fascinating book of 1940, *Life on Other Worlds*, that "a distant universe in the constellation of Boötes has been found to be receding with a velocity of 24,300 miles a second. We can infer that this nebula is at a distance of 230,000,000 light-years." I may perhaps remind my fellow followers of science that a light year means the distance travelled in one year by light, moving at 186,000 miles a second.



In other words, this "distant universe" is now 1,049,970,980,000,000,000,000 miles away!

Some distance! as Mr. Churchill would say.

But now it appears that that distant universe has *not* been receding at all; in fact, it isn't away out there. Heaven knows where it is. Bring it back. Yet not only did the astronomers assert the expansion but they proved it, from the behaviour of the red band in the spectrum, which blushed a deeper red at the revelation of it, like the conscious water that "saw its God and blushed" at Cana in Galilee long ago. One of the most distinguished and intelligible of our astronomers, Sir Arthur Eddington, had written a book about it, *The Expanding Universe*, to bring it down to our level. Astronomers at large accepted this universe expansion in all directions as calmly as they once accepted the universal fall of gravitation, or the universal death in the cold under Carnot's Second Law of Thermodynamics.

But the relief brought by Professor Hubble is tempered on reflection by certain doubts and afterthoughts. It is not that I venture any disbelief or disrespect towards science, for that is as atrocious in our day as disbelief in the Trinity in the days of Isaac Newton. But we begin to doubt whether science can quite keep on believing in and respecting itself. If we expand to-day and contract to-morrow; if we undergo all the doubled-up agonies of the curvature of space only to have the kink called off, as it has been; if we get reconciled to dying a martyr's death at one general, distributed temperature of 459 degrees below zero, the same for all, only to find that the world is perhaps unexpectedly warming up again—then we ask, where are we? To which, of course, Einstein answers "Nowhere," since there is no place to be. So we must pick up our little book again, follow science, and wait for the next astronomical convention.

Let us take this case of the famous Second Law of Thermodynamics, that inexorable scroll of fate which condemned the universe—or at least all life in it—to die

of cold. I look back now with regret to the needless tears I have wasted over that, the generous sympathy for the last little band of survivors, dying at 459 degrees below our zero (  $-273^{\circ}$  Centigrade), the absolute zero of cold when the molecules cease to move and heat ends. No stove will light at that, for the wood is as cold as the stove, and the match is as cold as both, and the dead fingers motionless.

I remember meeting this inexorable law for the first time in reading, as a little boy, a piece of "popular science" entitled *Our Great Timepiece Running Down*. It was by Richard Proctor, whose science-bogeys were as terrifying as Mrs. Crow's *Night Thoughts*, only slower in action. The sun, it appeared, was cooling; soon it would be all over. Lord Kelvin presently ratified this. Being Scotch, he didn't mind damnation and he gave the sun and the whole solar system only ninety million years more to live.

This famous law was first clearly enunciated in 1824 by the great French physicist, Nicolas Carnot. It showed that all bodies in the universe kept exchanging their temperature—hot things heated cold, and cold things chilled hot. Thus they pooled their temperature. Like the division of a rich estate among a flock of poor relations, it meant poverty for all. We must all share ultimately the cold of absolute space.

It is true that a gleam of hope came when Ernest Rutherford and others, working on radioactivity, discovered that there might be a contrary process of "stoking up." Atoms exploding into radioactivity would keep the home fires burning in the sun for a long time. This glad news meant that the sun was both much older and much younger than Lord Kelvin had ever thought it was. But even at that it was only a respite. The best they could offer was 1,500,000,000 years. After that we freeze.

And now what do you think! Here comes the new physics of the Quantum Theory and shatters the Second

Law of Thermodynamics into gas—a word that is Dutch for chaos. The world may go on for ever. All of this because of the final promulgation of the Law of the *Quantum*—or, shall we say, the Law of Just So Much—of which we shall presently speak. These physical people do not handle their Latin with the neat touch of those of us who knew our declensions as they know their dimensions. Of course they mean *Tantum*—but let it go at that. *Quantum* is drugstore Latin, *quantum sufficit*. *Tantum* is the real thing—*Virgilium vidi tantum* (“I saw something of Virgil”).

At this point I may perhaps pause to explain that the purpose of this article is not to make fun of science, nor to express disbelief in it, but only to suggest its limits. What I want to say is that when the scientist steps out from recording phenomena and offers a general statement of the nature of what is called “reality,” the ultimate nature of space, of time, of the beginning of things, of life, of a universe, then he stands exactly where you and I do, and the three of us stand where Plato did—and long before him Rodin’s primitive thinker.

Consider this. Professor Hubble, like Joshua, has called upon the universe to be still. All is quiet. The universe rests, motionless, in the night sky. The mad rush is over. Every star in every galaxy, every island universe, is at least right where it is. But the old difficulty remains: Does it go for ever, this world in the sky, or does it stop? Such an alternative has posed itself as a problem for every one of us, somewhere about the age of twelve. We cannot imagine that the stars go on for ever. It’s unthinkable. But we equally cannot imagine that they come to a stop and that beyond them is nothing, and then more nothing. Unending nothing is as incomprehensible as unending something. This alternative I cannot fathom, nor can Professor Hubble, nor can anyone ever hope to.

Let me turn back in order to make my point of view a little clearer. I propose to traverse again the path along

which modern science has dragged those who have tried to follow it for about a century past. It was at first a path singularly easy to tread, provided that one could throw aside the inherited burden of superstition, false belief, and prejudice. For the direction seemed verified and assured all along by the corroboration of science by actual physical results. Who could doubt electricity after the telegraph? Or doubt the theory of light after photography? Or the theory of electricity when read under electric light? At every turn, each new advance of science unveiled new power, new mechanism of life—and of death. To “doubt science” was to be like the farmer at the circus who doubted the giraffe. Science, of course, had somehow to tuck into the same bed as Theology, but it was the theologian who protested. Science just said, “Lie over.”

Let us follow then this path.

## II

When the mediæval superstition was replaced by the new learning, mathematics, astronomy, and physics were the first sciences to get organized and definite. By the opening of the nineteenth century they were well set; the solar system was humming away so drowsily that Laplace was able to assure Napoleon that he didn't need God to watch over it. Gravitation worked like clockwork and clockwork worked like gravitation. Chemistry, which, like electricity, was nothing but a set of experiments in Benjamin Franklin's time, turned into a science after Lavoisier had discovered that fire was not a thing but a process, something happening to things—an idea so far above the common thought that they guillotined him for it in 1794. Dalton followed and showed that all things could be broken up into a set of very, very small atoms, grouped into molecules all acting according to plan. With Faraday and Maxwell, electricity, which turned out to be the same as magnetism, or interchangeable with it, fell into its place in the new order of science.

By about 1880 it seemed as if the world of science was fairly well explained. Metaphysics still talked in its sleep. Theology still preached sermons. It took issue with much of the new science, especially with geology and the new evolutionary science of life that went with the new physical world. But science paid little attention.

For the whole thing was so amazingly simple. There you had your space and time, two things too obvious to explain. Here you had your matter, made up of solid little atoms, infinitely small but really just like birdseed. All this was set going by and with the Law of Gravitation. Once started, the nebulous world condensed into suns, the suns threw off planets, the planets cooled, life resulted and presently became conscious, conscious life got higher up and higher up till you had apes, then Bishop Wilberforce, and then Professor Huxley.

A few little mysteries remained, such as the question of what space and matter and time and life and consciousness really were. But all this was conveniently called by Herbert Spencer the *Unknowable*, and then locked in a cupboard and left there.

Everything was thus reduced to a sort of Dead Certainty. Just one awkward skeleton remained in the cupboard. And that was the peculiar, mysterious aspect of electricity, which was not exactly a thing and yet more than an idea. There was also, and electricity only helped to make it worse, the old puzzle about "action at a distance." How does gravitation pull all the way from here to the sun? And if there is *nothing* in space, how does light get across from the sun in eight minutes, and even all the way from Sirius in eight years?

Even the invention of "ether" as a sort of universal jelly that could have ripples shaken across it proved a little unconvincing.

Then, just at the turn of the century, the whole structure began to crumble.

The first note of warning that something was going wrong came with the discovery of X-rays. Sir William

Crookes, accidentally leaving round tubes of rarefied gas, stumbled on "radiant matter," or "matter in the fourth state," as accidentally as Columbus discovered America. The British Government knighted him at once (1897) but it was too late. The thing had started. Then came Guglielmo Marconi with the revelation of more waves, and universal at that. Light, the world had learned to accept, because we can see it, but this was fun in the dark.

There followed the researches of the radioactivity school, and above all, those of Ernest Rutherford which revolutionized the theory of matter. I knew Rutherford well as we were colleagues at McGill for seven years. I am quite sure that he had no original intention of upsetting the foundations of the universe. Yet that is what he did and he was in due course very properly raised to the peerage for it.

When Rutherford was done with the atom all the solidity was pretty well knocked out of it.

Till these researches began, people commonly thought of atoms as something like birdseed, little round solid particles, ever so little, billions to an inch. They were small. But they were there. You could weigh them. You could apply to them all the laws of Isaac Newton about weight and velocity and mass and gravitation—in other words, the whole of first-year physics.

Let us try to show what Rutherford did to the atom. Imagine to yourself an Irishman whirling a shillelagh round his head with the rapidity and dexterity known only in Tipperary or Donegal. If you come anywhere near you'll get hit with the shillelagh. Now make it go faster; faster still; get it going so fast that you can't tell which is Irishman and which is shillelagh. The whole combination has turned into a green blur. If you shoot a bullet at it, it will probably go through, as there is mostly nothing there. Yet if you go up against it, it won't hit you now, because the shillelagh is going so fast that you will seem to come against a solid surface.

Now make the Irishman smaller and the shillelagh longer. In fact you don't need the Irishman at all; just his force, his Irish determination, so to speak. Just keep that, the *disturbance*. And you don't need the shillelagh either, just the *field of force* that it sweeps. There! Now put in two Irishmen and two shillelaghs and reduce them in the same way to one solid body—at least it seems solid but you can shoot bullets through it anywhere now. What you have now is a hydrogen atom—one proton and one electron flying round as a *disturbance* in space. Put in more Irishmen and more shillelaghs—or, rather, more protons and electrons—and you get other kinds of atoms. Put in a whole lot—eleven protons, eleven electrons; that is a sodium atom. Bunch the atoms together into combinations called molecules, themselves flying round—and there you are! That's solid matter, and nothing in it at all except disturbance. You're standing on it right now: the molecules are beating against your feet. But there is nothing there, and nothing in your feet. This may help you to understand how "waves," ripples of disturbance—for instance, the disturbance you call radio,—go right through all matter, indeed right through *you*, as if you weren't there. You see, you aren't.

The peculiar thing about this atomic theory was that whatever the atoms were, birdseed or disturbance, it made no difference to the way they acted. They followed all the laws of mechanics and motion, or they seemed to. There was no need to change any idea of space or time because of them. Matter was their "fort," like wax figures with Artemus Ward.

One must not confuse Rutherford's work on atoms with Einstein's theories of space and time. Rutherford worked all his life without reference to Einstein. Even in his later days at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge when he began, ungratefully, to smash up the atom that had made him, he needed nothing from Einstein. I once asked Rutherford—it was at the height of

the popular interest in Einstein, in 1923—what he thought of Einstein's relativity. "Oh, that stuff!" he said. "We never bother with that in our work!" His admirable biographer, Professor A. S. Eve, tells us that when the German physicist Wien told Rutherford that no Anglo-Saxon could understand relativity Rutherford answered, "No, they have too much sense."

But it was Einstein who made the real trouble. He announced in 1905 that there was no such thing as absolute rest. After that there never was. But it was not till just after the Great War that the reading public caught on to Einstein and little books on "Relativity" covered the bookstalls.

Einstein knocked out space and time as Rutherford knocked out matter. The general viewpoint of relativity towards space is very simple. Einstein explains that there is no such place as *here*. "But," you answer, "I'm here; here is where I am right now." But you're moving, you're spinning round as the earth spins; and you and the earth are both spinning round the sun, and the sun is rushing through space towards a distant galaxy, and the galaxy itself is beating it away at 26,000 miles a second. Now where is that spot that is here! How did you mark it? You remember the story of the two idiots who were out fishing, and one said, "We should have marked that place where we got all the fish," and the other said, "I did, I marked it on the boat." Well, that's it. That's *here*.

You can see it better still if you imagine the universe swept absolutely empty: nothing in it, not even *you*. Now put a *point* in it, just one point. Where is it? Why, obviously it's nowhere. If you say it's right there, where do you mean by there? In which direction is there? In *that* direction? Oh! hold on, you're sticking yourself in to make a direction. It's in *no* direction; there aren't any directions. Now put in another point. Which is which? You can't tell. They *both* are. One is on the right, you say, and one on the left. You keep



out of that space! There's no right and no left. Join the points with a line. Now you think you've got something, and I admit this is the nearest you have come to it. But is the line long or short? How long is it? Length soon vanishes into a purely relative term. One thing is longer than another: that's all.

There's no harm in all this, so far. To many people it's as obvious as it is harmless. But that's only the beginning. Leave space alone for a moment and take on time and then things begin to thicken. If there is no such place as here, a similar line of thought will show that there's no such time as now—not absolutely now. Empty the universe again as you did before, with not a speck in it, and now ask, what time is it—God bless me, how peculiar. It isn't any time. It can't be, there's nothing to tell the time by. You say you can feel it go; oh, but you're not there. There will be no *time* until you put something into space with dimensions to it—and then there'll be time, but only as connected somehow—no knowing how—with things in space. But just as there is no such thing as absolute top or bottom in space, so there is a similar difficulty as to time backward and time forward—

The relativity theory undertakes to explain both space and time by putting them together, since they are meaningless without one another, into a compound called "space-time continuum." Time thus becomes, they say, the fourth dimension of space. Until just recently it was claimed further that to fit these relationships together, to harmonize space and time, space must have a curve, or curvature. This was put over to the common mind by comparing what happens in space with what happens to a fly walking on a sphere (a globe). The fly walks and walks and never gets to the end. It's curved. The joke is on the fly. So was the joke long ago on the mediæval people who thought the world

flat. "What happened to the theory of the earth," writes Eddington, "has happened also to the world of space and time."

The idea was made plainer for us by comparing space-time to an onion skin, or rather to an infinite number of onion skins. If you have enough you can fill all space. The universe is your onion, as it was Shakespeare's oyster.

The discovery by Einstein of this curvature of space was greeted by the physicists with the burst of applause that greets a winning home-run at baseball. That brilliant writer just mentioned, Sir Arthur Eddington, who can handle space and time with the imagery of a poet, and even infiltrate humour into gravitation, as when he says that a man in an elevator falling twenty stories has an ideal opportunity to study gravitation—Sir Arthur Eddington is loud in his acclaim. Without this curve, it appears, things won't fit into their place. The fly on the globe, as long as he thinks it flat (like Mercator's map), finds things shifted as by some unaccountable demon to all sorts of wrong distances. Once he gets the idea of a sphere everything comes straight. So with our space. The mystery of gravitation puzzles us, except those who have the luck to fall in an elevator, and even for them knowledge comes too late. They weren't falling at all: just curving. "Admit a curvature of the world," wrote Eddington in his Gifford Lectures of 1927, "and the mysterious agency disappears. Einstein has exorcized this demon."

But it appears now, fourteen years later, that Einstein doesn't care if space is curved or not. He can take it either way. A prominent physicist of to-day, head of the department in one of the greatest universities of the world, wrote me on this point: "Einstein had stronger hopes that a general theory which involved the assumption of a property of space, akin to what is ordinarily called curvature, would be more useful than he now believes to be the case." Plain talk for a professor.

Most people just say Einstein has given up curved space. It's as if Sir Isaac Newton years after had said, with a yawn, "Oh, about that apple—perhaps it wasn't falling."

Now with the curve knocked out of it, the space-time continuum with these so-called four dimensions becomes really a very simple matter, in fact only a very pretentious name for a very obvious fact. It just means that information about an occurrence is not complete unless we know both where it happened and when it happened. It is no use telling me that Diogenes is dead if I didn't know that he was alive.

Obviously "time-when" or "place-where" are bound together and coexist with one another. If there were no space—just emptiness—there could be no time: It wouldn't count itself. And if no time, no space; start it and it would flicker out again in no time: Like an electric bulb on a wobble-plug. Space-time continuum is just a pretentious name for this consequence of consciousness. We can't get behind it. We begin life with it as the chicken out of the egg begins with its cell memory. All the mathematics based on "space-time continuum" get no farther, as far as concerns the search for reality. It gets no farther than the child's arithmetic book that says, "If John walks 2 miles every day for 10 days," etc. etc. The child hooks space and time with a continuum as easily as the chicken picks up gravel.

### III

But unhappily we can't get away from the new physics quite as simply as that. Even if we beat them out on space and time, there is far worse to come. That's only the start of it, for now, as the fat boy in *Pickwick* said, "I'm going to make your flesh creep." The next thing to go is cause and effect. You may think that one thing causes another. It appears that it doesn't. And of course, when cause and effect go, the bottom is out of the universe, since you can't tell, literally can't, what's going to happen next. This is the consequence of the famous

Quantum Theory, first hinted at by Professor Max Planck about forty years ago and since then scrambled for by the physicists like dogs after a bone. It changes so fast that when Sir Arthur Eddington gave the Gifford Lectures referred to, he said to his students that it might not be the same when they met next autumn.

But we cannot understand the full impact of the Quantum Theory, in shattering the world we lived in, without turning back again to discuss time in a new relation, namely, the forward-and-backwardness of it, and to connect it up again with the Second Law of Thermodynamics—the law, it will be recalled, that condemns us to die of cold. Only we will now call it by its true name, which we had avoided before, as the Law of Entropy. All physicists sooner or later say, “Let us call it Entropy,” just as a man says, when you get to know him, “Call me Charlie.”

So we make a new start.

I recall, as some other people still may, a thrilling melodrama called *The Silver King*. In this the hero, who thinks he has committed a murder (of course, he hasn't really), falls on his knees and cries, “Oh, God, turn back the universe and give me yesterday.” The supposed reaction of the audience was “Alas, you *can't* turn back the universe!”

But nowadays it would be very different. At the call the Spirit of Time would appear—not Father Time, who is all wrong, being made old, but a young, radiant spirit in a silver frock made the same back and front. “Look,” says the Spirit, “I'm going to turn back the universe. You see this wheel turning round. Presto! It's going the other way! You see this elastic ball falling to the floor. Presto! It's bouncing back. You see out of the window that star moving west. Presto! It's going east. Hence accordingly,” continues the Spirit, now speaking like a professor, so that the Silver King looks up in apprehension, “time as evidenced by any primary motion is entirely reversible so that we cannot distinguish

between future time and past time : indeed if they move in a circle both are one."

The Silver King leaps up, shouts "Innocent ! Innocent !" and dashes off, thus anticipating Act V and spoiling the whole play. The musing Spirit, musing of course backwards, says, "Poor fellow, I hadn't the heart to tell him that this only applies to primary motion and not to Entropy. And murder of course is a plain case of Entropy."

And now let us try to explain. Entropy means the introduction into things that happen of a random element, as opposed to things that happen and "unhappen," like a turning wheel, good either way, or a ball falling and bouncing as high as it falls, or the earth going around the sun. These primary motions are "reversible." As far as they are concerned, time could just as well go back as forward. But now introduce the element of random chance. You remember how Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again. Of course not. It was a straight case of "entropy." But now consider a pack of cards fresh from the maker, all in suits, all in order again? They might, but they won't. Entropy. Take this case. You show a motion picture of a wheel spinning : You run it backwards : It spins the other way. That's time, the time of primary motion, both ways alike. Now show a motion picture of a waiter with a tray of teacups : he drops them : they roll in a hundred fragments. Now run it backwards : you see all the little fragments leap up in the air, join neatly into cups, and rest on the tray. Don't think that the waiter smiles with relief : he doesn't : he can't smile backwards : he just relaxes horror to calm.

Here then is Entropy, the smashing down of our world by random forces that don't reverse. The heat and cold of Carnot's Second Law are just one case of it. This is the only way by which we can distinguish which of two events came first. It's our only clue as to which way

time is going. If procrastination is the thief of time, Entropy is the detective.

The Quantum Theory begins with the idea that the quantities of disturbance in the atom, of which we spoke, are done up, at least they act that way, in little fixed quantities (each a Quantum—no more, no less), as if sugar only existed by the pound. The smallness of the Quantum is beyond comprehension. A Quantum is also peculiar. A Quantum in an atom flies round in an orbit. This orbit may be a smaller ring or a bigger ring. But when the Quantum shifts from orbit to orbit it does not pass or drift or move *from one to the other*. No, sir. First, it's here and then it's there. Believe it or not, it has just shifted. Its change of place is random, and *not because of anything*. Now the things that we think of as matter and movements and events (things happening) are all based, infinitely far down, on this random dance of Quanta. Hence, since you can't ever tell what a Quantum will do, you can't ever say what will happen next. Cause and effect are all gone.

But as usual in this bright, new world of the new physics, the statement is no sooner made than it is taken back again. There are such a lot of Quanta that we can feel sure that one at least will turn up in the right place—by chance, not by cause.

The only difficulty about the Quantum Theory has been that to make the atomic "orbits" operate properly, and to put the Quantum *into two places at once*, it is necessary to have "more dimensions" in space. If they are not in one they are in another. You ask next door. What this means I have no idea.

Nor does it tell us any ultimate truth about the real nature of things to keep on making equations about them. Suppose I wish to take a holiday trip and am selecting a place to go. I ask, How far is it?—how long does it take?—what does it cost? These things all come into it. If I like I can call them "dimensions." It does no harm. If I like I can add other dimensions—how

hot it is, how much gold it has, and what sort of women. I can say, if I wish, that the women are therefore found out to be the seventh dimension of locality. But I doubt if I can find anything sillier to say than the physicists' talk of ten and twelve dimensions added to space.

Let it be realized, I say, that making equations and functions about a thing does not tell us anything about its real nature. Suppose that I sometimes wonder just what sort of man Chipman, my fellow club member, is. While I am wondering another fellow member, a mathematician, comes in. "Wondering about Chipman, were you?" he says. "Well, I can tell you all about him as I have computed his dimensions. I have here the statistics of the number of times he comes ( $t$ ), the number of steps he takes before he sits down ( $s$ ), his orbit in moving round ( $o$ ), aberrations as affected by other bodies ( $ab$ ), velocity ( $v$ ), specific gravity ( $sp$ ), and his saturation ( $S$ ). He is therefore a function of these things, or shall we say quite simply :

$$F \int \frac{s.v.o.sp.S}{t.ab}$$

Now this would be mathematically useful. With it I can calculate the likelihood of my friend being at the club at any particular time, and whether available for billiards. In other words, I've got him in what is called a "frame" in spacetime. But just as all this tells me nothing of ultimate reality, neither do the super-dimensions of the new physics.

People who know nothing about the subject, or just less than I do, will tell you that science and philosophy and theology have nowadays all come together. So they have, in a sense. But the statement, like those above, is just a "statistical" one. They have come together as three people may come together in a picture theatre, or three people happen to take apartments in the same building, or, to apply the metaphor that really fits, as three people come together at a funeral. The funeral is

that of Dead Certainty. The interment is over and the three turn away together.

“Incomprehensible,” murmurs Theology reverently.

“What was that word?” asks Science.

“Incomprehensible; I often use it in my litanies.”

“Ah yes,” murmurs Science, with almost equal reverence, “incomprehensible!”

“The comprehensibility of comprehension,” begins Philosophy, staring straight in front of him.

“Poor fellow,” says Theology, “he’s wandering again; better lead him home.”

“I haven’t the least idea where he lives,” says Science.

“Just below me,” says Theology. “We’re both above you.”



## CHAPTER VII

### *A Plea for Geographical Science*

I WILL begin by saying in a word what I mean to elaborate in an essay. This is a plea for the restoration of geography to the place it once had in school study, from which it was ousted by the mechanization of matriculation. With this aim, I wish with the same stone to hit another bird, or, rather, a small flock of them, the natural science subjects akin to geography—astronomy, geology, biology, the theory of evolution and such. These subjects occupy an odd place, or lack of place, in our college study. They are things of which every educated graduate should know something, of which no one but a specialist can know much and of which many present graduates know nothing. They seem too advanced, for the schools and the colleges can't find time for them, the college curriculum being older (academically) than they are. The best the college can offer to the Arts student is a choice of a half-portion selected among them, as if a little of geology would make up for a complete lack of biology—like the choice of roast meat or fish in a table d'hôte dinner.

What I propose to do is to gather all these various "knowledges of the Earth" up into one combined Geographical Science and turn it into an A1 matriculation subject so that it covers four years in a high school and that even then the pupils don't know it. I'd like to call it *Geosophy* but that sounds stuffed at the start.

The situation is really an historic one. Our college curriculum in Canada, and especially our formal matriculation, comes down from a hundred years ago—with the extinction of King's College and the formation of the University of Toronto, and others. At that time "learning" meant overwhelmingly Latin and Greek, either taken with athletics and brandy and water as

for the Oxford Pass degree, or with the intense and prolonged industry that produced the portentous figure of the Classical Scholar, knowing nothing but classics and not needing to. Classical Scholars knew everything, like Molière's "people of quality," without learning anything. The new discoveries in natural science from Priestley to Darwin, from Boyle to Faraday, meant nothing to them. Speak of Evolution and they quoted impressively Homer, Book VI, line 175, on the fall of the leaves. Talk of atoms and they were back at once to Democritus—*Panta Rei*—"everything is on the move." So there you were, and the other people took their cue from them. Smart people like Mr. Disraeli joked about being "on the side of the angels"; and dull people like Bishop Wilberforce called Mr. Huxley a monkey.

That was why, when the new science knocked at the doors of our colleges it got a very grudging reception. It only squeezed in; part of it is still caught in the door.

That, then, is one side of the subject before us, the unsatisfactory place given to the rudiments of natural science in institutions where no one enters without the rudiments of Latin and mathematics. Beside this, as the other half of the topic that dovetails where the edges join, is the mean place now accorded to geography, once a favoured subject of the schools.

It has been said that everything has the defects of its merits. That was the expression used by the Frenchman who first said it, one of those "witty Frenchmen," who thought of everything first. The plain English for it is that there are two sides to everything. Our progress in education in a hundred years has been no doubt unparalleled, especially in sheer bulk, numbers and cost. In a way, what went before seems twilight. Yet even progress in its forward movement scrapes off and loses something of its quality. There are things also seen better in the twilight than in a glare. Our education in these hundred years has of necessity—from its extent and its use as a legal qualification for something else—

become mechanized, systematized, all reduced to a standard, and a provable standard at that. Hence a lot of subjects not capable of that kind of credit measurement got left behind. The older school education laid great stress on such things as reading aloud, and with it the cultivation of the voice, and the learning of poetry, and reciting it, and on such useful queerities as mental arithmetic and dictation in foreign languages and, in a general way, character and the fear of God. In other words there was about the older education a certain reality which gets lost, in part at least, when education becomes mechanized.

I remember that grand enthusiast, Professor A. B. Macallum, of McGill and Toronto (he died young), once talking to me of what was, seventy or eighty years ago from now, the realities, the meaning, of Scottish-Canadian education. "My brother," he said, "had never been to college, only to school, but he had a wonderful education. I've seen him jump down off the load in the harvest field and recite a whole Canto of Walter Scott, with the men standing round him, spell-bound." Cynicism might object that men paid by the hour would easily spellbind—perhaps even for a Canto of my *Elements of Political Science*—but the meaning, and the attraction, of the scene is obvious.

So when formal matriculation began, exercises like learning and reciting poetry went overboard, and bad voices that wouldn't do in a harvest field were good enough for college. Yet even when it slowly dawned on the teachers that these things didn't count, they died hard. But die they must. What good was reading out loud if you didn't have to read at matriculation? Of what use is a cultivated voice to the ear of the examiner who never hears it? As to the fear of God, that was needed only for divinity, not for pass matriculation in Arts.

Some things, I say, died hard. Take the case of Latin Verse—turning English verse into Latin. In the big

days when Classical scholarship was in flower, or in the pod, Latin Verse was a compulsory acquirement. So it was at Toronto when the University began, a compulsory matriculation subject. After a while they dropped it as a compulsory subject but it still hung around the old gateway for years and years like a faithful old dog, wagging its tail to attract a few students. I happen to be the last living student who ever took it at matriculation, to wit in 1887, the examination paper being still there in the records to prove it. The verse that I and my fellow-students wrote sounded, I admit, like coupling up freight cars. But we did it for its own sake as we were only just learning that round a college you must only take things which "count," things for which you are "liable." In my McGill teaching days I have noted students ask whether they were "liable" to the French Revolution or rejoice that they were "not responsible" for Chaucer. What I want to do in this article is to make them liable to sedimentary rocks and responsible for the origin of species.

Let me quote a concrete example to show the odd historical changes of our school and college studies. Here on the one hand is the matriculation requirement of the University of Toronto in 1851, and on the other the programme of the sixth Form studies of Upper Canada College—that is, of the boys who were going to matriculate.

*Matriculation into the Faculty of Arts at Toronto*, from the report of the "Caput"—(a piece of gratuitous scholarship)—as printed in Appendix I.I.I. to the journals of the legislative Assembly of Canada, 1851. Homer, *Iliad*, Books I, VI; Homer, *Odyssey*, Book IX; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Book I; Lucan, *Charon, Vita and Simon*; Virgil, *Aeneid*, Books II and VI; Horace, *Odes*, Book V; Sallust, *Catilina*; Ovid, *Fasti*. Translation into Latin Verse and Prose. Mathematics, Algebra, Elementary Rules to Quadratic Equations; Euclid, Books I, II, III, IV: Definitions of Book V, Book VI.

That's it and that's the whole of it. One observes with amazement the attitude of mind involved. These are the things that the matriculant *must know*. There was no harm in his knowing something of history or English or French—or even of the fear of God—it wouldn't hurt him. But this was the qualification for matriculation, this unadulterated mass of Latin and Greek and the mathematics that neither scholarship, nor stupidity, nor divinity had ever been able to kill. . . . To some of us it looks like a bag of sawdust.

Here on the other hand is the new programme of Upper Canada College, the grand old school on King St. that Sir John Colborne founded in 1829 as the successor to the old "grammar school" on Church St. He took its original programme of studies from the old Elizabethan school (1563) to "Sarnia"—not our Sarnia of to-day but the island with that Latin name, the Channel Island distorted into Guernsey. Colborne had been Governor of Guernsey before he came to Canada and the naming of Sarnia was a compliment to him.

That was the original programme. But now in 1851 they drew up a new one, for the moment it was singularly auspicious. Upper Canada College had now just been broken away (Act of 1849) from the old "King's College" (once in Queen's Park; too religious to survive) which had controlled its studies. A committee of the Principal and some enthusiastic "old pupils" (they didn't call them "old boys" then; they weren't old enough for that) worked out the new programme and laid it, a labour of love, before the Legislative Assembly to be duly preserved in Appendix I.I.I. (In those simple days they called the first Appendix, or sessional paper as now known, A, and the next B, and on to Z; then they began again with AA, BB, . . . to ZZ; then if there was any more to say it was AAA, BBB, etc. It's a good plan; done like that (statistics never need stop).

Here is the programme, and—as that man in the States says—believe it or not.

*Proposed Course of Education in Upper Canada College, Aug. 6, 1851. Sixth Form. Scripture; Map of Palestine—Greek Testament—Arithmetic, same as Fifth Form, with Allegation and Simple and Double Position—Mental Arithmetic—Euclid, Books IV and VI with Definitions of V—Shakespeare—Burke on the Sublime and English Composition—Algebra—Homer, Iliad, Book IV, and Odyssey, Book IX—Lucian (life)—Xenophon, Anabasis with retranslation—Cicero, Oratio in Catilinam and retranslation—Horace, Odes, III—Livy—Geometrical Drawing—Latin Grammar, kept up—Greek Grammar to end of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Book—French, same as Fifth Form with Henriade and  $\frac{1}{2}$  History of France—Dictation—Anthon's Latin Versification—Arnold's Latin Prose Composition (pp. 163–260), Arnold's Greek Prose Composition, second  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the Book—Light and Optics (Comstock's Philosophy (pp. 209–72)—Elocution Reader, Vaudenhoff—Modern Geography (America and Africa)—Physical Geography, Somerville, pp. 158–254—Ancient Geography and History (Putey, pp. 1–96)—Greek Versification—Smith's Antiquities (Third  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Book)—Music—Singing—Ornamental Drawing.*

It looks unbelievable, doesn't it? You wouldn't think anybody could know all that; neither would I, except that I learnt it all in 1886–7. The programme was a little changed by then; some of it never "got by"; some gradually got left off. What happened was that if the university tacked on a subject to compulsory matriculation the school kept it. If not, do what you might, it faded out. When I was at Upper Canada music and ornamental drawing were gone—at least were snuffy, optional subjects. Scripture was pretty dead; the First Form had it but the Sixth weren't responsible for it; Anthon and his verse were out. But we had taken on a new cargo of English History (till 1815 only), Trigonometry and German.

The big change was geography—clean gone from its high place, moving downwards form by form, the heart

all out of it. It was still needed for High School Entrance, but no one was "liable to geography" after that. As a consequence the subject had dwindled from its glorious meaning in the days of the Strabos ; and the Ptolemys ; and Martin Behaim cartographers of the New World. It just meant a map with a list of names, and a master half asleep, or thinking of something else, saying, "Now then, first boy, name the capes of Europe— Second boy, name the capes of Africa" . . . Funny world we lived in—all colours and capes.

Thus died geography. And now come people and tell us that it isn't dead after all but only asleep a hundred years. It's like the beautiful sleeping princess behind the wood of thorns. And enthusiasts like Professor Griffith Taylor of Toronto are already hacking away at the thorn bushes to get her out ; for proof of which I invite any reader to turn to the stimulating pages of some of his papers on the subject : *Structure and Settlement in Canada*, *The Geographical Approach to European History*, and to his book of 1937, *Environment, Race and Migration*. But finish this article first, because when Professor Taylor and his fellow-workers have rescued the geographical princess, I want to marry her to Darwin, or Lyell, or some of her own contemporaries ; I must not say, the First Electric Spark.

I hope that no one will here interrupt, or shall I say, wake up, to tell me that I am proposing to do something that has already been done. I am well acquainted with many of the new books, on both sides of the Atlantic, which expand Geography into something far beyond the old list of capes—which make it as it were a description, illustrated and detailed, of all the world and its people. There has been indeed a notable development of geography as general literature. There is no more fascinating reading than the books dealing with mankind in relation to physical environment, and the animated and detailed description of the uttermost parts of the earth that go with them. One thinks here of the

work of Professor Elsworth Huntington, . . . E. C. Semple, and H. Jeffreys, the author of *The Earth, its Origin and Physical History*.

I freely admit, however, that I find it hard to accept, difficult to swallow, the new term "ecology" which has come to us with these books. It sounds a little too much like being sick. But this literature at its highest reach is not part of a school or college curriculum but something that comes after it, something which a proper college education should enable one to read. In its lower reach, it appears in works obviously meant as educational. Some of these new books are, I admit, excellent of their kind. One may cite Jasper Stenbridge's *The World*, one of the new Oxford Geographers (1939); the excellent *World Geography for Canadian Schools* (Denton and Lord, 1942), the nearest approach, I know, to what I have in mind but still without enough segregated science; or again the widely-used *Canadian School Geography* of Professor Cornish (1922). These books are miles ahead of the old Atlas Geographies out of which we used to learn the projecting capes and the coloured counties.

But the difficulty with all such books, admirable though they are, is that they do not attain the goal that might be reached because they lack a full appreciation of what it is. Thus for want of a better conscious purpose they are driven towards expanding Geography into cumulated description of what countries are like, and then more description of other countries. It is like the three wishes accorded to the sailor who had saved a fairy's life, and registered as—rum, and then more rum, and as the final wish, after reflection—some more rum. Many geographers never get beyond that, especially when the facile aid of illustration can make a book like a picture film; here, Laplanders in the Snow, there Arabs in the Sun, Pygmies in the equatorial forest, Canadian Lumbermen walking on ten acres of saw-logs, and Constantinople without a saw-log in sight.



Another most plausible expansion is coaxed off into what is called Commercial Geography. This is like letting cattle out into a big pasture ; they're off, Heaven knows where—past pictures of the Bank of England, past columns of statistics, lists of exports, description of frozen-meat steamers from Argentine—a mass of stuff which is certainly *information* but doesn't somehow seem to be study.

Here again is "*Human Geography*," the fortunate phrase by good old Jean Brunhes, while still young, so fortunate that he lived on it for the rest of his life. It is marvellous what a good title does ; it turns otherwise indifferent people into peasants at a peep show. I am sure that if Dr. Cudmore of Ottawa would label his admirable *Year Book*, "*The Pageant of Arithmetic*," it would be a best seller. So with Jean Brunhes. The appeal of his phrase is so instantaneous that no one stops to ask if there is anything in it. "*Human Geography*"—it sounds as if there must be. But it means too much or too little—mankind on earth?—where do you stop? It's like Bob Benchley's remark on India—"India, what does the name *not* suggest?" To which Benchley himself gives the answer—"a hell of a lot of things." But whatever "*Human Geography*" and its counterpart "*Ecology*" suggest they are certainly not studies for an academic curriculum, least of all to a school.

The proposal I have to make is that of an ordered system of study, what used to be called a *Schema*, as follows :

#### GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCE

- I. Astro-Physical Science—The Earth and the Universe.
- II. Geology—The Physical Evolution of the Earth.
- III. Biology—The Evolution of Life and Man . . .  
(including Anthropology and Races).
- IV. Physical Geography—The surface of the Globe  
(Climate, Resources, Power).
- V, VI, VII, VIII, IX.—Political Geography by  
Continents (or sub-divided some other way).

Looking at these divisions at large one sees the attempt is made to cover a vast ground in a small compass, a thing condemned by certain minds as doomed to failure from the start. My own opinion is exactly to the contrary. I admit that in the actual development of a child's mind from infancy, details come first, generalization later. No child can start with a broad general view of its parents, or a working outline of its nurse. Even when lessons begin it can't start with a preliminary theory of the alphabet but must take it letter by letter. But this stage passes. Later on this process is reversed. The true way to learn history is to begin with the general history of the world—all on one page, learned in an hour; then to pass to an advanced History of the World—ten pages spread over a week, and so on. For all the above subjects the broad view of the total is more interesting, more profitable, more lasting than to begin on one end of a string of details like a goat eating a rope. With some subjects, I admit, it is not possible to begin with a broad view. With Arithmetic most people live and die without ever getting it—indeed are glad to—since it only comes away near the back of the book as the Theory of Numbers.

Nor let it be said that under such a Schema as mine the pupils (we are at school, you note, not college) learn so little of a subject that what they learn is practically useless. This is exactly wrong; it is taken from old adages of the classical scholarship days—"a little learning is a dangerous thing"—"learning maketh a full man." Inspired by such precepts pupils in Latin learned all five declensions and all four conjugations and all the deponent verbs before they learned to say *How d'ye do?* In fact they never said it. The malicious word "smattering" was invented to warn off amateurs and outsiders from the field of knowledge. As a matter of fact there is nothing like a good smattering of as many things as you can smatter. Any student of living languages knows what a lot you can thus get from a little. Only one

subject I admit to be an exception—Chemistry. A little smattering of chemistry might help to blow you up or poison you, that's all. It doesn't help you to live. Chemistry we leave alone. Where chemistry meets life, it joins hands with physics, anyway. As to physics, the working parts of it are, or should be, parts of mathematics. You can work out Galileo's falling stones and Kepler's Areas as mathematics. When we get further on, to the constitution of matter, then Maxwell's Equations, and Planck's Constant and Niel Bohr's hop-skip-and-jump electron are so utterly beyond your reach and mine that we can only take them as read, and ask the ultimate physicist where we are to get off at.

That is what I mean by division I. The structure of the universe—leaving out of it as calmly, as Herbert Spencer left out the Unknowable—the question of how the universe began, and when it's going to stop, and what it is really made of—this structure, I say, can be presented in intelligible, useful form—ought to be so presented as part of a decent education. Most geography books do present it, or attempt to, but perhaps in too "earthly" a fashion, too many tides, too much moon, not enough outer universe. I admit that some books are very good. All of them of necessity run into the difficulty of who made the universe and when? To which the answer seems to be, regretfully, "Hush——" or as Amos and Andy say, "Why bring that up?" Nor will we bring it up here; how to reconcile scientific phenomena with dogmatic interpretation is a problem solved so far only in Tennessee.

But the value of this elementary astro-physical knowledge, and the instinctive recognition of its value, is shown by the increasing popular demand for popular science of the universe. Such titles as the *Mysterious Universe*, the *Stars in Their Course*, *An Outline of the Universe*, *Life on Other Worlds*, run round the English-speaking world. The same uneasy taboo as hushes the teaching of astro-physics warns and whispers in the background

of the Divisions of Geology and Biology, and with the same difficulty of solution. But a compromise seems to have been reached whereby if the teachers hurry past "ultimate beginnings"—as past a graveyard in the dark—they may walk where they will in the daylight beyond. Nor should there be any need to expatiate here on the value of an outline of such studies.

Physical Geography needs no advocacy since it is in the books now. It needs only trimming into form, to fit in with the knowledge already imparted. Political Geography speaks for itself. It is the original geography of kingdoms and republics, their configuration and boundaries, even the *capes*. It deals with the names on the map.

One other division I had planned, but scarcely venture to include—a division of Economic and Social Organization. I deeply distrust it. One would have to be as careful with it as with putting a sleeping draft into a pudding. Political Economy has, quite obviously, turned out to be the Idiot Boy of the Scientific Family; all the more pitiful, as having been so bright at first; put up on a chair to recite by old Dr. Adam Smith and Mr. Ricardo—and then somehow went wrong; never really grew up though utterly overgrown in the physical sense; sits there and mutters, poor boy, about "marginal consumption," and "consumers' increment," and if you don't watch him will try to steal mathematics, actually take a formula and hide it under his chair. . . . As to Sociology—there's another disappointment. My Heavens! The girl never stops talking. What about? About anything! She'll start any topic, or you'll start it, and she'll break out into that silly laugh and exclaim, "Say! that's Sociology, isn't it? Say! I'm going to make a whole book on that. What did you say it was? The Influence of the Moon on Digestion! Isn't that bully!"

The only bother is that these two afflicted creatures are sitting on some really good things—such as Transport

and Communications, and Mechanical Invention. We'll have to coax them off somehow. We might hunt up some of those big sawdust dolls, empty the classics out and let them fill them with their stuff. . . .

However, as Mr. Joe Macdougall has said in his *Goblin* poem about the Professor, "That will be all for to-day."

## CHAPTER VIII

### *An Apology for the British Empire*

IT IS related of George III that a learned divine once presented to the king his new volume, *An Apology for the Bible*. "I did not know," said the simple monarch, "that the Bible needed an apology." It was explained to him that the word *apology* was used in its Greek meaning of a defence. It is in this sense that I want to offer an apology for the British Empire, a humble apology, as coming from a person without rank or honour, neither a statesman nor a general, but just a subject of the King, and glad to be one. Such qualifications as I have to voice the apology rest upon an English childhood, a life-time mostly spent in Canada but with much knowledge at first hand of the other Dominions, as of the United States.

There has been of late some queer talk and odd misunderstanding about the British Empire. Mr. Churchill has found it necessary to explain that we are not liquidating the Empire after the war. Others, on the contrary, have suggested that the parts of the Empire unable to look after themselves should be put under "international control." This is a status, a straight-jacket, entirely fitted for blood-crazy Germans and treacherous "wops," but scarcely for the people living in peace in the open freedom of the Empire.

Nor do we want to be internationalized, any of us, in the Empire; I don't, and the Canadians don't, and the Nigerian boys don't, nor the Cingalese, nor the Bahamians nor the shepherds that watch their flocks on the windswept Falkland Islands—none of us. How would you like international control for the United States?—or even for Chicago?

Such a notion can only come from a very feeble understanding of what the Empire is and does.

The British Empire covers about one-quarter of the globe (13,353,000 square miles) and includes about one-quarter (525,000,000) of its inhabitants. It's a pity it's not bigger. It is made up of a group of six Associated Commonwealths and about fifty, more or less, dependent areas.

Constitutionally the Empire is supposed to be held together by the Statute of Westminster, a British imperial statute of 1931. But that's just a suppose. In reality it is just held together by a vast gentlemen's agreement, and in the case of Ireland it isn't even gentlemanly.

The Statute of Westminster indeed is just a myth, a sort of idealization of unity or reality otherwise created. We keep it just as the Nigerian savages keep a wooden God with big glass eyes in the half-dark of a grass bungalow. People shake when they go in. So do our lawyers. But in plain logic the Statute won't stand overhauling. It was passed by the British Parliament in 1931, after advice from an Imperial Conference, and then sent on to the Dominions. So far it has never been accepted, not on its face value. Australia never ratified it; meant to and never has yet. There seemed something fishy about it, some trick in it. So in twelve years they haven't touched it. South Africa ratified it, yes indeed, they ratified the life out of it, with a local statute that ripped it to pieces. Canada didn't formally ratify it, but accepted it, took it as read, till they found that if it went into force it would tie up Canada hand and foot with no supreme public authority left. We can only amend our Constitution by an imperial statute, in other words, by calling the Westminster Statute off. Newfoundland, shivering and starving with the depression, accepted the Statute and then gave up Dominion

Status (1935) and crawled back into its little old colonial cot where it had slept since 1583. Ireland, call it Eire, if you know how, never even looked at the Statute of Westminster. They made a Constitutional Amendment Act of their own (1936). By this the British King is King of Ireland, but not King of Ireland in Ireland, only outside of it. To find the solution turn to the back of the book.

That's the sole connection of Ireland with the Empire, except its language. Even as to that, they're working hard to restore the old Gaelic. If they're not careful, they'll learn to speak it and then they'll be sorry.

I forgot—one Dominion ratified the Statute, New Zealand. But any British person, knowing New Zealand, would take that for granted. Down there they ratify anything as soon as they see the British trade mark. New Zealand is New Britain, about 150 per cent. British. Same size of islands (110,000 sq. miles), upside down in the Pacific instead of right side up in the Atlantic. Same people exactly, English and Scots, with enough Irish to make an Irish vote, a thing you have to have in any British country, like pepper in a soup. In a population of 1,600,000 we may leave out the 80,000 native Maoris—great fellows, all admit, a big asset in any trouble. *A! Kia! Kia!* Come on, boys! Climate just the same as "at home," plenty of rough snow for the Scots down south, rain for the Irish and for the English, meadow-land beside willows, and cricket and the bells of the Church of England. . . .

So that's the way the major parts of the Empire, the Associated Commonwealth, hang together—associated under the same King. In reality, not quite even that, for they have to accept him separately. As a matter of fact King George VI didn't begin to reign in England



till he had been reigning for a day already in South Africa and in Ireland he didn't reign for another day after that.

The Crown is the imperial link. Legally there is no other except, oddly enough, that Canada keeps up the appeal from its own law courts to the final decision of the British Privy Council in London. We get better justice. It must be better because it costs ten times as much, as our lawyers assure us on their return from pleading.

Associated also under the British Crown are all kinds of areas—*islands, colonies, naval and military stations, protectorates*, all round the globe. It's hard to count them: some are half in the Empire and half out. But they number about sixty units of government. At first sight they seem to defy classification, but when you look close they seem to represent a beautiful symmetry of structure according to how much, how little, or how not at all, they govern themselves. Canada governs itself. So does Southern Rhodesia—almost—the Governor, the Ministerial Cabinet and everything, look like real, but in reality certain ground is "reserved." Nearly as much, not quite, the Bahamas (West Indies, class I, Partly White)—a parliament, but the cabinet not exactly a cabinet. Vote granted to all who have a very small property qualification. Most haven't.

And so you pass on down through the grades and degrees till you come to the great protectorates of the tropics, the places where white men cannot live.

Take one as a sample. . . .

Here is Nigeria. It is a vast tropical river country sunk in the hollow side of West Africa, a huge place,

with low coasts all surf and foam, swamps, jungles, fever and the sleeping-sickness, then dense equatorial forests, then wide plains of grass, on into the heart of Africa to die in the desert. Nigeria covers half a million square miles—more than the whole Atlantic sea-board of the United States. There is a native population of 25,000,000 people. The climate never varies, each day awful. White people cannot *live* there; those who survive go home. This was the famous Bight of Benin where “for one that comes out there were ten who went in.”

And how many white people do you suppose “hold down” this vast protectorate of 25,000,000 people? About two or three hundred. There are in all 5,000 whites but a large proportion of these are missionaries, nurses and teachers, holding down a job, not a country, along with the clerks and traders of the steamship companies and the Staff of Government House. The whole Nigerian national defence (pre-war) consisted of three guns ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches each), four battalions of infantry, one mortar and a signal-school class. But even at that the whole army is black, anyway, except the officers and those who have to use signals in the dark. That’s how Nigeria is “held down” by imperialism. In other words the people of Nigeria could rise up and kill all the whites in one day. But why should they? So could the people of Omaha, Nebraska, rise up and kill all the commercial travellers. But I doubt if they would care to.

How was this vast undisturbed rule brought about? It was like this. The British are terribly lazy about fighting. They like to get it over and done with and then get up a game of cricket. In the tropics cricket is played on coco-nut matting. Well, Nigeria grows one-half of the world’s coco-nuts. So there you are! What with playing cricket and learning how to mix a gin fizz and to tie on one-piece, two-leg cotton pants, the place was civilized in no time. Not quite, of course. The British took away all the brutalities of savagery—the hideous human sacrifices of Ashanti—and left only its pleasant

sides, such as polygamy. Cannibalism went right out as soon as the American canned food came in.

The Government!—yes, there's a real Government House at Lagos with all the forms that go with it, but mostly the Nigerians, those inland, govern themselves under their own chiefs, Emirs and such. All the revenue raised in taxes wouldn't keep Chicago going for six months. As to religion it's entirely free, but Mohammedanism beats Christianity to a standstill. Yet the few Christian converts are full of zeal, expecting the day of judgement any time, and all set for it with music.

Some natives, it must be admitted, want a change. They have had enough education to look around and compare other countries. They want to be like Canada: you can hardly blame them. So they talk in a vague way of a great Gold Coast Nation under the British flag—by taking in all the other odd lots between the Congo and Senegal. It may come some day, or something like it, but meantime this is not a political scheme, just a forlorn African fancy, like the Golden Gates and the Year of Jubilo! Longfellow's dreaming slave came from the Gold Coast.

Now, can any sane person think of setting up a European International Committee—of Dagos, Wops and Slats—to look after Nigeria! And if "International" means British, we've got it already. If it means American and British, that's all right if they promise not to introduce baseball—after all, we saw them first.

Nigeria is just one of ever so many such areas, great and small. It is the biggest of them next to India but the pattern is the same all the globe round.

**India is of course the Empire's problem. By all means**

give it self-government. But how do you do it? You can't start self-government with a civil war. In the United States there was a century between the Stamp Act and the Civil War. But imagine the situation if the North and the South had been all ready to start the Civil War as soon as Independence was granted. That's India. There is no such thing as the Indian nation. There are in India over 200 nations, as distinguished by distinct languages. The great mass of the Moslem races cannot tolerate the Hindu races, nor the Hindus the Moslems. The Hindus think the Moslems rough and uncultivated, people of physical force and not of the spirit. The Moslems think the Hindus a set of flabby intellectuals, not men at all. It's the difference between football players and divinity students. We have it in all the colleges. The football teams would liquidate the divinity students, only they're not allowed to. That's India. While the British stay, liquidation can't start.

An American lawyer would say, Federate India. You can't. It won't. Inside the Moslems the Sikhs refuse any rule but British. No "pakistan" for them. All through Hindu India are the cast-out people, the "untouchables," the 60,000,000 people that the rest won't eat with, from whose hands they will not even take water. Are they to be slaves? You can't talk freedom to men who treat 60,000,000 others as dogs.

There is no union in India but the British Raj and the English language and the imported British transport and industrialism. India is a misfit. It was old when England began, full when England was empty, and fallen asleep over dead books when England learned to read with Shakespeare and think with Newton.

Except to Great Britain India has no meaning for the Empire, no cohesion nor even any commercial interest. To us in Canada it is utterly alien. We would never dream of letting in Indians, touchable or untouchable.

We forbid their immigration, not by law but a lawyer's trick. In Australia they forbid it flat out. South Africa let them in till they began to swamp Natal, then shut the door. In all goodwill there can be no co-operation between India and the Dominions except by and through and because of Britain. Cut that out and it's all gone.

What can be done about India? International Control by a Committee? They have 222 nations already. Anyway, they'd only send Mr. Gandhi in a loincloth to lie down and die on the committee's doorstep—it's called Swa-raj, or Swa-slush, or something. There's no answer. We always pick Gandhi up and feed him.

There is nothing to be done but wait. If and when the people in India agree, all of them, or most of them, on what they want, and cut out that hideous untouchable stuff—then, I am sure, they can have Dominion Government to-morrow.

So India must for the present stay as it is. You can't have a free, united state till you have first a free, united people. At present the Indians in India won't let one another be that.

India must stay and the Empire must stay. You can't mark it out with rule and compass as we mark out on the flat ground of empty prairie an Oklahoma or an Alberta before it is there. Such places can begin with a ready-made constitution put up over them like a circus tent—you can't do that with older places. The Empire is a long produce of history. It began as a mixed result of national defence and plundering the Spanish Main. It was hard to tell a patriot from a pirate. Some were both. Then it shifted into adventure and commerce and refugee settlement. Puritans sang in the wilderness, till they were too busy with business and stopped singing. Empire wars with France and Spain came and went,

accepted like rounds in a prize-fight. Then came the Independence of America. We are just getting over it after 100 years. That started Australia and New Zealand.

The first Great War of 1793-1815 brought in more colonies than they could use. They gave back some, like Argentina. Then followed the wonderful era of free trade with all men brothers, too good to be true—there weren't enough brothers. Then the scramble to partition Africa and Asia and everything left over. That's when many people first learned the word imperialism and learned to hate it. But that is half a century ago, as long ago and as far away as Rudyard Kipling's *Mandalay*.

That's not the Empire to-day. We know better now. The Empire to-day means co-operation of hundreds of millions of people not on equal terms, but on decent terms. What would have been a hundred discordant states, each a powerless prey for rapacity to destroy, has turned to the united buttresses that held alone a while the falling walls of a broken world.

We prefer to keep all this going under a set of mediæval forms and observances, offices and dignities that sound as the very converse of popular liberty and equality. We pretend that the King is an absolute sovereign, and to make him look like it we surround him with Beefeaters, Lords of the Buckhounds, Norroy Kings-at-Arms, a Pursuivant Unicorn, a Red Dragon and an officer of the Black Rod. These are all actual offices, but in reality these people are as harmless as a pack of cards, ranking somewhere below a full house. And with that we have Dukes and Earls who pay feudal homages, giving the King dead birds once a year, other offices all gone except the salary, and salaries all gone except the office, and an official list of precedence—it is a fact—that distinguishes seventy-one classes of British subjects before it even lets in Gentlemen. The point of it all is that it works. People like a bit of humbug. If a reader

of this book heard that the King had appointed him Keeper of the Swans, he'd be all over town with it in a minute.

That's the way we run the Empire. Now send us along that International Committee and we'll invite them to a cricket match, and let them see all Australia beat half England, have a gin-fizz with the Archbishop of Canterbury and go home.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Britain and Canada*

#### *Old Phases and New*

MANY OF us are wishing now that we had learned more while we were still at school about the British Empire and how it is made up and how it works. Our recollection of the old school geography doesn't help us much. We recall a picture of the solar system in full swing, with a huge earth sweeping around an insignificant sun, and after that the names of the counties of Ontario and the capes of North America. But indeed the whole vast system which we call the British Empire presents in its structure such a mass of oddities and inconsistencies that not even the lawyers can understand it. Is it one solid unit, or just a collection of units, "freely associating" while they care to, and off somewhere else when they are ready to? There is supposed to be at the centre of it a body called the Privy Council, or more properly the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, to decide all cases that arise in regard to the laws and constitutions of the Empire. This is a very pleasant thing for the lawyers, as they have to take long trips at someone else's expense (lawyers never travel on their own) from various parts of the Empire to see what the Privy Council thinks of some contested case. As a matter of fact, the Privy Council, made of wise, experienced men, far too wise to think on their own account, merely whisper to the visiting lawyers, "What do they think about the matter over in your country?" and they say, "Well, that's what we think too. . . ." As a matter of fact, some parts of the Empire, namely Eire (don't call it Ireland) and South Africa, no longer consent to appeal to the Privy



Council—which is a pity as they lose a lot of goodwill and friendly intercourse.

But, in reality, the British Empire doesn't hang together by any set of hard and fast statutes, such as the Statute of Westminster (1931) that everybody talks about and nobody understands. This statute was passed by the British parliament and declares, practically in the same breath, that the Empire is permanent and that it can be dissolved at will. Nor need the Americans laugh at this, since it is practically what their Constitution said from 1789 till 1865 about the relation of the States to the Federal Government. It took a whole Civil War to find out what it did mean.

We've learned, with the help of this American experience, a better system of dealing with our imperial constitution. We don't ask what it *means*; we just take it as a sort of "gentlemen's agreement." There are certain things which it is "the thing" to do, and others that you simply "don't do" because it's not "the thing" to do them. It's like cricket—which many of you Canadians have now seen as played in England. When we play it in my home town of Orillia, or yours of Sussex, New Brunswick, or Red Deer, Alberta, there's lots of fighting and disputes in it, almost as good as American baseball, with argument and tumult around the umpire, so that you can't see which one he is till they carry him off the field. But in England cricket is cricket; you mustn't dispute or argue. It's not "the thing." If you're fielding at square leg (ask the nearest Englishman where that is) and you get a paste with the ball in the pit of the stomach, you mustn't complain; you must just say, "Sorry, old man." That's addressed to the bowler. Ask the Englishman why you say you're sorry for his sake; it wasn't his stomach.

What I am really trying to say is that all government rests, not on codes and laws (those are for criminals), but on decency, kindly feeling and a proper idea of the merits and rights and the good sides of others. This is especially

true of our British Empire. We couldn't live a day without it. You should carry the idea up to the verge of truth, and for the sake of good fellowship, even a little beyond. I've had the good luck to see a great many parts of the British Empire and I make it a rule to praise it all. If a man says he comes from Jamaica, I say, "And, now there's an island! . . . if you like . . ." So it is; it's an island. And if a man tells me he's from Western Australia, I say, "My! my! What country, especially up inland past Calgourlie! How fertile! I've seen a cabbage growing there in the open without support. . . ." And for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, "Ah, now there's a climate for you! Never cold; that is, never *severely* cold; never far below zero—in summer. . . ."

Nor do I say this to try to be funny. I mean it in earnest. And when you've done with your fellow Britisher, use it on an American and tell him that Nevada is your idea of a summer resort.

But just now we're to talk only of Britain and Canada and to illustrate various imperial phases through them. You may notice at once the difficulty, as all throughout the Empire, of finding suitable names. Britain. Where's that? When I was young, there was no such place outside of a poetry book. We always used to say "England"—to mean in a general sense—well, whatever "Britain" means now. A poet of the Crimean War days could write, "One more gone for England's sake, where so many go," though perhaps the man fallen in the snow was a Scotchman; and a learned professor could write a whole book called *The Expansion of England*, as if Ireland and Scotland hadn't swelled up, too.

Presently the other parts of—well, of what they are all parts of—got touchy about it. They wouldn't be called "England" any more. The Channel Islands were especially bitter. They considered that they had conquered England under their own Duke in 1066 and that England was therefore an annex of the Channel Islands.

Believe it or not, this fiction was actually kept up till 1914; the British parliament didn't legislate for the Islands and had no power there except through the King—but not as King—as ex-Duke of Normandy. This fairyland fell under the shadow of the 1914-18 War Income Tax.

But what name could be used? "Great Britain" leaves out Ireland. "British Isles" won't fit in ordinary sentences. The "United Kingdom" is a law term. So now we say "Britain"; when we get settled to it, we shall talk of taking a trip to "Britain," which in my youth would have sounded like going to "Caledonia" or running over to "Erin."

The name "Canada" used to be just as bad but is now pretty well straightened out. Nobody knows where it came from. When Jacques Cartier came up the St. Lawrence in 1535 on his way to McGill University (then called Hochelaga), he came to the great river that we call Saguenay—in fact, the Indians told him that up this and beyond it, farther west, was the Kingdom of Saguenay, full of gold and diamonds; they were right in a way. Savage legend always has a background. They meant the Hollinger mine, and God's Lake and Flin-Flon, the legend of gold and silver beyond the divide, which later turned out to be true. But they told Cartier, also, that if he went on up the river he would come to "Canada," and when he got to where Quebec is they said, "This is Canada and beyond it is Hochelaga" (corner of McGill College Avenue and Burnside). . . . What did the name mean? We don't know. Some said it was Algonquin *Kanata*—the narrows; some said it was Algonquin *Kanada*—a collection of wigwams. Later someone made a joke, "It's Spanish *Aca-Nada*"—meaning "nothing there." That joke got into the schoolbooks of my youth as dead earnest (the education department in Ontario was Scotch) and stayed there. So we don't know. The French called the country *New France*—a name that was, so to speak, spilt on the Ameri-

can coast (1524) by Verrazano (he never landed north of New Hampshire), and then picked up again by Chaplain. It was the official name of the country till the Conquest, but by about the year 1700 people commonly used "Canada" and even put it in official correspondence.

After the cession of 1763, the British government adopted the name "*Quebec*" for its new possession, the reason being that General Amherst and General Murray both declared that they couldn't find out just how much territory the French meant by Canada. So Quebec it was, on a small scale, till 1774, and then it was the huge Quebec of the Quebec Act of that year, which reached from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, and took in Chicago, what there was of it to take—mudflats, reeds and an Indian Portage—and perhaps a Rotary Club.

The schoolbooks may have led you to think that France and England fought for the possession of Canada (1754–63). They didn't. They weren't thinking of it. They were fighting, so to speak, for the United States, for the marvellous Ohio territory just being revealed in all its park-land fertility. After the war the English didn't want Canada particularly, to which fact we owe a great deal of the freedom of our present institutions and especially the privileges of church and speech and nationality extended to French Canada, which alone made possible our Confederation.

A lot of the silly nonsense talked about Canada as a land of desolation began right then and has kept up till to-day. Voltaire's sneer about "the snow" passed down in history, and people forgot the last, wistful phrase of the departing Governor Vaudreuil, "a vast and beautiful country. . . ."

But I was talking of the name. "Canada" never got on the map till England decided to keep it and use it, after the loyalists came in, to name Upper and Lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec) in 1791, and after that, in 1841, when they united the two together as the

Province of Canada. That lasted till 1867 when the name "Canada" was used to cover all British North America—yes, all, because Newfoundland was invited in. But even long after that, forty years after that, people in the Maritimes used the term "Canada" to mean a separate place; within my own recollection—and mind you, I'm not even eighty—I've heard Nova Scotia people say they had never been in "Canada." . . . That's changed now. So, too, with the North-West. "Canada" meant another country from their own till after 1869. . . . And with British Columbia till 1871. . . . The name triumphs now; it reaches from the forty-ninth parallel to the North Pole, in a long sort of wedge like a slice of orange peel. We own more of the North Pole than any other nation, except the Russians.

Even these casual references to history show something about where we got our relationships with Britain. Pretty thin they were at first. We "owned" the Maritimes (the huge Nova Scotia that reached to what was called Massachusetts) as far back as 1713. But what there was of them was all French. Then as the shadow of a new war fell, things began to happen. The British government deliberately founded Halifax so as to have a real footing in Nova Scotia, founded it mostly with old soldiers, all pipeclay and mitred helmets (see Mr. Jefferys' picture of the Foundation), but so unhandy on the land they couldn't even grow cabbages. So for that the government of England sent out a set of distressed Germans and located them at Lunenburg in Nova Scotia. There were always "distressed Germans" in those days, ready to be sent out to America. I forget what they were distressed about; something pretty tough, I hope.

Every mother and every mother country has a favourite child. Now Halifax, all hearty British as compared with the West Indies, all black, and with the American plantations, fractious and bothersome, was the favourite child of the mother country. And so the law officers of

the Crown decided (that is, somebody whispered it to them) that the settlers had an inherent British right to an elected assembly. They got it in 1758 and that became, and is, one of the great precedents of the British imperial system. . . .

The dark side of this picture, the reverse of this bright medal, was the forcible moving out, the expulsion of the Arcadian French of Nova Scotia, some 6,000 of them, shipped away, some here, some there, with no compensation for their land or their stock. It makes bad reading. The British government tried to plead that the imminence of a new war made these people a danger, as they might fight on the side of France. One hopes they would have. But tears have fallen for nearly a century over the pages of Longfellow's *Evangeline* which chronicles their fate.

That much there was of British . . . and out in the West the wide sovereignty of the Hudson's Bay Company, under their Charter of 1670, covered all the watershed of Hudson Bay, and, by extension, all the Pacific coast, over two million square miles. . . . It was all called Rupert's Land then (after the wonderful Prince Rupert who founded the Company). The name lasted officially till 1869. It only survives now in the name of the Province of Rupert's Land. But the North-West—the common name for it—was far more Scottish than English. The Company's vessels sailed from London around Scotland to the Bay. Most of their men on the ships and at the forts were Scots— Islanders at that. The canoemen and servants were French, or French half-breed Métis: The language of the West was French and Indian Cree, with Scottish for the parlour. . . . The West was empty till 1870. The Roman poet Virgil said that to found the Roman Empire was *tanta molis*—Latin for "a hell of a business." But he'd never seen Canada.

Through this maze of history, where did our government come in? Where did we get those privileges, presently rights, that gradually removed us from the control of Great Britain? As usual with British people,

much of it was accident, much of it was done by the Turkish system of doing nothing, and much of it, most of it, a result of that inherent "decency" towards other people and towards those who can't hit back, that is the characteristic of the free government that grew up under British and American democracy. This democracy has not been the result of theory but of instinct and temperament; the fact came first and the theory afterwards. It is always thus; professors of theory merely hold post-mortems.

With us in Canada the sequence of development in our relations with Britain ran like this: The grant of freedom of religion to the Roman Catholic French in Canada (1763) gave it, of necessity, to all Roman Catholics. In England they didn't have it till the emancipation of 1829. When the Loyalists came in (1784 and on), they had to have representative assemblies by virtue of the Halifax precedent and by what they had left at home. Here began Upper Canada's first government under Governor Simcoe. We may admit that Simcoe made it as aristocratic as he could; his little parliament at Niagara was all feathers, forms, uniforms, salutes of guns and speeches from the throne—in fact, just like "home." From him and from his senior, Lord Dorchester, we carried down a lot of those queer formalities of government that mean so little to the cynic, so much to the philosopher. But aristocracy wouldn't work in Upper and Lower Canada (1791–1841). It broke down under the Rebellion of 1837, after which the British government hanged the rebels and adopted their programme. That gave the united province of Canada (1841–67) responsible government with a cabinet of its own, so that it controlled everything except foreign policy trade and navigation, etc.—all local things. Old-fashioned Tories, like the Duke of Wellington, were reported "thunderstruck" when they heard of giving a colony its own government. But old-fashioned Tories always are thunderstruck. That's how they live; indig-

nation keeps them warm. Cabinet government for the Province of Canada gave it automatically to the Maritimes.

Cabinet government failed to work in the Province of Canada, because the parties simply couldn't get a majority that was a majority in each section (Canada East and West) and of each race, and also of the whole.

Hence the plan of a wide union of all British North America. Everybody had talked of this for years as an ideal. But ideals never come true till something else happens. It was the American Civil War, that and the naughty Fenians who grew out of it, that chased all the scattered British North American Colonies into Confederation like chickens into a coop. Great Britain was the mother hen herding them in, with a peck here and a push there—a railway for Nova Scotia, a railway for B.C.—and free leave for them all to divide up the Hudson's Bay Company's land. . . . In they came, and they couldn't get out.

Confederation in 1867, however, was on a different footing from our present relations. The British soldiers were still here till 1871; the British Navy at Halifax and Esquimalt till 1903. All foreign policy was managed from Downing Street—no Canadian ambassadors or ministers—treaties all made for us, though a Canadian might be invited to "sit in" and see it done, as Sir John A. Macdonald at the Washington Treaty of 1871. We couldn't even hang our own criminals at first (not till 1878), as the fountain of mercy only flowed from Downing Street through the Governor-General. But now the Minister of Justice runs the fountain from his own tap of tears.

So it was with all of it. Bit by bit the special reservations, treaty powers, etc., all wore away. The Red River Rebellion of 1869 was put down (frightened away) by mingled imperial regulars and Canadian militia. The Rebellion of 1885 was put down with all-Canadian forces, with only an imperial general running up and down to



show them how—or how not, I forget which. . . . A string of Imperial Conferences presently turned the chief colonies into Dominions, and by the Great War of 1914 they were practically as free as Great Britain itself.

But the real thing was that Canada outgrew the idea of its own inferiority to Britain that had vexed its earlier years. No doubt the mingling of population in the great immigration (1900-13) helped a lot by welding into the structure of the Dominion the temper of American and Scandinavian people—some newcomers, we may admit, didn't help much and in some spots the thing was overdone, but in the main it helped to make a greater Canadian self-reliance. Other things helped also, other aspects of culture. British scholarship and learning; Latin and Greek, the seniority and sneeriness of Oxford, the dead weight of the classical tradition, sat heavy on the chest of Canadian academic aspirations. Ask any of us who spent years and years of study to get a B.A. degree at Toronto or Queens in the early 'nineties, only to find that a better B.A. (in the world's eyes) could be got at Oxford in less time on brandy and soda. They had other degrees, too, I admit. This burden sat until presently it got heaved off by the rise of the great practical science schools in Canada, McGill and others, with all the water-power of a continent thundering in their ears, with mines and mountains for geologists to rifle . . . schools, beside which the practical science schools of England were nursery games. Soon after 1900, hundreds of British students came over to "get science" in Canada as humbly as Canadian students went to pick up crumbs of Greek under the Oxford table. . . .

But at this point, with a lot still to say about British and Canadian culture, I must close. As the professors say to their classes, "that will be all for to-day," expecting a deep sigh.

## CHAPTER X

### *This Business of Prophecy*

I USED to go in a great deal for prophecy. I found it safer and easier than fact, and more impressive. During my long years of lecturing at McGill I used to say to my classes, "Mark my words, gentlemen, in another fifty years you will see—" so and so ; or, "Mark me, gentlemen, in another half-century you will see the end of"—of pretty well everything. The students were tremendously impressed. They didn't see how I could see it all coming. They just lived on the hope of it.

The only mistake was that I made the prophecies too short. They'll soon fall due. I began in 1901 and the first of the prophecies will come round in 1951. It is true that a great many of the older students have dropped out. Even those left begin to look pretty shaky. So I guess it will be all right. Yet it was timed too close. I wouldn't do it again.

But in any case, I have gone out of the prophecy business. Too many people are crowding into it, people without experience. And it is a thing that demands long preparation. Look at those prophets of the Old Testament. They were mature men, five to six hundred years old, with a bombing range of three thousand years.

But now everybody's in it. Why, only yesterday at my club a man told me to mark him that the world would be an absolutely different place after the war. I marked him right away (with a piece of billiard chalk) but I doubt if I can find him again—after the war.

That's it, all the time—after the war. They're prophesying and planning all the big things that are going to be done after the war. It seems that the whole framework of society has got to be reconstructed—from

top to bottom, or from bottom to top. Some will begin one end, some the other. Fascinating, isn't it? In fact some of us can hardly wait till the war is over, and would end it right now so as to get at this post-war stuff. It seems that we've been living in the wrong ideology—I think that's it. Anyway, it's all got to change.

Naturally the biggest thing of all is the question of the future of Europe. We have simply got to consider what that is to be. In fact it is a thing that should have been attended to long ago. Only last week I heard two men discussing quite eagerly, indeed almost angrily, whether Europe after the war is to be a federation, or just a loose conglomerate under a guarantee of conglomeration. It is a thing you have to face. These two men were going to a meeting (I was so sorry I couldn't go) where they were to thresh this out. They said that after the discussion the future of Europe would probably be thrown open to the audience. That was nice, wasn't it? I forgot to look in the paper to see what happened; often so much war stuff gets into the papers that you miss the news.

But anyway what is needed here is one of those big general polls of public opinion that show exactly what is going to be, or rather, the percentage of everything that is going to be. A lot of us would like to see the future of Europe put to a poll that way, along the lines (1) Future, (2) No future, (3) Any damn future. I'll bet you it would show Europe 62 per cent., or say 63, conglomerated. That's what I'd do with it. Of course there would be the usual 17 per cent. "indifferent." Those fellows should keep out of the poll. If they don't care, why do they vote? In fact, the real trouble with these polls is that the very people whose opinions we don't want in the poll are the kind of people who give their opinions, and those we do, don't, if you see what I mean. If we could get the solid thought of the country to think it would be better.

But there are big things to plan for at home, too. Take education, one of the biggest. They are saying that after the war education will have to be reconstructed from top to bottom. They say it won't be recognizable. You won't be able to tell whether a man is educated or not. It seems there are a lot of committees, some of the biggest educationalists in the country, sitting on it already. One committee is sitting on arithmetic, and working on the multiplication table. They're up to nine times nine, already. They may scrap the rest. Another is working on long division ; it's too long for them.

But of course the biggest post-war thing of all is the reconstruction of the cities. I imagine that that question has come up everywhere. I know that with us in my city it is the most acute problem of all and there's no use ending the war till we solve it. There's no doubt our city has got to go ; it's no darned use ; the streets all run the wrong way and cross one another. Indeed the only thing to do with it is to knock it all down, and shovel it away. When I look at my own house I just want to take a spade and knock it down flat. The thing is worthless ; the upstairs ought to be downstairs. Anybody can see that now. And it's the same way with all the apartment buildings. That's the fascination of city planning. You see it all so clearly when you see it. You see, in practically all the apartments, the bottom floor should be the top one—to get proper light.

Anyway, in our city we all see eye to eye about it, though in different directions. I see my own house best. However, we've got a committee of experts working on it and they are beginning right at the beginning, at the very foundation, of reconstruction—drainage. Are we draining properly ? And after that leakage, and then seepage and then garbage. We had a big man here a week or two back tackling garbage. He was certainly right up in it. He's been invited to talk elsewhere.

That's the way with these experts ; they know their stuff.

But of course it all takes time and spade-work. One of our speakers put it pretty neatly the other day, by saying you can't rebuild without spade-work. That seems to put it in a nutshell or at any rate in a steam shovel.

The only trouble is the time. It would never do to have the war end on us and the city still right here.

Then there's post-war finance, I suppose the nation's greatest problem of the lot. But here the biggest experts, on the biggest salaries, seem to be pretty well agreed ; after the war we must keep right on with big expenditure and high salaries for fear of a collapse. It seems that quite apart from the other allies, the United States and Great Britain and Canada are spending 365 billion dollars a year. That means a billion dollars a day and, spread out among the 200 million of us it means five dollars a day each. I just can't think now how I'll spend mine. How about a trip to Japan ?

So you see with all these fascinating post-war problems to think about, you can't blame people if the war news sometimes seems a little dull. There is so much to plan and so little time. I hope those who are fighting won't stop till we get our ideology ready.

## EPILOGUE

### *Three Score and Ten—the Business of Growing Old*

FROM "My Remarkable Uncle"

OLD AGE is the "Front Line" of life, moving into No Man's Land. No Man's Land is covered with mist. Beyond it is Eternity. As we have moved forward, the tumult that now lies behind us has died down. The sounds grow less and less. It is almost silence. There is an increasing feeling of isolation, of being alone. We seem so far apart. Here and there one falls, silently, and lies a little bundle on the ground that the rolling mist is burying. Can we not keep nearer? It's hard to see one another. Can you hear me? Call to me, I am alone. This must be near the end.

I have been asked how old age feels, how it feels to have passed seventy, and I answer in metaphor, as above, "not so good."

Now let us turn it round and try to laugh it off in prose. It can't be so bad as that, eh what? Didn't Cicero write a book on old age to make it all right? But you say he was only just past sixty when he wrote it, was he? That's a tough one. Well, what about Rabbi ben Ezra, you remember—"Grow old along with me." Oh, he was eighty-one, eh? No, thanks. I'll stay right here around seventy. He can have all his fun for himself at eighty-one.

I was born in Swanmoor, a suburb of Ryde in the Isle of Wight, on 30th December 1869. That was in Victorian England at its most Victorian, far away now, dated by the French Empire, still glittering, and Mr. Dickens writing his latest book on the edge of the grave while I thought out my first on the edge of my cradle and, in America, dated by people driving golden spikes on Pacific railroads.

It was a vast, illimitable world, far superior to this—

whole continents unknown, Africa just an outline, oceans never sailed, ships lost over the horizon—as large and open as life itself.

Put beside such a world this present shrunken earth, its every corner known, its old-time mystery gone with the magic of the sea, to make place for this new demoniac confine, loud with voices out of emptiness and tense with the universal threat of death. This is not mystery but horror. The waves of the magic sea called out in the sunlight: "There must be a God." The demoniac radio answers in the dark: "There can't be." Belief was so easy then: it has grown so hard now; and life, the individual life, that for an awakening child was so boundless, has it drawn into this—this alleyway between tall cypresses that must join somewhere in the mist? But stop, we are getting near No Man's Land again. Turn back.

Moving pictures love to give us nowadays "cavalcades" of events to mark the flight of time. Each of us carries his own. Mine shows, as its opening, the sea beaches of the Isle of Wight. . . . Then turn on Portchester village and its Roman castle . . . Queen Victoria going past in a train, in the dark, putting her head out of the window (her eight heads out of eight windows). . . . Now shift to an Atlantic sailing steamer (type of 1876) with people emigrating to Canada. . . . Then a Canadian farm in a lost-corner of Ontario up near Lake Simcoe for six years. . . . Put in bears, though there weren't any. . . . Boarding school, scene at Upper Canada College—the real old rough stuff . . . University, cap and gown days, old style, put a long beard on the President, show fourteen boarding-houses at \$4.50 a week . . . School teaching—ten years—(run it fast, a series of stills, any year is typical, I want to forget it) . . .

Then make the film Chicago University with its saloons of forty years ago, a raw place, nowhere to smoke . . . And then settle the film down to McGill University, and

run it round and round as slowly as you like for thirty-six sessions—college calling in the Autumn, students and co-eds and Rah! Rah! all starting afresh, year after year . . . College in the snow, the February classroom; hush! don't wake them, it's a lecture in archæology . . . All of it again and again . . . College years, one after the other . . . Throw in, as interludes, journeys to England, a lecture trip around the Empire . . . Put in Colombo, Ceylon, for atmosphere. . . . Then more college years . . .

Then loud music and the Great War with the college campus all at drill, the boys of yesterday turned to men . . . Then the war over, lecture trips to the U.S. . . . Pictures of Iowa State University . . . Ladies' Fortnightly Club—about forty of them . . . Then back to the McGill campus . . . Retirement . . . An honorary degree ("this venerable scholar") . . . And then unexpectedly the war again and the Black Watch back on the McGill campus.

Such is my picture, the cavalcade all the way down from the clouds of the morning to the mists of the evening.

As the cavalcade passes down the years it is odd how gradually and imperceptibly the change of outlook comes, from the eyes of wonder to those of disillusionment—or is it to those of truth? A child's world is full of celebrated people, wonderful people like the giants and magicians of the picture books. Later in life the celebrated people are all gone. There aren't any—or not made of what it once meant.

I recall from over half a century ago a prize-day speaker at Upper Canada College telling us that he saw before him the future statesmen, the poets, the generals and the leaders of the nation. I thought the man a nut to say that. What he saw was just us. Yet he turned out to be correct; only in a sense he wasn't; it was still only us after all. It is the atmosphere of illusion that cannot last.

Yet some people, I know, are luckier in this than I am.



They're born in a world of glamour and live in it. For them there are great people everywhere, and the illusion seems to feed itself. One such I recall out of the years, with a capacity for admiration all his own.

"I sat next to Professor Buchan at the dinner last night," he once told me. "He certainly is a great scholar, a marvellous philologist!"

"Is he?" I said.

"Yes," my friend continued. "I asked him if he thought the Indian word 'snabe' was the same as the German word 'knabe.'"

"And what did he say?"

"He said he didn't know."

And with that my friend sat back in quiet appreciation of such accurate scholarship and of the privilege of being near it. There are many people like that, decent fellows to be with. Their illusions keep their life warm.

But for most of us they fade out and life itself as we begin to look back on it appears less and less. Has it all faded to this? There comes to me the story of an old Carolina negro who found himself, after years of expectancy, privileged to cast a vote. After putting the ballot paper in the box he stood, still expectant, waiting for what was to happen, to come next. And then, in disillusionment: "Is that all there is, boss? Is that all there is to it?"

"That's all," said the presiding officer.

So it is with life. The child says "when I am a big boy"—but what is that? The boy says "when I grow up"—and then, grown up, "when I get married." But to be married, once done and over, what is that again? The man says "when I retire"—and then when retirement comes he looks back over the path traversed, a cold wind sweeps over the fading landscape and he feels somehow that he has missed it all. For the reality of life, we learn too late, is in the living tissue of it from day to day, not in the expectation of better, nor in the fear of worse. Those two things, to be always looking ahead,

and to worry over things that haven't yet happened and very likely won't happen—those take the very essence out of life.

If one could only live each moment to the full, in a present with its own absorption, even if as transitory and evanescent as Einstein's "here" and "now." It is strange how we cry out in our collective human mind against this restless thinking and clamour for time to stand still—longing for a land where it is always afternoon, or for a book of verses underneath a bough, where we may let the world pass.

But perhaps it is this worry, this restlessness, that keeps us on our necessary path of effort and endeavour. Most of us who look back from old age have at least a comfortable feeling that we have "got away with it." At least we kept out of jail, out of the asylum and out of the poor-house. Yet one still needs to be careful. Even "grand old men" get fooled sometimes. But at any rate we don't want to start over; no, thank you, it's too hard. When I look back at long evenings of study in boarding-house bedrooms, night after night, one's head sinking at times over the dictionary—I wonder how I did it.

And schooldays—at Upper Canada College *anno Domini* 1882—could I stand that now? If someone asked me to eat "supper" at six and then go and study next day's lessons, in silence, in the long study from seven to nine-thirty—how would that be? A school waiter brought round glasses of water on a tray at half-past eight, and if I asked for a whisky and soda, could I have had it? I could not. Yet I admit there was the fun of putting a bent pin—you know how, two turns in it—on the seat where the study master sat. And if I were to try that now at convocation they wouldn't understand it. Youth is youth, and age is age.

So many things, I say, that one went through seem hopelessly difficult now. Yet other things, over which youth boggles and hesitates and palpitates, seem so easy and so simple to old age. Take the case of women, I mean

girls. Young men in love go snooping around, hoping, fearing, wondering, lifted up at a word, cast down by an eyebrow. But if he only knew enough, any young man—as old men see it—could have any girl he wanted. All he need do is to step up to her and say, “Miss Smith, I don’t know you, but your overwhelming beauty forces me to speak; can you marry me at, say, three-thirty this afternoon?”

I mean, that kind of thing in that province of life would save years of trepidation. It’s just as well, though, that they don’t know it or away goes all the pretty world of feathers and flounces, of flowers and dances that love throws like a gossamer tissue across the path of life.

On such a world of youth, old age can only gaze with admiration. As people grow old all youth looks beautiful to them. The plainest girls are pretty with nature’s charms. The dullest duds are at least young. But age cannot share it. Age must sit alone.

The very respect that young people feel for the old—or at least for the established, the respectable, by reason of those illusions of which I spoke, makes social unity impossible. An old man may think himself a “hell of a feller” inside, but his outside won’t justify it. He must keep to his corner or go “ga-ga,” despised of youth and age alike. . . .

In any case, to put it mildly, old men are tiresome company. They can’t listen. I notice this around my club. We founded it thirty years ago, and the survivors are all there, thirty years older than they were thirty years ago, and some even more, much more! Can they listen? No, not even to me. And when they start to tell a story they ramble on and on, and you know the story anyway because it’s the one you told them yesterday. Young people when they talk have to be snappy and must butt in and out of conversation as they get a chance. But once old men are given rope, you have to pay it out to them like a cable. To my mind the only tolerable old men are the ones—you notice lots of them

when you look for them—who have had a stroke—not a tragic one ; that would sound cruel—but just one good flap of warning. If I want to tell a story, I look round for one of these.

The path through life I have outlined from youth to age you may trace for yourself by the varying way in which strangers address you. You begin as “ little man ” and then “ little boy,” because a little man is littler than a little boy ; then “ sonny ” and then “ my boy,” and after that “ young man,” and presently the interlocutor is younger than yourself and says, “ Say, mister.” I can still recall the thrill of pride I felt when a Pullman porter first called me “ doctor ” and when another one raised me up to “ judge,” and then the terrible shock it was when a taximan swung open his door and said, “ Step right in, dad.”

It was hard to bear when a newspaper reporter spoke of me as the “ old gentleman,” and said I was very simply dressed. He was a liar ; those were my best things. It was a worse shock when a newspaper first called me a septuagenarian, another cowardly lie, as I was only sixty-nine and seven-twelfths. Presently I shall be introduced as “ this venerable old gentleman,” and the axe will fall when they raise me to the degree of “ grand old man.” That means on our continent anyone with snow-white hair who has kept out of jail till eighty. That's the last and worst they can do to you.

Yet there is something to be said even here for the mentality of age. Old people grow kinder in their judgment of others. They are able to comprehend, even if not to pardon, the sins and faults of others. If I hear of a man robbing a cash register of the shop where he works, I think I get the idea. He wanted the cash. If I read of a man burning down his store to get the insurance, I see that what he wanted was the insurance. He had nothing against the store. Yet somehow just when I am reflecting on my own kindness I find myself getting furious with a waiter for forgetting the Worcester sauce.

This is the summary of the matter that as for old age there's nothing to it, for the individual looked at by himself. It can only be reconciled with our view of life in so far as it has something to pass on, the new life of children and of grandchildren, or if not that, at least some recollection of good deeds, or of something done that may give one the hope to say, *non omnis moriar* (I shall not altogether die).

Give me my stick. I'm going out to No Man's Land. I'll face it.



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