Pause to WONDER

STORIES
OF THE MARVELOUS
MYSTERIOUS AND
STRANGE

66 AUTHORS • 82 STORIES • 200,000 WORDS

Edited by

MARJORIE FISCHER and ROLFE HUMPHRIES

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"One of the most beautiful things we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true science and art. He who can no longer pause to wonder is as good as dead."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

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INTRODUCTION: POSSIBILITY OF PLEASURE

To think that two and two are four
And neither five nor three
The heart of man has long been sore
And long 'tis like to be.
—A. E. HOUSMAN.

FORTUNATELY THE HEART OF MAN IS NOT ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO resignation. If we do not find miracles, we create them, and, since most of us learned something about the world, for better or worse, from fairy tales, from myth and legend, we sometimes say: "Four, yes, of course; but once in a while—why not?—five or three."

Here is a collection of such strange mathematics. We have selected the stories, essays, and poems in this anthology for their possibilities of pleasure. "From the very beginning," according to Dr. Sigmund Freud, "when life imposes its stern discipline upon us, there grows up in us a resistance against the restlessness and monotony of the laws of thought. Reason becomes an enemy that keeps us from so many possibilities of pleasure. One discovers what a joy it is to escape from it, at least for a moment, and give oneself up to the fascination of irrationality." This is not to say that a story teller can escape completely into the fascination of irrationality, nor from reality's fascination, either.

The writer must keep in touch with the only world we know. *Nothing too much*, even in fantasy; we do not want to be stuck in stuffy dark-brown Victorian parlors, with too much of everything crowding about, too many objects, too much fake-gloom, above all, too many words. Nor do we want to be floating around in Cloud-Cuckoo Land, where everything comes so easy that nothing means

anything. A story should tell a story, something should happen, it should not be too long getting under way, nor too slow stopping; the reader should be distressed neither by an interminable introduction nor an indeterminate end. "Put yourself in the reader's place," said A. E. Housman, in a less resigned mood, "and consider how, and at what stage, that man of sorrows is to find out what it is all about."

Accounts of the marvelous and miraculous are by no means rare, and whether, for our purposes, the authors are called saints, hysterics, or just plain liars, is beside the point. What matters is the telling; we have rejected those stories which, in their disregard of the laws of probability, have also, unhappily, neglected the laws which govern the telling of tales. We have included Cotton Mather's letter to a friend, not because he thought he saw witches, but because of the way he wrote, for instance, about Susanna Martin, who "falling out with one Kembal, for his refusing to buy Puppies of her, she said that he should have Puppies enough, and one day coming home, he was by an invisible Power, driven out of the road upon the stumps of Trees, and immediately a Puppy shot too and fro between his Legs, and sometimes over his Shoulder, which he could not hit, though often with his Ax he struck at it. . . ." Theology aside, the Reverend Mr. Mather was a born story teller.

A good story needs more than construction; it needs concrete detail, even in symbol and allegory. "So when the gods came to this humble home," wrote Ovid, in the story of Baucis and Philemon, "and ducking their heads came through the low doorway, the old man set out a bench, and bade them rest their limbs, while over the bench the old housewife threw a rough covering. Then she raked aside the warm ashes on the hearth and fanned to life yesterday's fire, feeding it with leaves and dry bark, blowing them to flame with the breath of her old body." Ovid intended to point a moral, but his love for earthy things and people keeps him from obtrusive sermonizing. The miracle is told truly, and we see it happen. "Marble columns took the place of forked wooden props; the yellow straw turned yellow gold; the gates were richly carved, the ground was floored with marble."

Ovid's story, one of the best he ever wrote, is wonderful, not only

for its technical polish and grace, for its exact observation, but because he never lets the radiance of the miracle dazzle his vision of the human beings at its center. If we do not believe in the human beings, it will not matter whether or not we believe in the miracle which occurs to or about them; in stories about ghosts, the people should not become phantoms.

Captain Eli Stormfield, dead on his own admission and by courtesy of Mark Twain, remains as tough, lively, and American as ever. When he enters Heaven, a size thirteen still fits him—a halo, this time. Saki's Laploshka, etherealized, is an elegant cadger still, haunting his debtor with hopes of repayment and a prejudice against the poor that no transition can alter. In Henry James's *The Real Right Thing,* the ghost dominates the story, and the borderline between the disembodied and embodied spirits is none too clear. But in making his people bloodless and wraithlike, James, we suspect, often has a satirical intention in mind.

Fantasy is a great help to the satirist. That inveterate miracle, Spring's annual return, so much more interesting usually in fact than in literature, is used by Bemelmans in *Sacre du Printemps* to polish off the New Order. "The Under-Secretary of the Division of Spring of the Ministry of the Four Seasons unrolled an ivy-green runner on the balcony of the Ministry of Strength-Through-Joy at the precise moment that the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Discipline and Order placed thereon his microphone: then both listened to the bells strike seven in the morning and opened the door behind which stood in proper uniform, and with all buttons buttoned. . . ." And there we have the beginning of Spring in the Third Reich, attended by Discipline and Order, and with all buttons buttoned.

Fantasy has many uses, the satirical and bizarre, the perverse and comical. There is also a place for the earnest, the serious, even the somber and appalling. But we have no wish to exalt the gloomy—those dark-brown Victorian rooms—into a sort of neo-Gothic cult. Our own prejudice favors the bright and gay, and we take a poor view of Mr. Montague Summers, safe in his fixed world, solemnly placing a wax wreath under glass and averring that no story of the supernatural should ever be humorous.

Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* will appeal to many readers for the precise reason that it outraged Mr. Summers—it is unconventional, even slapstick; the poor lordly ghost is frightened out of his wits when the American Ambassador and family move in on him. The end is unexpected, a little off-key, as if Wilde did not take his humor seriously enough; D. H. Lawrence, a splendid writer without any humor, startles us at the close of *The Last Laugh,* for nothing in the wild pagan mood of the story leads up to the killing and wounding at the end. But before that, what possibilities of pleasure—the wild jubilant voices in the storm of snow, the puff of warm wind smelling of spring and almond blossoms, the sharp delighted voices like seagulls crying, the laughter, the gay, trilling music.

The climate of the story, beyond its immediate events, may evoke our sense of the marvelous and miraculous. Where, for instance, is the miracle in the Liam O'Flaherty story called *Birth,* or in John Masefield's poem, *The Passing Strange?* Here the mystery is more general, an intense and lovely awareness of life, from its beginning, through its passing, to its end—

> "Out of the earth to rest and range
> Perpetual in perpetual change
> The unknown passing through the strange."

Denial of mystery is the theme of Ralph Bates's *The Haunted Man;* an un-miracle story, we might call it, about a man who cannot pause to wonder, and so is as good as dead. Adding two and two he gets no more than three, or zero. "He calls himself a Christian," said Ralph Bates, discussing his protagonist, "and gets no joy from Christmas." All grapes are sour for Davison, because he believes that Life will not ripen; he cannot, even for his own comfort, black out all the horrible visions, lurid and remorseless, induced by this belief.

The longest story in this book, *Lady Into Fox,* is a proper miracle. We have David Garnett's own word for it. "A grown lady is changed straightway into a fox. There is no explaining that away by any natural philosophy. The materialism of our age will not help us here. It is indeed a *miracle*. . . ." Gravely, straightforwardly, the author tells us what happened to the lady turned vixen, and to her husband,

how that unhappy gentleman remained changeless and devoted, while his wife forgot piquet and Mendelssohn in favor of doves, ducks, rabbits, and a litter of cubs. And having presented us with the miracle, Garnett leaves it at that, with a subtlety and simplicity that baffled even a Prime Minister. "Mr. Asquith (if gossip is correct)," said E. M. Forster, "could not meet the demands made on him by *Lady Into Fox*. He should not have objected, he said, if the fox had become a lady at the end, but as it was, he was left with an uncomfortable, dissatisfied feeling."

Mr. Asquith, no doubt, would have been less disturbed by H. G. Wells's *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*. Whatever discomfort he might have suffered from contemplation of the common man altering even the stars in their courses would have been allayed by the fact that the gift was even more terrifying to its possessor. In the end, George McWhirter Fotheringay resigns his magic, and returns to the bar at The Long Dragon, and nobody any the worse for it.

The little man worked big miracles; Chesterton's little miracle, three perfect croquet shots on a darkening lawn, was no less astounding. Wilfrid Gibson, with or without knowledge of David Garnett's short novel, wrote a poem in which a fox turns into a lady. Whether the span is two or two thousand years, themes vary and recur. British soldiers saw St. George and his angels coming to their aid at the battle of Mons; Castor and Pollux fought at the head of the Roman legions near Lake Regillus. A man's boots, according to Yeats and De La Mare, can do strange things, whether they are put on by Farmer Turley or taken off by a doubter in Donegal; cosmic forces attend the amorous pursuits of a Cavalier or a bold Colonial dragoon. Such combinations as these multiply the possibilities of pleasure. We are not irreverent if we follow Liam O'Flaherty's *Birth* with *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,* or if we bring in Mr. Dooley hard on the heels of *The Real Right Thing*. Our menagerie department houses all kinds of phenomenal creatures—Macavity the Mystery Cat, the so-called elks of Julius Caesar, the sea-serpent that W. W. Jacobs' sailors almost brought back alive, and the lily-loving unicorn of James Thurber. Colonel Sterrett has marvels to relate; Davy Crockett, newborn, is prodigious, to say the least; and Lucian's true stories are as

easy to believe as John Steinbeck's report of the elf in Algiers, or the latest tall tales reported by Sergeant Davidson from the camps and fighting fronts.

Tall tales come natural to Americans. The huge size of this country, with plenty of room to move around in, required a Davy Crockett to hunt its forests, a Paul Bunyan to fell its timber, a John Henry to drive its rails. When Washington Irving went to Europe, in 1815, the frontier of the civilization he left was, to all intents and purposes, the Hudson River. It was seventeen years before he returned to this country, long enough for Europe to modify the native extravagance that flourished in the Knickerbocker History of New York. But however much Europe gave his style ease and elegance, it never made him an expatriate; he did not turn his back on America—in 1836 he was writing a book on the fur-traders of the northwest.

The frontier is still close to us. Charles Erskine Scott Wood, who died this year at the age of 92, fought in the Indian Wars as a Lieutenant in the United States Army. The legends he tells in this book were told to him by scouts and interpreters, friends he made during the campaigns. Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Texas, Arizona—the names of these states still have frontier associations. Davy Crockett rode the lightning, and American soldiers today are true to native idiom and tradition when they order a cyclone to come and police their army camp.

The other strong tendency in American writing is in the direction of realism, dealing with men at their jobs, with the way they talk, lie, cheat, fight—even their entrance to Heaven is made realistic. The Americans who write fantasy remember their old occupations; Captain Stormfield was what he was because Mark Twain had been a Mississippi River pilot. Henry Yelvington's story is full of real details of Texas ranching; the San Miguel country is the American southwest, damn funny country though it seems to old John Piedra, watching its phantom fence rider on his big bay horse.

The British are not at all self-conscious about their tradition, as Americans are inclined to be. They are familiar with it, and both its familiarity and variety give them ease. They have their moors and fens along with their parks; they cross borders, if not frontiers, but in

general their countryside, like their writing, is cultivated and civilized. Both in the material they use, and in the manner of treatment, British writers (and Americans who are impressed by their tradition, like Eliot and Henry James) tend to be sophisticated and cosmopolitan. Wherever they go they take their tradition with them, to be sure; but they do travel, and they have an independent curiosity that leads them into fresh and individual areas of the imagination. And whatever their variety of subject and temperament, they are peers in competence; fine wit, rather than broad humor, distinguishes their native style. They get their effects more often by understatement than by exaggeration; they are skilled in irony. Mr. Max Beerbohm, after an impassioned if scholarly protest against the injustice suffered by Prometheus, contemplates with happy anticipation his rescue from the Caucasian crags. "When we reach the end of the valley, I shall provide him with a tweed suit which I have ordered for him and am taking with me, the fur coat, and the dressing-case whose fittings are marked Π. We shall be in London, if all go well, in time for the latter part of the season. I am sure Prometheus will be much lionized."

Cool and skilled as they are, the British writers are by no means cold, devoid of emotion, or strangers to tenderness. Who could ask for writing more delicate, more moving, than Virginia Woolf's—"so fine, so rare, coolly sunk beneath the surface. . . ."? In this haunted house, no one is afraid; love dwells in its past and present. "Wandering through the house, opening the windows, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy." And E. M. Forster touches the heart in his story of tired old Mr. Lucas on the road from Colonus, dragged back to suburban senility, although "in that place, and with those people a supreme event was awaiting him which would transfigure the face of the world." The British, it is true, can be sentimental; they can, witness Dickens, club you over the head with tenderness. They can also be tough, and sensitive.

As for the Irish, who have been kicked around for ten centuries, and done some kicking of their own in that time, what have they got out of it all except unquestionable superiority in letters and their own greatest period? Dublin, sure enough, is the literary capital of our time. Two names alone, those of Yeats and Joyce, would be almost

enough to prove it, but what a supporting cast!—Synge, Lady Gregory, Gogarty, Stephens, Colum, Russell, O'Faolain, O'Connor, O'Flaherty, O'Casey, Elizabeth Bowen; and George Moore and Bernard Shaw, without stretching it too far, might be added to the list. What makes the Irish unable to write a bad sentence? Sheer perversity, is the explanation of one author in this book: they do it, like everything else, to spite the English. Lady Gregory has a more civil explanation of the mystery. When Cascorach had played for St. Patrick, he asked a reward. " 'What reward are you asking, my soul?' said Patrick. 'Heaven for myself' said he 'for that is the reward is best; and good luck to go with my art and with all that will follow it after me.' 'I give you Heaven' said Patrick, 'and I give this to your art, it to be one of the three arts by which a man can find profit to the last in Ireland.' "

The Irish, the British, the Americans constitute the major portion of this anthology. Writers of modern languages other than English have been excluded, partly because of the practical difficulties of securing permissions and decent translations, but mostly because their inclusion would enlarge the scope of this book beyond all reasonable hope of compass. We have included some stories from the classics, interesting in themselves or in combination with modern treatments of the same themes, and also because they represent the early western patterns of myth and legend. Some stories we have ruled out because they were already available in many anthologies; the reader who misses old favorites may feel compensated by our occasional discoveries. Some day, perhaps, we may be able to divulge the full story of how we happened to find *A Blazing Starre Seene In The West;* at present, it seems too incredible to relate, even in a book of marvels and miracles. We have some writers whose work may here be found for the first time in anthology form; we have others, we are sure, who have never appeared side by side; and there are some, notably the American writers around the turn of the century, for whose writing we are glad to bespeak more attention than it has lately received.

With all this said, we know very well that every reader, both in the books he buys, in those he keeps, and in those he rereads, is his own anthologist. Sooner or later we expect two questions: Why did

they put this in?; Why did they leave that out? If we are pressed on these points, candor would compel us to admit that our answer to the first question might be, Caprice; to the second, Ignorance. We do have confidence that readers are by nature affable people, willing to meet authors, or even anthologists, more than halfway. It is nothing against a story that a reader should be asked to go through it thoughtfully, as many times as he likes, to be sure he gets it, but, with three exceptions, there are no stories or poems in this book that make any such demands. All they ask of the reader is a temporary willingness to pause to wonder. Taken on these terms, they promise in return certain possibilities of pleasure, and even, we hope, glimpses now and then of what Virginia Woolf's ghostly couple were seeking—the light in the heart.

THE EDITORS.

REASON

Ralph Hodgson

REASON HAS MOONS, BUT MOONS NOT HERS,
Lie mirror'd on the sea,
Confounding her astronomers,
But, O! delighting me.

A HAUNTED HOUSE

Virginia Woolf

WHATEVER HOUR YOU WOKE THERE WAS A DOOR SHUTTING. From room to room they went, hand in hand, lifting here, opening there, making sure—a ghostly couple.

"Here we left it," she said. And he added, "Oh, but here too!" "It's upstairs," she murmured. "And in the garden," he whispered. "Quietly," they said, "or we shall wake them."

But it wasn't that you woke us. Oh, no. "They're looking for it; they're drawing the curtain," one might say, and so read on a page or two. "Now they've found it," one would be certain, stopping the pencil on the margin. And then, tired of reading, one might rise and see for oneself, the house all empty, the doors standing open, only the wood pigeons bubbling with content and the hum of the threshing machine sounding from the farm. "What did I come in here for? What did I want to find?" My hands were empty. "Perhaps it's upstairs then?" The apples were in the loft. And so down again, the garden still as ever, only the book had slipped into the grass.

But they had found it in the drawing room. Not that one could ever see them. The window panes reflected apples, reflected roses; all the leaves were green in the glass. If they moved in the drawing room, the apple only turned its yellow side. Yet, the moment after, if the door was opened, spread about the floor, hung upon the walls, pendant from the ceiling—what? My hands were empty. The shadow of a thrush crossed the carpet; from the deepest wells of silence the wood pigeon drew its bubble of sound. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat softly. "The treasure buried; the room . . ." the pulse stopped short. Oh, was that the buried treasure?

A moment later the light had faded. Out in the garden then?

But the trees spun darkness for a wandering beam of sun. So find, so rare, coolly sunk beneath the surface the beam I sought always burnt behind the glass. Death was the glass; death was between us; coming to the woman first, hundreds of years ago, leaving the house, sealing all the windows; the rooms were darkened. He left it, left her, went North, went East, saw the stars turned in the Southern sky; sought the house, found it dropped beneath the Downs. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat gladly. "The Treasure yours."

The wind roars up the avenue. Trees stoop and bend this way and that. Moonbeams splash and spill wildly in the rain. But the beam of the lamp falls straight from the window. The candle burns stiff and still. Wandering through the house, opening the windows, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy.

"Here we slept," she says. And he adds, "Kisses without number." "Waking in the morning—" "Silver between the trees—" "Upstairs—" "In the garden—" "When summer came—" "In winter snowtime—" The doors go shutting far in the distance, gently knocking like the pulse of a heart.

Nearer they come; cease at the doorway. The wind falls, the rain slides silver down the glass. Our eyes darken; we hear no steps beside us; we see no lady spread her ghostly cloak. His hands shield the lantern. "Look," he breathes. "Sound asleep. Love upon their lips."

Stooping, holding their silver lamp above us, long they look and deeply. Long they pause. The wind drives straightly; the flame stoops slightly. Wild beams of moonlight cross both floor and wall, and, meeting, stain the faces bent; the faces pondering; the faces that search the sleepers and seek their hidden joy.

"Safe, safe, safe," the heart of the house beats proudly. "Long years—" he sighs. "Again you found me." "Here," she murmurs, "sleeping; in the garden reading; laughing, rolling apples in the loft. Here we left our treasure—" Stooping, their light lifts the lids upon my eyes. "Safe! safe! safe!" the pulse of the house beats wildly. Waking, I cry "Oh, is this *your* buried treasure? The light in the heart."

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIVE EXISTENCES"

Frank R. Stockton

IN A CERTAIN SUMMER, NOT LONG GONE, MY FRIEND BENTLEY and I found ourselves in a little hamlet which overlooked a placid valley, through which a river gently moved, winding its way through green stretches until it turned the end of a line of low hills and was lost to view. Beyond this river, far away, but visible from the door of the cottage where we dwelt, there lay a city. Through the mists which floated over the valley we could see the outlines of steeples and tall roofs; and buildings of a character which indicated thrift and business stretched themselves down to the opposite edge of the river. The more distant parts of the city, evidently a small one, lost themselves in the hazy summer atmosphere.

Bentley was young, fair-haired, and a poet; I was a philosopher, or trying to be one. We were good friends, and had come down into this peaceful region to work together. Although we had fled from the bustle and distractions of the town, the appearance in this rural region of a city, which, so far as we could observe, exerted no influence on the quiet character of the valley in which it lay, aroused our interest. No craft plied up and down the river; there were no bridges from shore to shore; there were none of those scattered and half-squalid habitations which generally are found on the outskirts of a city; there came to us no distant sound of bells; and not the smallest wreath of smoke rose from any of the buildings.

In answer to our inquiries our landlord told us that the city over the river had been built by one man, who was a visionary, and who had a great deal more money than common sense. "It is not as big a

town as you would think, sirs," he said, "because the general mistiness of things in this valley makes them look larger than they are. Those hills, for instance, when you get to them are not as high as they look to be from here. But the town is big enough, and a good deal too big; for it ruined its builder and owner, who when he came to die had not money enough left to put up a decent tombstone at the head of his grave. He had a queer idea that he would like to have his town all finished before anybody lived in it, and so he kept on working and spending money year after year and year after year until the city was done and he had not a cent left. During all the time that the place was building hundreds of people came to him to buy houses, or to hire them, but he would not listen to anything of the kind. No one must live in his town until it was all done. Even his workmen were obliged to go away at night to lodge. It is a town, sirs, I am told, in which nobody has slept for even a night. There are streets there, and places of business, and churches, and public halls, and everything that a town full of inhabitants could need; but it is all empty and deserted, and has been so as far back as I can remember, and I came to this region when I was a little boy."

"And is there no one to guard the place?" we asked; "no one to protect it from wandering vagrants who might choose to take possession of the buildings?"

"There are not many vagrants in this part of the country," he said, "and if there were they would not go over to that city. It is haunted."

"By what?" we asked.

"Well, sirs, I scarcely can tell you; queer beings that are not flesh and blood, and that is all I know about it. A good many people living hereabouts have visited that place once in their lives, but I know of no one who has gone there a second time."

"And travellers," I said, "are they not excited by curiosity to explore that strange uninhabited city?"

"Oh yes," our host replied; "almost all visitors to the valley go over to that queer city—generally in small parties, for it is not a place in which one wishes to walk about alone. Sometimes they see things and sometimes they don't. But I never knew any man or woman to show a fancy for living there, although it is a very good town."

This was said at supper-time, and, as it was the period of full moon, Bentley and I decided that we would visit the haunted city that evening. Our host endeavored to dissuade us, saying that no one ever went over there at night; but as we were not to be deterred he told us where we would find his small boat tied to a stake on the river-bank. We soon crossed the river, and landed at a broad but low stone pier, at the land end of which a line of tall grasses waved in the gentle night wind as if they were sentinels warning us from entering the silent city. We pushed through these, and walked up a street fairly wide, and so well paved that we noticed none of the weeds and other growths which generally denote desertion or little use. By the bright light of the moon we could see that the architecture was simple, and of a character highly gratifying to the eye. All the buildings were of stone, and of good size. We were greatly excited and interested, and proposed to continue our walks until the moon should set, and to return on the following morning—"to live here, perhaps," said Bentley. "What could be so romantic and yet so real? What could conduce better to the marriage of verse and philosophy?" But as he said this we saw around the corner of a cross-street some forms as of people hurrying away.

"The spectres," said my companion, laying his hand on my arm.

"Vagrants, more likely," I answered, "who have taken advantage of the superstition of the region to appropriate this comfort and beauty to themselves."

"If that be so," said Bentley, "we must have a care for our lives."

We proceeded cautiously, and soon saw other forms fleeing before us and disappearing, as we supposed, around corners and into houses. And now suddenly finding ourselves upon the edge of a wide, open public square, we saw in the dim light—for a tall steeple obscured the moon—the forms of vehicles, horses, and men moving here and there. But before, in our astonishment, we could say a word one to the other, the moon moved past the steeple, and in its bright light we could see none of the signs of life and traffic which had just astonished us.

Timidly, with hearts beating fast, but with not one thought of turning back, nor any fear of vagrants—for we were now sure that what we had seen was not flesh and blood, and therefore harmless—we crossed the open space and entered a street down which the moon

shone clearly. Here and there we saw dim figures, which quickly disappeared; but, approaching a low stone balcony in front of one of the houses, we were surprised to see, sitting thereon and leaning over a book which lay open upon the top of the carved parapet, the figure of a woman who did not appear to notice us.

"That is a real person," whispered Bentley, "and she does not see us."

"No," I replied; "it is like the others. Let us go near it."

We drew near to the balcony and stood before it. At this the figure raised its head and looked at us. It was beautiful, it was young; but its substance seemed to be of an ethereal quality which we had never seen or known of. With its full, soft eyes fixed upon us, it spoke.

"Why are you here?" it asked. "I have said to myself that the next time I saw any of you I would ask you why you come to trouble us. Cannot you live content in your own realms and spheres, knowing, as you must know, how timid we are, and how you frighten us and make us unhappy? In all this city there is, I believe, not one of us except myself who does not flee and hide from you whenever you cruelly come here. Even I would do that, had not I declared to myself that I would see you and speak to you, and endeavor to prevail upon you to leave us in peace."

The clear, frank tones of the speaker gave me courage. "We are two men," I answered, "strangers in this region, and living for the time in the beautiful country on the other side of the river. Having heard of this quiet city, we have come to see it for ourselves. We had supposed it to be uninhabited, but now that we find that this is not the case, we would assure you from our hearts that we do not wish to disturb or annoy any one who lives here. We simply came as honest travellers to view the city."

The figure now seated herself again, and as her countenance was nearer to us, we could see that it was filled with pensive thought. For a moment she looked at us without speaking. "Men!" she said. "And so I have been right. For a long time I have believed that the beings who sometimes come here, filling us with dread and awe, are men."

"And you," I exclaimed—"who are you, and who are these forms that we have seen, these strange inhabitants of this city?"

She gently smiled as she answered, "We are the ghosts of the future. We are the people who are to live in this city generations hence. But all of us do not know that, principally because we do not think about it and study about it enough to know it. And it is generally believed that the men and women who sometimes come here are ghosts who haunt the place."

"And that is why you are terrified and flee from us?" I exclaimed. "You think we are ghosts from another world?"

"Yes," she replied; "that is what is thought, and what I used to think."

"And you," I asked, "are spirits of human beings yet to be?"

"Yes," she answered; "but not for a long time. Generations of men—I know not how many—must pass away before we are men and women."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Bentley, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to the sky, "I shall be a spirit before you are a woman."

"Perhaps," she said again, with a sweet smile upon her face, "you may live to be very, very old."

But Bentley shook his head. This did not console him. For some minutes I stood in contemplation, gazing upon the stone pavement beneath my feet. "And this," I ejaculated, "is a city inhabited by the ghosts of the future, who believe men and women to be phantoms and spectres?"

She bowed her head.

"But how is it," I asked, "that you discovered that you are spirits and we mortal men?"

"There are so few of us who think of such things," she answered, "so few who study, ponder, and reflect. I am fond of study, and I love philosophy; and from the reading of many books I have learned much. From the book which I have here I have learned most; and from its teachings I have gradually come to the belief, which you tell me is the true one, that we are spirits and you men."

"And what book is that?" I asked.

"It is 'The Philosophy of Relative Existences,' by Rupert Vance."

"Ye gods!" I exclaimed, springing upon the balcony, "that is my

book, and I am Rupert Vance." I stepped toward the volume to seize it, but she raised her hand.

"You cannot touch it," she said. "It is the ghost of a book. And did you write it?"

"Write it? No," I said; "I am writing it. It is not yet finished."

"But here it is," she said, turning over the last pages. "As a spirit book it is finished. It is very successful; it is held in high estimation by intelligent thinkers; it is a standard work."

I stood trembling with emotion. "High estimation!" I said. "A standard work!"

"Oh yes," she replied, with animation; "and it well deserves its great success, especially in its conclusion. I have read it twice."

"But let me see these concluding pages," I exclaimed. "Let me look upon what I am to write."

She smiled, and shook her head, and closed the book. "I would like to do that," she said, "but if you are really a man you must not know what you are going to do."

"Oh, tell me, tell me," cried Bentley from below, "do you know a book called 'Stellar Studies,' by Arthur Bentley? It is a book of poems."

The figure gazed at him. "No," it said, presently, "I never heard of it."

I stood trembling. Had the youthful figure before me been flesh and blood, had the book been a real one, I would have torn it from her.

"O wise and lovely being!" I exclaimed, falling on my knees before her, "be also benign and generous. Let me but see the last page of my book. If I have been of benefit to your world; more than all, if I have been of benefit to you, let me see, I implore you—let me see how it is that I have done it."

She rose with the book in her hand. "You have only to wait until you have done it," she said, "and then you will know all that you could see here." I started to my feet and stood alone upon the balcony.

"I am sorry," said Bentley, as we walked toward the pier where we had left our boat, "that we talked only to that ghost girl, and that the other spirits were all afraid of us. Persons whose souls are choked up

with philosophy are not apt to care much for poetry; and even if my book is to be widely known, it is easy to see that she may not have heard of it."

I walked triumphant. The moon, almost touching the horizon, beamed like red gold. "My dear friend," said I, "I have always told you that you should put more philosophy into your poetry. That would make it live."

"And I have always told you," said he, "that you should not put so much poetry into your philosophy. It misleads people."

"It didn't mislead that ghost girl," said I.

"How do you know?" said Bentley. "Perhaps she is wrong, and the other inhabitants of the city are right, and we may be the ghosts after all. Such things, you know, are only relative. Anyway," he continued, after a little pause, "I wish I knew that those ghosts were now reading the poem which I am going to begin to-morrow."

BIRTH

Liam O'Flaherty

THE YOUNG COW WAS STANDING ON A HILLOCK WITHIN THE LOW stone wall behind which the men were crouching. They peered cautiously at her through the little holes between the loose stones of the wall, watching her rotund sides, her slowly swinging tail, her raised head, her twitching ears that listened nervously.

Slight tremors passed along her sides as something moved within her.

Her red body was brown in the night. The green deep field was pale under a covering of soft mist. Although the wind was dead calm there was a gentle murmur in the air. The murmur of the sea was distinct from the gentle whisper of the myriad blades of grass that stretched lovingly towards the falling dew.

Far away a curlew called in terror on the slope of the blue hill to the east, startled by the ringing of a horse's steel-shod hoof on a stone.

The bodies of the men were indistinct. Their cold, hard peasant faces had assumed a gentle look. Each soul, watching, hidden by the night from its fellows, shyly felt pity and love, of which it would be ashamed during the coarse human intercourse of the day. A youth's lips were open. Sitting by the wall, he stared sideways into the night, with wondering eyes. The old man with withered hands and glittering eyes who knelt on one knee and gripped a pointed stone was muttering something. The cow was his. A man with a black beard crept, stooping, to the old man and whispered in his ear. All listened.

"It won't be before dawn," he said.

"Nonsense," the old man said sharply. "It will come with the turning of the tide."

"You know best, Red Michael. But with their first calf they fear the night. It has been always so in my memory."

"There is truth in that," whispered a little man in a tam o' shanter cap, squatting on his heels. "With their first calf they fear the night."

"Silence," said the old man.

They all listened. The cow had moved. Her muscles, straining beneath her weight, creaked as she moved. They could also hear the swishing of her hoofs, dividing the long pale grass as she dragged them slowly. She arched her tail and bobbing her head up and down, she lashed her open jaws with her yellowish coarse tongue.

"Soon, very soon now," said the old man. "She'll lie in the hollow by the cairn of little stones."

The cow halted, shuddering. A rabbit darted from behind a young thistle, its invisible brown body betrayed by the vaulting white circle of its tail. It bounded over a mound and disappeared. Snorting, the cow smelt the thistle. Then she shivered along her flanks and moved to the heap of little stones that were overgrown with sprouting briars. Those she also smelt. Then she sighed wearily and turning around three times, she knelt, arose in terror and then immediately knelt again. She remained for a few moments, swaying uncertainly on her bent forelegs and then with a loud groan, she lowered her heavy haunches and lay on her side.

"Ha," said the old man, rising hurriedly. "The darkness of night cannot go against nature. Its the moon they feel, when the tide is about to turn."

His muscles also creaked, as he rose, with old age and rheumatism.

"There is great wisdom truly among the old," said the little man in the tam o' shanter cap, also rising.

"Be ready with the gad," said the old man to the youth.

The youth jumped up and snatched at the little coil of horse hair rope that lay beside him.

"We better move up by the fence to the gap," said the man with the beard.

"Easy now, easy now," murmured the old man. "Move carefully. Hush, what's this?"

They all looked behind them. There was a bare sloping field

behind them strewn with white stones. A small flock of sheep were sleeping, lying in a half circle, with their heads resting on their outstretched, thin forelegs, on the brow of the field, where it dipped into a long hollow. Beyond, through the night mist, the dim shapes of the village houses rose against the starlit sky. Down there, there was no murmur and the stars glittered, a myriad of wise heavenly eyes watching the earth.

Over the brow of the field, the figure of a woman approached, a little round head and a slender body widening to the wide circle of her long skirt. She approached stooping, one hand resting on her hip, the other hand carrying something in a tin can.

"It's herself," somebody said.

"She should have stayed with her child," the old man grunted.

"Hey," he said to her angrily when she approached. "Who sent you?"

"I came with the meal," she whispered shyly, glancing timorously at the stooping bodies of the men. "The old woman sent me. Larry has not come back from fishing."

"Huh," said the old man with a show of anger, reaching for the can. "Let me see. It's a foolish avarice to stay out fishing when his young cow is calving. Still," . . . his voice softened . . . "you are a good woman."

She was his son's young wife. She handed him the can containing oatmeal and then she took a little bottle from her bosom and handed it to him also.

"She said you might be cold in the night and . . . there's a drop Pateen the priest's servant brought from the town today."

"God bless the givers," they all said.

The old man took the bottle and pulled the cork. He drank. They all drank, blessing God and the cow that was about to calf. Then the old man said:

"You stay here, Nuals, while we go up to the gap. When we call you, come with the oatmeal."

She nodded her head. They moved up silently to the gap, a few paces away. She could hear them whispering as they crouched there. She also heard the moaning of the cow but she was afraid to look at

her through the holes in the wall. Every little sound startled her and she feared the distance of the clear sky. A sheep rose, cleared her nostrils and began to browse without moving. The queer sound of grass being chopped!

What silence! The daisies had arched their white leaves inwards over their yellow hearts; many leafy ladders, along which the dew drops slid to the yellow core.

Then she heard the old man, her husband's father, saying in a loud whisper: "Ha! Listen."

Turning her head towards them, she listened. She heard nothing but the groaning of the cow and the low chopping of the sheep. All the sheep had now risen and browsed, jerking their heads.

"That's it," someone said. "The tide is flowing."

"It's on the black reef that sound is made," said the timid voice of the youth. "Is it Big Stephen? Tell me. Is it?"

"Silence, boy," they all said.

Then she heard long waves rolling slowly, with a slightly angry noise.

For a long time they waited again in silence. Then suddenly, there was a loud murmur among the men. She looked and saw them mounting the gap. A stone fell from a man's grip and pattered downwards to the earth. They all clambered over, dropping with dull sounds into the field and then their feet swished through the grass. "God be with you, my little hag," somebody called in a gentle anxious voice to the cow. "The rope, the rope," said another. "Hand it to me. You clumsy fool, undo the knot." There was an angry oath. She crossed herself.

There was a great babel of voices and stamping of feet. "Heurtha, heurtha, my pretty girl," they cried.

"God have mercy on us," she said, getting to her feet.

She thought of her little baby and of her husband who was at sea among the long waves that rolled slowly. Then a voice:

"Praised be God."

"Come, woman. Come quickly. Come quickly. Quickly now. Brown girl, brown girl. Steady, my darling."

She ran, holding her skirt, to the gap and passed the can over the wall to the youth. Then she climbed over. They were around the cow

in a circle, looking at something on the grass. The old man was scraping something that floundered, with his long, slowly-moving fingers.

Everybody was talking loudly, joyfully.

"Praised be God," she said, stooping to look at the beautiful, curly, red body of the floundering calf.

Then they scattered oatmeal on him and turned the dazed cow towards him. They stepped aside. She smelt him and then, ignorant of motherhood, she started in fright, as he lifted his head on his feeble long neck and then let it drop again. She darted away, snorting, her slack sides heaving wildly.

"Heurtha, heurtha, my little hag," murmured the old man, and, with a pretense of stealth, he approached the calf and dragged it away a little, lifting him under the belly.

The calf, wriggling his body, uttered a strange sound, the first sound of life, a weary moan.

Then the cow, uttering a fierce, rapturous, savage cry of love, rushed at the calf. She put her mouth close to his, glaring at him with dazed eyes. Then she shivered. A low moaning sound came from her suddenly, like a cry of great anguish or of great love that cannot satisfy itself. Then mumbling, she put out her coarse tongue and licked his body savagely.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

F. Scott Fitzgerald

AS LONG AGO AS 1860 IT WAS THE PROPER THING TO BE BORN AT home. At present, so I am told, the high gods of medicine have decreed that the first cries of the young shall be uttered upon the anesthetic air of a hospital, preferably a fashionable one. So young Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button were fifty years ahead of style when they decided, one day in the summer of 1860, that their first baby should be born in a hospital. Whether this anachronism had any bearing upon the astonishing history I am about to set down will never be known.

I shall tell you what occurred, and let you judge for yourself.

The Roger Buttons held an enviable position, both social and financial, in ante-bellum Baltimore. They were related to the This Family and the That Family, which, as every Southerner knew, entitled them to membership in that enormous peerage which largely populated the Confederacy. This was their first experience with the charming old custom of having babies—Mr. Button was naturally nervous. He hoped it would be a boy so that he could be sent to Yale College in Connecticut, at which institution Mr. Button himself had been known for four years by the somewhat obvious nickname of "Cuff."

On the September morning consecrated to the enormous event he arose nervously at six o'clock, dressed himself, adjusted an impeccable stock, and hurried forth through the streets of Baltimore to the hospital, to determine whether the darkness of the night had borne in new life upon its bosom.

When he was approximately a hundred yards from the Maryland

Private Hospital for Ladies and Gentlemen he saw Doctor Keene, the family physician, descending the front steps, rubbing his hands together with a washing movement—as all doctors are required to do by the unwritten ethics of their profession.

Mr. Roger Button, the president of Roger Button & Co., Wholesale Hardware, began to run toward Doctor Keene with much less dignity than was expected from a Southern gentleman of that picturesque period. "Doctor Keene!" he called. "Oh, Doctor Keene!"

The doctor heard him, faced around, and stood waiting, a curious expression settling on his harsh, medicinal face as Mr. Button drew near.

"What happened?" demanded Mr. Button, as he came up in a gasping rush. "What was it? How is she? A boy? Who is it? What——"

"Talk sense!" said Doctor Keene sharply. He appeared somewhat irritated.

"Is the child born?" begged Mr. Button.

Doctor Keene frowned. "Why, yes, I suppose so—after a fashion." Again he threw a curious glance at Mr. Button.

"Is my wife all right?"

"Yes."

"Is it a boy or a girl?"

"Here now!" cried Doctor Keene in a perfect passion of irritation, "I'll ask you to go and see for yourself. Outrageous!" He snapped the last word out in almost one syllable, then he turned away muttering: "Do you imagine a case like this will help my professional reputation? One more would ruin me—ruin anybody."

"What's the matter?" demanded Mr. Button, appalled. "Triplets?"

"No, not triplets!" answered the doctor cuttingly. "What's more, you can go and see for yourself. And get another doctor. I brought you into the world, young man, and I've been physician to your family for forty years, but I'm through with you! I don't want to see you or any of your relatives ever again! Good-by!"

Then he turned sharply, and without another word climbed into his phaeton, which was waiting at the curbstone, and drove severely away.

Mr. Button stood there upon the sidewalk, stupefied and trembling from head to foot. What horrible mishap had occurred? He had suddenly lost all desire to go into the Maryland Private Hospital for Ladies and Gentlemen—it was with the greatest difficulty that, a moment later, he forced himself to mount the steps and enter the front door.

A nurse was sitting behind a desk in the opaque gloom of the hall. Swallowing his shame, Mr. Button approached her.

"Good-morning," she remarked, looking up at him pleasantly.

"Good-morning. I—I am Mr. Button."

At this a look of utter terror spread itself over the girl's face. She rose to her feet and seemed about to fly from the hall, restraining herself only with the most apparent difficulty.

"I want to see my child," said Mr. Button.

The nurse gave a little scream. "Oh—of course!" she cried hysterically. "Up-stairs. Right up-stairs. Go—*up!*"

She pointed the direction, and Mr. Button, bathed in a cool perspiration, turned falteringly, and began to mount to the second floor. In the upper hall he addressed another nurse who approached him, basin hand. "I'm Mr. Button," he managed to articulate. "I want to see my—"

Clank! The basin clattered to the floor and rolled in the direction of the stairs. Clank! Clank! It began a methodical descent as if sharing in the general terror which this gentleman provoked.

"I want to see my child!" Mr. Button almost shrieked. He was on the verge of collapse.

Clank! The basin had reached the first floor. The nurse regained control of herself, and threw Mr. Button a look of hearty contempt.

"All *right,* Mr. Button," she agreed in a hushed voice. "Very *well!* But if you *knew* what state it's put us all in this morning! It's perfectly outrageous! The hospital will never have the ghost of a reputation after—"

"Hurry!" he cried hoarsely. "I can't stand this!"

"Come this way, then, Mr. Button."

He dragged himself after her. At the end of a long hall they reached a room from which proceeded a variety of howls—indeed, a

room which, in later parlance, would have been known as the "crying-room." They entered. Ranged around the walls were half a dozen white-enameled rolling cribs, each with a tag tied at the head.

"Well," gasped Mr. Button, "which is mine?"

"There!" said the nurse.

Mr. Button's eyes followed her pointing finger, and this is what he saw. Wrapped in a voluminous white blanket, and partially crammed into one of the cribs, there sat an old man apparently about seventy years of age. His sparse hair was almost white, and from his chin dripped a long smoke-colored beard, which waved absurdly back and forth, fanned by the breeze coming in at the window. He looked up at Mr. Button with dim, faded eyes in which lurked a puzzled question.

"Am I mad?" thundered Mr. Button, his terror resolving into rage. "Is this some ghastly hospital joke?"

"It doesn't seem like a joke to us," replied the nurse severely. "And I don't know whether you're mad or not—but that is most certainly your child."

The cool perspiration redoubled on Mr. Button's forehead. He closed his eyes, and then, opening them, looked again. There was no mistake—he was gazing at a man of threescore and ten—a *baby* of threescore and ten, a baby whose feet hung over the sides of the crib in which it was reposing.

The old man looked placidly from one to the other for a moment, and then suddenly spoke in a cracked and ancient voice. "Are you my father?" he demanded.

Mr. Button and the nurse started violently.

"Because if you are," went on the old man querulously, "I wish you'd get me out of this place—or, at least, get them to put a comfortable rocker in here."

"Where in God's name did you come from? Who are you?" burst out Mr. Button frantically.

"I can't tell you *exactly* who I am," replied the querulous whine, "because I've only been born a few hours—but my last name is certainly Button."

"You lie! You're an impostor!"

The old man turned wearily to the nurse. "Nice way to welcome a new-born child," he complained in a weak voice. "Tell him he's wrong, why don't you?"

"You're wrong, Mr. Button," said the nurse severely. "This is your child, and you'll have to make the best of it. We're going to ask you to take him home with you as soon as possible—some time to-day."

"Home?" repeated Mr. Button incredulously.

"Yes, we can't have him here. We really can't, you know."

"I'm right glad of it," whined the old man. "This is a fine place to keep a youngster of quiet tastes. With all this yelling and howling, I haven't been able to get a wink of sleep. I asked for something to eat"—here his voice rose to a shrill note of protest—"and they brought me a bottle of milk!"

Mr. Button sank down upon a chair near his son and concealed his face in his hands. "My heavens!" he murmured, in an ecstasy of horror. "What will people say? What must I do?"

"You'll have to take him home," insisted the nurse—"immediately!"

A grotesque picture formed itself with dreadful clarity before the eyes of the tortured man—a picture of himself walking through the crowded streets of the city with this appalling apparition stalking by his side. "I can't. I can't," he moaned.

People would stop to speak to him, and what was he going to say? He would have to introduce this—this septuagenarian: "This is my son, born early this morning." And then the old man would gather his blanket around him and they would plod on, past the bustling stores, the slave market—for a dark instant Mr. Button wished passionately that his son was black—past the luxurious houses of the residential district, past the home for the aged. . . .

"Come! Pull yourself together," commanded the nurse.

"See here," the old man announced suddenly, "if you think I'm going to walk home in this blanket, you're entirely mistaken."

"Babies always have blankets."

With a malicious crackle the old man held up a small white swaddling garment. "Look!" he quavered. "*This* is what they had ready for me."

"Babies always wear those," said the nurse primly.

"Well," said the old man, "this baby's not going to wear anything in about two minutes. This blanket itches. They might at least have given me a sheet."

"Keep it on! Keep it on!" said Mr. Button hurriedly. He turned to the nurse. "What'll I do?"

"Go down town and buy your son some clothes."

Mr. Button's son's voice followed him down into the hall: "And a cane, father. I want to have a cane."

Mr. Button banged the outer door savagely. . . .

II

"Good-morning," Mr. Button said, nervously, to the clerk in the Chesapeake Dry Goods Company. "I want to buy some clothes for my child."

"How old is your child, sir?"

"About six hours," answered Mr. Button, without due consideration.

"Babies' supply department in the rear."

"Why, I don't think—I'm not sure that's what I want. It's—he's an unusually large-size child. Exceptionally—ah—large."

"They have the largest child's sizes."

"Where is the boys' department?" inquired Mr. Button, shifting his ground desperately. He felt that the clerk must surely scent his shameful secret.

"Right here."

"Well—" He hesitated. The notion of dressing his son in men's clothes was repugnant to him. If, say, he could only find a *very* large boy's suit, he might cut off that long and awful beard, dye the white hair brown, and thus manage to conceal the worst, and to retain something of his own self-respect—not to mention his position in Baltimore society.

But a frantic inspection of the boys' department revealed no suits to fit the new-born Button. He blamed the store, of course—in such cases it is the thing to blame the store.

"How old did you say that boy of yours was?" demanded the clerk curiously.

"He's—sixteen."

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you said six *hours*. You'll find the youths' department in the next aisle."

Mr. Button turned miserably away. Then he stopped, brightened, and pointed his finger toward a dressed dummy in the window display. "There!" he exclaimed. "I'll take that suit, out there on the dummy."

The clerk stared. "Why," he protested, "that's not a child's suit. At least it *is*, but it's for fancy dress. You could wear it yourself!"

"Wrap it up," insisted his customer nervously. "That's what I want."

The astonished clerk obeyed.

Back at the hospital Mr. Button entered the nursery and almost threw the package at his son. "Here's your clothes," he snapped out.

The old man untied the package and viewed the contents with a quizzical eye.

"They look sort of funny to me," he complained. "I don't want to be made a monkey of—"

"You've made a monkey of me!" retorted Mr. Button fiercely. "Never you mind how funny you look. Put them on—or I'll—or I'll *spank* you." He swallowed uneasily at the penultimate word, feeling nevertheless that it was the proper thing to say.

"All right, father"—this with a grotesque simulation of filial respect—"you've lived longer; you know best. Just as you say."

As before, the sound of the word "father" caused Mr. Button to start violently.

"And hurry."

"I'm hurrying, father."

When his son was dressed Mr. Button regarded him with depression. The costume consisted of dotted socks, pink pants, and a belted blouse with a wide white collar. Over the latter waved the long whitish beard, drooping almost to the waist. The effect was not good.

"Wait!"

Mr. Button seized a hospital shears and with three quick snaps amputated a large section of the beard. But even with this improve-

ment the ensemble fell far short of perfection. The remaining brush of scraggly hair, the watery eyes, the ancient teeth, seemed oddly out of tone with the gayety of the costume. Mr. Button, however, was obdurate—he held out his hand. "Come along!" he said sternly.

His son took the hand trustingly. "What are you going to call me, dad?" he quavered as they walked from the nursery—"just 'baby' for a while? till you think of a better name?"

Mr. Button grunted. "I don't know," he answered harshly. "I think we'll call you Methuselah."

III

Even after the new addition to the Button family had had his hair cut short and then dyed to a sparse unnatural black, had had his face shaved so close that it glistened, and had been attired in small-boy clothes made to order by a flabbergasted tailor, it was impossible for Mr. Button to ignore the fact that his son was a poor excuse for a first family baby. Despite his aged stoop, Benjamin Button—for it was by this name they called him instead of by the appropriate but invidious Methuselah—was five feet eight inches tall. His clothes did not conceal this, nor did the clipping and dyeing of his eyebrows disguise the fact that the eyes underneath were faded and watery and tired. In fact, the baby-nurse who had been engaged in advance left the house after one look, in a state of considerable indignation.

But Mr. Button persisted in his unwavering purpose. Benjamin was a baby, and a baby he should remain. At first he declared that if Benjamin didn't like warm milk he could go without food altogether, but he was finally prevailed upon to allow his son bread and butter, and even oatmeal by way of a compromise. One day he brought home a rattle and, giving it to Benjamin, insisted in no uncertain terms that he should "play with it," whereupon the old man took it with a weary expression and could be heard jingling it obediently at intervals throughout the day.

There can be no doubt, though, that the rattle bored him, and that he found other and more soothing amusements when he was left alone. For instance, Mr. Button discovered one day that during the preceding week he had smoked more cigars than ever before—a phenomenon

which was explained a few days later when, entering the nursery unexpectedly, he found the room full of faint blue haze and Benjamin, with a guilty expression on his face, trying to conceal the butt of a dark Havana. This, of course, called for a severe spanking, but Mr. Button found that he could not bring himself to administer it. He merely warned his son that he would "stunt his growth."

Nevertheless he persisted in his attitude. He brought home lead soldiers, he brought toy trains, he brought large pleasant animals made of cotton, and, to perfect the illusion which he was creating—for himself at least—he passionately demanded of the clerk in the toy-store whether "the paint would come off the pink duck if the baby put it in his mouth." But, despite all his father's efforts, Benjamin refused to be interested. He would steal down the back stairs and return to the nursery with a volume of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," over which he would pore through an afternoon, while his cotton cows and his Noah's ark were left neglected on the floor. Against such a stubbornness Mr. Button's efforts were of little avail.

The sensation created in Baltimore was, at first, prodigious. What the mishap would have cost the Buttons and their kinsfolk socially cannot be determined, for the outbreak of the Civil War drew the city's attention to other things. A few people who were unfailingly polite racked their brains for compliments to give to the parents—and finally hit upon the ingenious device of declaring that the baby resembled his grandfather, a fact which, due to the standard state of decay common to all men of seventy, could not be denied. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button were not pleased, and Benjamin's grandfather was furiously insulted.

Benjamin, once he left the hospital, took life as he found it. Several small boys were brought to see him, and he spent a stiff-jointed afternoon trying to work up an interest in tops and marbles—he even managed, quite accidentally, to break a kitchen window with a stone from a sling shot, a feat which secretly delighted his father.

Thereafter Benjamin contrived to break something every day, but he did these things only because they were expected of him, and because he was by nature obliging.

When his grandfather's initial antagonism wore off, Benjamin and

that gentleman took enormous pleasure in one another's company. They would sit for hours, these two so far apart in age and experience, and, like old cronies, discuss with tireless monotony the slow events of the day. Benjamin felt more at ease in his grandfather's presence than in his parents'—they seemed always somewhat in awe of him and, despite the dictatorial authority they exercised over him, frequently addressed him as "Mr."

He was as puzzled as any one else at the apparently advanced age of his mind and body at birth. He read up on it in the medical journal, but found that no such case had been previously recorded. At his father's urging he made an honest attempt to play with other boys, and frequently he joined in the milder games—football shook him up too much, and he feared that in case of a fracture his ancient bones would refuse to knit.

When he was five he was sent to kindergarten, where he was initiated into the art of pasting green paper on orange paper, of weaving colored maps and manufacturing eternal cardboard necklaces. He was inclined to drowse off to sleep in the middle of these tasks, a habit which both irritated and frightened his young teacher. To his relief she complained to his parents, and he was removed from the school. The Roger Buttons told their friends that they felt he was too young.

By the time he was twelve years old his parents had grown used to him. Indeed, so strong is the force of custom that they no longer felt that he was different from any other child—except when some curious anomaly reminded them of the fact. But one day a few weeks after his twelfth birthday, while looking in the mirror, Benjamin made, or thought he made, an astonishing discovery. Did his eyes deceive him, or had his hair turned in the dozen years of his life from white to iron-gray under its concealing dye? Was the network of wrinkles on his face becoming less pronounced? Was his skin healthier and firmer, with even a touch of ruddy winter color? He could not tell. He knew that he no longer stooped and that his physical condition had improved since the early days of his life.

"Can it be—?" he thought to himself, or, rather, scarcely dared to think.

He went to his father. "I am grown," he announced determinedly. "I want to put on long trousers."

His father hesitated. "Well," he said finally, "I don't know. Fourteen is the age for putting on long trousers—and you are only twelve."

"But you'll have to admit," protested Benjamin, "that I'm big for my age."

His father looked at him with illusory speculation. "Oh, I'm not so sure of that," he said. "I was as big as you when I was twelve."

This was not true—it was all part of Roger Button's silent agreement with himself to believe in his son's normality.

Finally a compromise was reached. Benjamin was to continue to dye his hair. He was to make a better attempt to play with boys of his own age. He was not to wear his spectacles or carry a cane in the street. In return for these concessions he was allowed his first suit of long trousers. . . .

IV

Of the life of Benjamin Button between his twelfth and twenty-first year I intend to say little. Suffice to record that they were years of normal ungrowth. When Benjamin was eighteen he was erect as a man of fifty; he had more hair and it was of a dark gray; his step was firm, his voice had lost its cracked quaver and descended to a healthy baritone. So his father sent him up to Connecticut to take examinations for entrance to Yale College. Benjamin passed his examination and became a member of the freshman class.

On the third day following his matriculation he received a notification from Mr. Hart, the college registrar, to call at his office and arrange his schedule. Benjamin, glancing in the mirror, decided that his hair needed a new application of its brown dye, but an anxious inspection of his bureau drawer disclosed that the dye bottle was not there. Then he remembered—he had emptied it the day before and thrown it away.

He was in a dilemma. He was due at the registrar's in five minutes. There seemed to be no help for it—he must go as he was. He did.

"Good-morning," said the registrar politely. "You've come to inquire about your son."

"Why, as a matter of fact, my name's Button—" began Benjamin, but Mr. Hart cut him off.

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Button. I'm expecting your son here any minute."

"That's me!" burst out Benjamin. "I'm a freshman."

"What!"

"I'm a freshman."

"Surely you're joking."

"Not at all."

The registrar frowned and glanced at a card before him. "Why, I have Mr. Benjamin Button's age down here as eighteen."

"That's my age," asserted Benjamin, flushing slightly.

The registrar eyed him wearily. "Now surely, Mr. Button, you don't expect me to believe that."

Benjamin smiled wearily. "I am eighteen," he repeated.

The registrar pointed sternly to the door. "Get out," he said. "Get out of college and get out of town. You are a dangerous lunatic."

"I am eighteen."

Mr. Hart opened the door. "The idea!" he shouted. "A man of your age trying to enter here as a freshman. Eighteen years old, are you? Well, I'll give you eighteen minutes to get out of town."

Benjamin Button walked with dignity from the room, and half a dozen undergraduates, who were waiting in the hall, followed him curiously with their eyes. When he had gone a little way he turned around, faced the infuriated registrar, who was still standing in the doorway, and repeated in a firm voice: "I am eighteen years old."

To a chorus of titters which went up from the group of undergraduates, Benjamin walked away.

But he was not fated to escape so easily. On his melancholy walk to the railroad station he found that he was being followed by a group, then by a swarm, and finally by a dense mass of undergraduates. The word had gone around that a lunatic had passed the entrance examinations for Yale and attempted to palm himself off as a youth of eighteen. A fever of excitement permeated the college. Men ran hatless out of classes, the football team abandoned its practice and joined the mob, professors' wives with bonnets awry and bustles out of posi-

tion, ran shouting after the procession, from which proceeded a continual succession of remarks aimed at the tender sensibilities of Benjamin Button.

"He must be the Wandering Jew!"

"He ought to go to prep school at his age!"

"Look at the infant prodigy!"

"He thought this was the old men's home."

"Go up to Harvard!"

Benjamin increased his gait, and soon he was running. He would show them! He *would* go to Harvard, and then they would regret these ill-considered taunts!

Safely on board the train for Baltimore, he put his head from the window. "You'll regret this!" he shouted.

"Ha-ha!" the undergraduates laughed. "Ha-ha-ha!" It was the biggest mistake that Yale College had ever made. . . .

V

In 1880 Benjamin Button was twenty years old, and he signalized his birthday by going to work for his father in Roger Button & Co., Wholesale Hardware. It was in that same year that he began "going out socially"—that is, his father insisted on taking him to several fashionable dances. Roger Button was now fifty, and he and his son were more and more companionable—in fact, since Benjamin had ceased to dye his hair (which was still grayish) they appeared about the same age, and could have passed for brothers.

One night in August they got into the phaeton attired in their full-dress suits and drove out to a dance at the Shevlins' country house, situated just outside of Baltimore. It was a gorgeous evening. A full moon drenched the road to the lustreless color of platinum, and late-blooming harvest flowers breathed into the motionless air aromas that were like low, half-heard laughter. The open country, carpeted for rods around with bright wheat, was translucent as in the day. It was almost impossible not to be affected by the sheer beauty of the sky —almost.

"There's a great future in the dry-goods business," Roger Button

was saying. He was not a spiritual man—his esthetic sense was rudimentary.

"Old fellows like me can't learn new tricks," he observed profoundly. "It's you youngsters with energy and vitality that have the great future before you."

Far up the road the lights of the Shevlins' country house drifted into view, and presently there was a sighing sound that crept persistently toward them—it might have been the fine plaint of violins or the rustle of the silver wheat under the moon.

They pulled up behind a handsome brougham whose passengers were disembarking at the door. A lady got out, then an elderly gentleman, then another young lady, beautiful as sin. Benjamin started; an almost chemical change seemed to dissolve and recompose the very elements of his body. A rigor passed over him, blood rose into his cheeks, his forehead, and there was a steady thumping in his ears. It was first love.

The girl was slender and frail, with hair that was ashen under the moon and honey-colored under the sputtering gas-lamps of the porch. Over her shoulders was thrown a Spanish mantilla of softest yellow, butterflied in black; her feet were glittering buttons at the hem of her bustled dress.

Roger Button leaned over to his son. "That," he said, "is young Hildegarde Moncrief, the daughter of General Moncrief."

Benjamin nodded coldly. "Pretty little thing," he said indifferently. But when the negro boy had led the buggy away, he added: "Dad, you might introduce me to her."

They approached a group of which Miss Moncrief was the centre. Reared in the old tradition, she courtesied low before Benjamin. Yes, he might have a dance. He thanked her and walked away—staggered away.

The interval until the time for his turn should arrive dragged itself out interminably. He stood close to the wall, silent, inscrutable, watching with murderous eyes the young bloods of Baltimore as they eddied around Hildegarde Moncrief, passionate admiration in their faces. How obnoxious they seemed to Benjamin; how intolerably rosy!

Their curling brown whiskers aroused in him a feeling equivalent to indigestion.

But when his own time came, and he drifted with her out upon the changing floor to the music of the latest waltz from Paris, his jealousies and anxieties melted from him like a mantle of snow. Blind with enchantment, he felt that life was just beginning.

"You and your brother got here just as we did, didn't you?" asked Hildegarde, looking up at him with eyes that were like bright blue enamel.

Benjamin hesitated. If she took him for his father's brother, would it be best to enlighten her? He remembered his experience at Yale, so he decided against it. It would be rude to contradict a lady; it would be criminal to mar this exquisite occasion with the grotesque story of his origin. Later, perhaps. So he nodded, smiled, listened, was happy.

"I like men of your age," Hildegarde told him. "Young boys are so idiotic. They tell me how much champagne they drink at college, and how much money they lose playing cards. Men of your age know how to appreciate women."

Benjamin felt himself on the verge of a proposal—with an effort he choked back the impulse.

"You're just the romantic age," she continued—"fifty. Twenty-five is too worldly-wise; thirty is apt to be pale from overwork; forty is the age of long stories that take a whole cigar to tell; sixty is—oh, sixty is too near seventy; but fifty is the mellow age. I love fifty."

Fifty seemed to Benjamin a glorious age. He longed passionately to be fifty.

"I've always said," went on Hildegarde, "that I'd rather marry a man of fifty and be taken care of than marry a man of thirty and take care of *him*."

For Benjamin the rest of the evening was bathed in a honey-colored mist. Hildegarde gave him two more dances, and they discovered that they were marvellously in accord on all the questions of the day. She was to go driving with him on the following Sunday, and then they would discuss all these questions further.

Going home in the phaeton just before the crack of dawn, when the first bees were humming and the fading moon glimmered in the

cool dew, Benjamin knew vaguely that his father was discussing wholesale hardware.

". . . And what do you think should merit our biggest attention after hammers and nails?" the elder Button was saying.

"Love," replied Benjamin absent-mindedly.

"Lugs?" exclaimed Roger Button. "Why, I've just covered the question of lugs."

Benjamin regarded him with dazed eyes just as the eastern sky was suddenly cracked with light, and an oriole yawned piercingly in the quickening trees. . . .

VI

When, six months later, the engagement of Miss Hildegarde Moncrief to Mr. Benjamin Button was made known (I say "made known," for General Moncrief declared he would rather fall upon his sword than announce it), the excitement in Baltimore society reached a feverish pitch. The almost forgotten story of Benjamin's birth was remembered and sent out upon the winds of scandal in picaresque and incredible forms. It was said that Benjamin was really the father of Roger Button, that he was his brother who had been in prison for forty years, that he was John Wilkes Booth in disguise—and, finally, that he had two small conical horns sprouting from his head.

The Sunday supplements of the New York papers played up the case with fascinating sketches which showed the head of Benjamin Button attached to a fish, to a snake, and, finally, to a body of solid brass. He became known, journalistically, as the Mystery Man of Maryland. But the true story, as is usually the case, had a very small circulation.

However, every one agreed with General Moncrief that it was "criminal" for a lovely girl who could have married any beau in Baltimore to throw herself into the arms of a man who was assuredly fifty. In vain Mr. Roger Button published his son's birth certificate in large type in the Baltimore *Blaze*. No one believed it. You had only to look at Benjamin and see.

On the part of the two people most concerned there was no wavering. So many of the stories about her fiancé were false that Hildegarde

refused stubbornly to believe even the true one. In vain General Moncrief pointed out to her the high mortality among men of fifty—or, at least, among men who looked fifty; in vain he told her of the instability of the wholesale hardware business. Hildegarde had chosen to marry for mellowness—and marry she did. . . .

VII

In one particular, at least, the friends of Hildegarde Moncrief were mistaken. The wholesale hardware business prospered amazingly. In the fifteen years between Benjamin Button's marriage in 1880 and his father's retirement in 1895, the family fortune was doubled—and this was due largely to the younger member of the firm.

Needless to say, Baltimore eventually received the couple to its bosom. Even old General Moncrief became reconciled to his son-in-law when Benjamin gave him the money to bring out his "History of the Civil War" in twenty volumes, which had been refused by nine prominent publishers.

In Benjamin himself fifteen years had wrought many changes. It seemed to him that the blood flowed with new vigor through his veins. It began to be a pleasure to rise in the morning, to walk with an active step along the busy, sunny street, to work untiringly with his shipments of hammers and his cargoes of nails. It was in 1890 that he executed his famous business coup: he brought up the suggestion that *all nails used in nailing up the boxes in which nails are shipped are the property of the shippee,* a proposal which became a statute, was approved by Chief Justice Fossile, and saved Roger Button and Company, Wholesale Hardware, more than *six hundred nails every year.*

In addition, Benjamin discovered that he was becoming more and more attracted by the gay side of life. It was typical of his growing enthusiasm for pleasure that he was the first man in the city of Baltimore to own and run an automobile. Meeting him on the street, his contemporaries would stare enviously at the picture he made of health and vitality.

"He seems to grow younger every year," they would remark. And if old Roger Button, now sixty-five years old, had failed at first to give

a proper welcome to his son he atoned at last by bestowing on him what amounted to adulation.

And here we come to an unpleasant subject which it will be well to pass over as quickly as possible. There was only one thing that worried Benjamin Button: his wife had ceased to attract him.

At that time Hildegarde was a woman of thirty-five, with a son, Roscoe, fourteen years old. In the early days of their marriage Benjamin had worshipped her. But, as the years passed, her honey-colored hair became an unexciting brown, the blue enamel of her eyes assumed the aspect of cheap crockery—moreover, and most of all, she had become too settled in her ways, too placid, too content, too anemic in her excitements, and too sober in her taste. As a bride it had been she who had "dragged" Benjamin to dances and dinners—now conditions were reversed. She went out socially with him, but without enthusiasm, devoured already by that eternal inertia which comes to live with each of us one day and stays with us to the end.

Benjamin's discontent waxed stronger. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 his home had for him so little charm that he decided to join the army. With his business influence he obtained a commission as captain, and proved so adaptable to the work that he was made a major, and finally a lieutenant-colonel just in time to participate in the celebrated charge up San Juan Hill. He was slightly wounded, and received a medal.

Benjamin had become so attached to the activity and excitement of army life that he regretted to give it up, but his business required attention, so he resigned his commission and came home. He was met at the station by a brass band and escorted to his house.

VIII

Hildegarde, waving a large silk flag, greeted him on the porch, and even as he kissed her he felt with a sinking of the heart that these three years had taken their toll. She was a woman of forty now, with a faint skirmish line of gray hairs in her head. The sight depressed him.

Up in his room he saw his reflection in the familiar mirror—he went closer and examined his own face with anxiety, comparing it after a

moment with a photograph of himself in uniform taken just before the war.

"Good Lord!" he said aloud. The process was continuing. There was no doubt of it—he looked now like a man of thirty. Instead of being delighted, he was uneasy—he was growing younger. He had hitherto hoped that once he reached a bodily age equivalent to his age in years, the grotesque phenomenon which had markd his birth would cease to function. He shuddered. His destiny seemed to him awful, incredible.

When he came down-stairs Hildegarde was waiting for him. She appeared annoyed, and he wondered if she had at last discovered that there was something amiss. It was with an effort to relieve the tension between them that he broached the matter at dinner in what he considered a delicate way.

"Well," he remarked lightly, "everybody says I look younger than ever."

Hildegarde regarded him with scorn. She sniffed. "Do you think it's anything to boast about?"

"I'm not boasting," he asserted uncomfortably.

She sniffed again. "The idea," she said, and after a moment: "I should think you'd have enough pride to stop it."

"How can I?" he demanded.

"I'm not going to argue with you," she retorted. "But there's a right way of doing things and a wrong way. If you've made up your mind to be different from everybody else, I don't suppose I can stop you, but I really don't think it's very considerate."

"But, Hildegarde, I can't help it."

"You can too. You're simply stubborn. You think you don't want to be like any one else. You always have been that way, and you always will be. But just think how it would be if every one else looked at things as you do—what would the world be like?"

As this was an inane and unanswerable argument Benjamin made no reply, and from that time on a chasm began to widen between them. He wondered what possible fascination she had ever exercised over him.

To add to the breach, he found, as the new century gathered head-

way, that his thirst for gayety grew stronger. Never a party of any kind in the city of Baltimore but he was there, dancing with the prettiest of the young married women, chatting with the most popular of the débutantes, and finding their company charming, while his wife, a dowager of evil omen, sat among the chaperons, now in haughty disapproval, and now following him with solemn, puzzled, and reproachful eyes.

"Look!" people would remark. "What a pity! A young fellow that age tied to a woman of forty-five. He must be twenty years younger than his wife." They had forgotten—as people inevitably forget—that back in 1880 their mammas and papas had also remarked about this same ill-matched pair.

Benjamin's growing unhappiness at home was compensated for by his many new interests. He took up golf and made a great success of it. He went in for dancing: in 1906 he was an expert at "The Boston," and in 1908 he was considered proficient at the "Maxixe," while in 1909 his "Castle Walk" was the envy of every young man in town.

His social activities, of course, interfered to some extent with his business, but then he had worked hard at wholesale hardware for twenty-five years and felt that he could soon hand it on to his son, Roscoe, who had recently graduated from Harvard.

He and his son were, in fact, often mistaken for each other. This pleased Benjamin—he soon forgot the insidious fear which had come over him on his return from the Spanish-American War, and grew to take a naïve pleasure in his appearance. There was only one fly in the delicious ointment—he hated to appear in public with his wife. Hildegarde was almost fifty, and the sight of her made him feel absurd. . . .

IX

One September day in 1910—a few years after Roger Button & Co., Wholesale Hardware, had been handed over to young Roscoe Button—a man, apparently about twenty years old, entered himself as a freshman at Harvard University in Cambridge. He did not make the mistake of announcing that he would never see fifty again nor did he mention the fact that his son had been graduated from the same institution ten years before.

He was admitted, and almost immediately attained a prominent position in the class, partly because he seemed a little older than the other freshmen, whose average age was about eighteen.

But his success was largely due to the fact that in the football game with Yale he played so brilliantly, with so much dash and with such a cold, remorseless anger that he scored seven touchdowns and fourteen field goals for Harvard, and caused one entire eleven of Yale men to be carried singly from the field, unconscious. He was the most celebrated man in college.

Strange to say, in his third or junior year he was scarcely able to "make" the team. The coaches said that he had lost weight, and it seemed to the more observant among them that he was not quite as tall as before. He made no touchdowns—indeed, he was retained on the team chiefly in hope that his enormous reputation would bring terror and disorganization to the Yale team.

In his senior year he did not make the team at all. He had grown so slight and frail that one day he was taken by some sophomores for a freshman, an incident which humiliated him terribly. He became known as something of a prodigy—a senior who was surely no more than sixteen—and he was often shocked at the worldliness of some of his classmates. His studies seemed harder to him—he felt that they were too advanced. He had heard his classmates speak of St. Midas', the famous preparatory school, at which so many of them had prepared for college, and he determined after his graduation to enter himself at St. Midas', where the sheltered life among boys his own size would be more congenial to him.

Upon his graduation in 1914 he went home to Baltimore with his Harvard diploma in his pocket. Hildegarde was now residing in Italy, so Benjamin went to live with his son, Roscoe. But though he was welcomed in a general way, there was obviously no heartiness in Roscoe's feeling toward him—there was even perceptible a tendency on his son's part to think that Benjamin, as he moped about the house in adolescent mooniness, was somewhat in the way. Roscoe was married now and prominent in Baltimore life, and he wanted no scandal to creep out in connection with his family.

Benjamin, no longer persona grata with the débutantes and younger

college set, found himself left much alone, except for the companionship of three or four fifteen-year-old boys in the neighborhood. His idea of going to St. Midas' school recurred to him.

"Say," he said to Roscoe one day, "I've told you over and over that I want to go to prep school."

"Well, go, then," replied Roscoe shortly. The matter was distasteful to him, and he wished to avoid a discussion.

"I can't go alone," said Benjamin helplessly. "You'll have to enter me and take me up there."

"I haven't got time," declared Roscoe abruptly. His eyes narrowed and he looked uneasily at his father. "As a matter of fact," he added, "you'd better not go on with this business much longer. You better pull up short. You better—you better"—he paused and his face crimsoned as he sought for words—"you better turn right around and start back the other way. This has gone too far to be a joke. It isn't funny any longer. You—you behave yourself!"

Benjamin looked at him, on the verge of tears.

"And another thing," continued Roscoe, "when visitors are in the house I want you to call me 'Uncle'—not 'Roscoe,' but 'Uncle,' do you understand? It looks absurd for a boy of fifteen to call me by my first name. Perhaps you'd better call me 'Uncle' *all* the time, so you'll get used to it."

With a harsh look at his father, Roscoe turned away. . . .

X

At the termination of this interview, Benjamin wandered dismally up-stairs and stared at himself in the mirror. He had not shaved for three months, but he could find nothing on his face but a faint white down with which it seemed unnecessary to meddle. When he had first come home from Harvard, Roscoe had approached him with the proposition that he should wear eye-glasses and imitation whiskers glued to his cheeks, and it had seemed for a moment that the farce of his early years was to be repeated. But whiskers had itched and made him ashamed. He wept and Roscoe had reluctantly relented.

Benjamin opened a book of boys' stories. "The Boy Scouts in Bimini Bay," and began to read. But he found himself thinking per-

sistently about the war. America had joined the Allied cause during the preceding month, and Benjamin wanted to enlist, but, alas, sixteen was the minimum age, and he did not look that old. His true age, which was fifty-seven, would have disqualified him, anyway.

There was a knock at his door, and the butler appeared with a letter bearing a large official legend in the corner and addressed to Mr. Benjamin Button. Benjamin tore it open eagerly, and read the enclosure with delight. It informed him that many reserve officers who had served in the Spanish-American War were being called back into service with a higher rank, and it enclosed his commission as brigadier-general in the United States army with orders to report immediately.

Benjamin jumped to his feet fairly quivering with enthusiasm. This was what he had wanted. He seized his cap and ten minutes later he had entered a large tailoring establishment on Charles Street, and asked in his uncertain treble to be measured for a uniform.

"Want to play soldier, sonny?" demanded a clerk, casually.

Benjamin flushed. "Say! Never mind what I want!" he retorted angrily. "My name's Button and I live on Mt. Vernon Place, so you know I'm good for it."

"Well," admitted the clerk, hesitatingly, "if you're not, I guess your daddy is, all right."

Benjamin was measured, and a week later his uniform was completed. He had difficulty in obtaining the proper general's insignia because the dealer kept insisting to Benjamin that a nice Y. W. C. A. badge would look just as well and be much more fun to play with.

Saying nothing to Roscoe, he left the house one night and proceeded by train to Camp Mosby, in South Carolina, where he was to command an infantry brigade. On a sultry April day he approached the entrance to the camp, paid off the taxicab which had brought him from the station, and turned to the sentry on guard.

"Get some one to handle my luggage!" he said briskly.

The sentry eyed him reproachfully. "Say," he remarked, "where you goin' with the general's duds, sonny?"

Benjamin, veteran of the Spanish-American War, whirled upon him with fire in his eye, but with, alas, a changing treble voice.

"Come to attention!" he tried to thunder; he paused for breath—then suddenly he saw the sentry snap his heels together and bring his rifle to the present. Benjamin concealed a smile of gratification, but when he glanced around his smile faded. It was not he who had inspired obedience, but an imposing artillery colonel who was approaching on horseback.

"Colonel!" called Benjamin shrilly.

The colonel came up, drew rein, and looked coolly down at him with a twinkle in his eyes. "Whose little boy are you?" he demanded kindly.

"I'll soon darn well show you whose little boy I am!" retorted Benjamin in a ferocious voice. "Get down off that horse!"

The colonel roared with laughter.

"You want him, eh, general?"

"Here!" cried Benjamin desperately. "Read this." And he thrust his commission toward the colonel.

The colonel read it, his eyes popping from their sockets.

"Where'd you get this?" he demanded, slipping the document into his own pocket.

"I got it from the Government, as you'll soon find out!"

"You come along with me," said the colonel with a peculiar look. "We'll go up to headquarters and talk this over. Come along."

The colonel turned and began walking his horse in the direction of headquarters. There was nothing for Benjamin to do but follow with as much dignity as possible—meanwhile promising himself a stern revenge.

But this revenge did not materialize. Two days later, however, his son Roscoe materialized from Baltimore, hot and cross from a hasty trip, and escorted the weeping general, *sans* uniform, back to his home.

XI

In 1920 Roscoe Button's first child was born. During the attendant festivities, however, no one thought it "the thing" to mention that the little grubby boy, apparently about ten years of age who played around the house with lead soldiers and a miniature circus, was the new baby's own grandfather.

No one disliked the little boy whose fresh, cheerful face was crossed with just a hint of sadness, but to Roscoe Button his presence was a source of torment. In the idiom of his generation Roscoe did not consider the matter "efficient." It seemed to him that his father, in refusing to look sixty, had not behaved like a "red-blooded he-man" —this was Roscoe's favorite expression—but in a curious and perverse manner. Indeed, to think about the matter for as much as a half an hour drove him to the edge of insanity. Roscoe believed that "live wires" should keep young, but carrying it out on such a scale was—was—was inefficient. And there Roscoe rested.

Five years later Roscoe's little boy had grown old enough to play childish games with little Benjamin under the supervision of the same nurse. Roscoe took them both to kindergarten on the same day and Benjamin found that playing with little strips of colored paper, making mats and chains and curious and beautiful designs, was the most fascinating game in the world. Once he was bad and had to stand in the corner—then he cried—but for the most part there were gay hours in the cheerful room, with the sunlight coming in the windows and Miss Bailey's kind hand resting for a moment now and then in his tousled hair.

Roscoe's son moved up into the first grade after a year, but Benjamin stayed on in the kindergarten. He was very happy. Sometimes when other tots talked about what they would do when they grew up a shadow would cross his little face as if in a dim, childish way he realized that those were things in which he was never to share.

The days flowed on in monotonous content. He went back a third year to the kindergarten, but he was too little now to understand what the bright shining strips of paper were for. He cried because the other boys were bigger than he and he was afraid of them. The teacher talked to him, but though he tried to understand he could not understand at all.

He was taken from the kindergarten. His nurse, Nana, in her starched gingham dress, became the centre of his tiny world. On bright days they walked in the park; Nana would point at a great gray monster and say "elephant," and Benjamin would say it after her, and when he was being undressed for bed that night he would say it over and over aloud to her: "Elyphant, elyphant, elyphant."

Sometimes Nana let him jump on the bed, which was fun, because if you sat down exactly right it would bounce you up on your feet again, and if you said "Ah" for a long time while you jumped you got a very pleasing broken vocal effect.

He loved to take a big cane from the hatrack and go around hitting chairs and tables with it and saying: "Fight, fight, fight." When there were people there the old ladies would cluck at him, which interested him, and the young ladies would try to kiss him, which he submitted to with mild boredom. And when the long day was done at five o'clock he would go up-stairs with Nana and be fed oatmeal and nice soft mushy foods with a spoon.

There were no troublesome memories in his childish sleep; no token came to him of his brave days at college, of the glittering years when he flustered the hearts of many girls. There were only the white, safe walls of his crib and Nana and a man who came to see him sometimes, and a great big orange ball that Nana pointed at just before his twilight bed hour and called "sun." When the sun went his eyes were sleepy—there were no dreams, no dreams to haunt him.

The past—the wild charge at the head of his men up San Juan Hill; the first years of his marriage when he worked late into the summer dusk down in the busy city for young Hildegarde whom he loved; the days before that when he sat smoking far into the night in the gloomy old Button house on Monroe Street with his grandfather—all these had faded like unsubstantial dreams from his mind as though they had never been.

He did not remember. He did not remember clearly whether the milk was warm or cool at his last feeding or how the days passed—there was only his crib and Nana's familiar presence. And then he remembered nothing. When he was hungry he cried—that was all. Through the noons and nights he breathed and over him there were soft mumblings and murmurings that he scarcely heard, and faintly differentiated smells, and light and darkness.

Then it was all dark, and his white crib and the dim faces that moved above him, and the warm sweet aroma of the milk, faded out altogether from his mind.

STRONG BUT QUIRKY

Irwin Shapiro

THE MORNING DAVY CROCKETT WAS BORN DAVY'S PA CAME BUSTING out of his cabin in Tennessee alongside the Nola-chucky River. He fired three shots into the air, gave a whoop, and said, "I've got me a son. His name is Davy Crockett, and he'll be the greatest hunter in all creation."

When he said that the sun rose up in the air like a ball of fire. The wind howled riproariously. Thunder boomed, and all the critters and varmints of the forest let out a moan.

Then Davy's Pa went back into the cabin. Little Davy was stretched out in a cradle made of a snapping turtle's shell. There was a pair of elk horns over the top, and over the elk horns was the skin of a wildcat. The cradle was run by water power, and it was rocking away—rockety-whump, rockety-whump.

Now all the Crocketts were big, but Davy was big even for a Crockett. He weighed two hundred pounds, fourteen ounces, and he was as frisky as a wildcat. His Ma and his Aunt Ketinah stood over Davy, trying to get him to sleep.

"Sing somethin' to quiet the boy," said Aunt Ketinah to his Uncle Roarious, who was standing in a corner combing his hair with a rake.

Uncle Roarious opened his mouth and sang a bit of *Over the River to Charley*. That is, it was meant for singing. It sounded worse than a nor'easter howling around a country barn at midnight.

"Hmmm," said Uncle Roarious. He reached for a jug and took him a sip of kerosene oil to loosen up his pipes.

Davy was sitting up in his cradle. He kept his peepers on his uncle, watching him pull at the jug.

"I'll have a sip o' the same," said Davy, as loud as you please.

That kerosene jug slipped right out of Uncle Roarious's hand. Davy's Ma and his Aunt Ketinah let out a shriek.

"Why, the little shaver can talk!" said Davy's Pa.

"We-el," said Davy, talking slow and easy-like, "maybe I don't jabber good enough to make a speech in Congress, but I reckon I got the hang of 'er. It's nothin' to Davy Crockett."

"That's mighty big talk, son," said Davy's Pa.

"It ought to be," said Davy. "It's comin' from a big man."

And with that he leaped out of his cradle, kicked his heels together, and crowed like a rooster. He flapped his arms and he bellowed, "I'm Davy Crockett, fresh from the backwoods! I'm half horse, half alligator, with a little touch o' snappin' turtle! I can wade the Mississippi, ride a streak o' lightnin', hug a bear too close for comfort, and whip my weight in wildcats! I can out-eat, out-sleep, out-fight, out-shoot, out-run, out-jump, and out-squat any man in these here United States! And I will!"

Aunt Ketinah eyed him as if he was a little bit of a mosquito making a buzz.

"That'll be enough o' your sass," said she, kind of sharp-like. "Now get back into your cradle and behave."

"Yes, ma'am," said Davy. He was always polite to the ladies.

"No such thing!" said Uncle Roarious. "Settin' in the cradle won't grow him none! We've got to plant him in the earth and water him with wild buffalo's milk, with boiled corncobs and tobacco leaves mixed in."

"Can't do any harm," said Davy's Ma.

"Might do good," said Davy's Pa.

"Suits me," said Davy. "Let's give 'er a try."

So they took Davy out to Thunder Shower Hill and planted him in the earth. They watered him with wild buffalo's milk, with boiled corncobs and tobacco leaves mixed in. The sun shone on him by day, and the moon beamed down on him by night. The wind cooled him and the rain freshened him. And Davy Crockett began to grow proper.

One morning Davy's Pa got up as usual and looked out the window. Instead of the sun shining, it was like a cloudy night with

fog and no moon. Davy's Pa had never seen it so dark in all his born days.

"Hurricane's comin' up," he said to Uncle Roarious, who was standing in a corner buttoning up his cast-iron shirt.

"We'd better water Davy before she breaks," said Uncle Roarious.

Davy's Pa and Uncle Roarious each picked up a barrel of wild buffalo's milk, with boiled corncobs and tobacco leaves mixed in. Davy's Ma and Aunt Ketinah followed along, carrying another barrel between them.

But when they got outside there wasn't a sign of a hurricane. There wasn't a hurricane coming up, going down, or standing still. There wasn't any hurricane at all. The sky was blue with little white clouds, and the sun was shining just as pretty. Only reason it was so dark was that Davy's shadow was falling over the cabin.

"Davy must have growed some," said Davy's Ma, and they all hurried over to Thunder Shower Hill. Davy was standing on tip-toe with his head poked through a cloud. He was taller than the tallest tree, and a sight friskier.

Uncle Roarious let out a yip and Davy leaned down. Davy wiped a bit of cloud out of his eye and said, "I've been lookin' over the country. She's right pretty, and I think I'm goin' to like 'er."

"You'd better," said Aunt Ketinah, kind of snappy-like. "She's the only one you've got."

"Yes, ma'am!" roared out Davy. His voice was so loud it started an avalanche at Whangdoodle Knob, thirty miles away. The trees all around flattened out, and Aunt Ketinah, Uncle Roarious, and Davy's Ma and Pa fell over from the force of it.

Davy's Pa picked himself up and shook his head.

"He's too big," he said.

"Oh, I don't know," said Uncle Roarious. "He'll settle some."

"No," said Davy's Pa, "he's too big for a hunter. It wouldn't be fair and square."

"What are we goin' to do?" asked Uncle Roarious.

"Only one thing *to* do," said Davy's Pa. "We've got to uproot him and let him grow down to man-size."

So Davy's Ma and Pa, his Aunt Ketinah and his Uncle Roarious

uprooted Davy. Soon as his feet were free, Davy leaped high into the air. He kicked his heels together, flapped his arms, and he bellowed, "Look out, all you critters and varmints o' the forest! For here comes Davy Crockett, fresh from the backwoods! I'm half horse, half alligator, with a little touch o' snappin' turtle! I can run faster, jump higher, squat lower, dive deeper, stay under water longer, and come up drier than any man in these here United States! Who-o-o-o-o-p!"

Uncle Roarious listened to Davy and he looked at Davy. Then he said, "He's strong, but he's quirky."

Davy's Pa looked at Davy and he listened to Davy.

"He'll do," he said. "He'll do for a Crockett till a better one comes along."

And when Davy's Pa said that, lightning flashed and thunder boomed. The wind howled riproariously, and all the critters and varmints of the forest let out a moan.

THE MAN THAT STOPPED

Frank O'Connor

I

'THE QUEEREST THING I EVER SAW,' BEGAN THE OLD MAN IN HIS meditative way.

'Yes?' I said eagerly.

'The queerest thing anyone ever saw,' he continued, correcting himself with great firmness, 'occurred in this town when I was a boy.'

'And that was?'

'The man that stopped.'

'Stopped!'

'Stopped.'

'What do you mean by stopped?'

'I mean stopped and nothing else. Now you're a clever young man; you write stories; and still you never thought of writing a story about a man that stopped. . . . I'm not blaming you. Far from it. How could you, and you never having seen the like? But it just shows you.

'John Cronin, the heavens be his bed, was an old bachelor; a tall, thin, melancholy man with a long miserable face and a grey moustache. He always looked untidy as though someone was after throwing the clothes on him from the back-door. He had only one way of amusing himself and that was going for long walks, always alone. I never saw him as much as cross the road to look for company or pass the time of day. He was some sort of fancy gardener, and I suppose he made money by that, but if he did he never had any great signs of it. A decent navy-blue suit and a boxer's cap with a shiny peak was his

get-up year in, year out. He was fond of the country and fond of flowers, and you hardly ever saw him without a posy in his buttonhole.

'He was a great chapel man. Every morning out to Mass and every Sunday to the altar as regular as clock-work. You'd say he was a thoughtful fellow, because that long melancholy face of his was always tied up in a black knot, but he never had much to say except on one thing. That was women, and blowing off about them, and all the harm they did the world from the first day man was made, he'd talk you sober.

'Now every night of the week, wet or fine, hail, rain or snow, John Cronin took his walk, up Fair Hill or round the Lough or down the river to Rochestown. No one ever noticed anything strange about him till a certain night when one man and two men and three men came in with the same story, that they were after seeing him standing at a street corner as if he was waiting for somebody.

'Well, we made great sport of it. Naturally we all took it that if John Cronin was waiting he was waiting for a woman, and it was a powerful story, an old woman-hater like himself to be caught in the latter end. One of the crowd began to take him off making a speech about women in his growling, sober-and-easy voice, and we laughed ourselves sick. But the laugh was at the other side of our face before the night was out. Soon after midnight and I with the deck in my hands, Mrs Crowley that owned the lodging-house near Peter and Paul's Chapel walked in with a face on her like a pail of sour milk.

' "Excuse me, men, and not wishing to interrupt ye," says she politely, "but did e'er a one of ye by chance see my Mr Cronin?"

' "Yerra," says I, "didn't he come in yet, the ould rip?"

' "He did not," says she, "him that was never five minutes late the whole long days of his life."

' "A woman it is," says I to the men.

' "*Mo leir! mo leir,* what woman?" says she, "or is it mad ye're going? Is it John Cronin go with a woman, him that I sent up me two beautiful educated daughters to every day for three years and in the heel of the hunt he wouldn't know which end of them was up, not to mind which of them 'twas?"

' "Well," says I, "there's three men here at this very minute that

saw him waiting for someone at the corner of the South Main Street and if 'twasn't a woman would you mind telling us who it was?"

'At those words she began to clap her hands and bawl like one demented.

' "He's gone! He's gone!" says she. "The best lodger a woman ever had and his twelve shillings a week as certain as the grace of God!"

'By main persuasion we got her to go back to the house and sit up a bit longer for him, but we got no more fun out of the cards that night. "As sure as God 'tis a drag," says one of them to me. About one o'clock Mrs Crowley came back, and without as much as By your leave, gentlemen, down she dropped in the middle of the floor in a dead mag. We knew then he was lost, so myself and another man called Charlie Coveney went off to give word to the police. It was a quiet night with a full moon shining. " 'Twas just at this very spot he was seen last," those were the words Charlie was saying to me as we rounded the corner into the South Main Street when all at once he stopped and clapped his hands to his forehead.

' "Sweet God alive!" says he. "Look and tell me who is it!"

' " 'Tis never Long John," says I in a whisper.

' "If 'tisn't, 'tis his spit," says he.

'And there, beyond a shadow of doubt was John Cronin, standing at the street corner where the three men were after seeing him more than four hours before and looking for all the world as if he didn't stir a step in the meantime. There was a bobby in front of him with his notebook out.

' "What's wrong, constable?" says I, running up and putting my hand on Long John's shoulder.

' "Are you a friend of this man?" says the bobby.

' "I am," says I, a bit nervous, "but no enemy of the law."

' "The law 'twill be then," says he, "if you don't shift him off out of this in double-quick time."

' "The law, constable?" says I. "Erra, what for?"

' "For being drunk on the public street," says the bobby.

' "Constable," says I, "you're a clever young man no doubt, seeing you're where you are, and by the way you talk I can tell you're a

well-read man besides, but will you kindly tell me where you saw or read of a drunken man that kept his two feet like that?"

' "I'm passing no compliments to you," says the bobby sourly, "but will you tell me where you saw a sober man with two eyes like that in his head?"

'So, begob, I looked closer at my hero and noticed his two eyes standing and his face, as pale as death, all tied up in an elegant knot.

' "'Tis queer, I'll grant you, constable," says I.

' "Queer?" says he. "Queer, did you say? 'Tis drink, or if 'tisn't 'tis as close as makes no difference, and drink 'twill be if you don't get him out of this."

' "'Tis not drink," says Charlie. "That man never hurt the feelings of a bottle of stout in all his born days. I know what it is. 'Tis sleep-walking!"

' "Merciful Hour!" says the bobby, drawing back his fist to give Charlie a clout. "Is that what you call walking? Is it, you unlettered yob?. . . Come on now, the pair of ye! I'll be back this way in a couple of minutes, and if that hump of misery is there still I'll put the whole bleddy lot of ye in the lock-up, for 'tis my firm conviction ye're a Fenian conspiracy."

'Well, now, getting Long John home was a hard job. I took home men that were quarter drunk and half drunk and drunk to God and the world, but I never took home a heavier load. There was no more life in him than a post, and when we grabbed him he fell back into our arms with his two hands stiff by his sides like something you'd see in the waxworks and the same idioty look on his face. At first we couldn't even bend his legs and they dragged along after him as stiff as pokers. His hands were the same, flapping dead on our shoulders.

' "Merciful Jesus!" says Charlie to me, "he's as cold as an altar stone!"

' "What is it at all?" says I. "Do you think he's dead?"

' "In the name of God," says Charlie, "how would be be dead and he standing up against the corner as large as life?"

' "Don't ask me," says I, "but if he's dead God help the two of us at the Coroner's inquest!"

'Well, he wasn't dead, but we didn't know that till we had him nearly home, and then the life began to come into him again, and such bawling and screeching he had with the pains shooting through every bit of him. He wanted us to let him down there and then to die, and not be lugging him in his last agony through the streets of the city. But we never gave him a minute's rest till we got him up to my place and put him sitting before the fire to thaw.

'Then we put him the question, and this was the story he told, and a very queer story it was you'll agree.

'It seems he was going for his usual constitutional without having his mind made up for certain where exactly he wanted to go. He stopped at the corner of South Main Street to decide whether 'twould be round the Lough or up Fair Hill, or maybe out the Lee Road for a bit of a change; and then, he said, something came over him and damn the bit of him could decide. The very thought of Fair Hill or the Lough or the Lee Road was enough to sicken him; he knew every inch of the way inside out, and there was nothing good in any of them. "So, begod," says he to himself, "if that's the way I might as well go back to the ould doss and sleep off me deliberations!" but no sooner did the thought come to his mind than he was worse than ever. "Hell's bells!" says he (for being a religious man he never used bad words), "that's as bad as the rest." As sick as he was of all his old walks he was sicker still of Norry-Dance-Naked and her two educated daughters. Now, that was a serious predicament, and the more John Cronin thought over it, the hazier he got; he remembered vaguely the darkness coming on, and the lamps being lighted, and seeing the moon rising, and after that he remembered nothing more till he woke up in the horrors of hell with the life coming back into him as myself and Charlie dragged him home.

'Naturally, he was shaken. A misfortune like that might shake anybody. It was two days before he'd face out again, and he knowing the queer story was after going the rounds. After that everything went well for a while. Then one night he stopped again at the foot of the Mardyke on his way back from a walk in the Lee Fields. At two o'clock in the morning Mrs. Crowley called for me. I went to the police barracks, but they had no account of him there, so off with me

to the Bridewell. The sergeant in charge brought me in. He threw back a slide and asked me to look. There was a jet of gas lighting and under it on top of a pallet, and looking like a ghost, was Cronin. He was leaning forward with his two hands behind his ears.

' "Is it for drunk ye took him, sergeant?" says I.

' "Drunk?" says he in an old woman's voice. "He's no more drunk than I am."

' 'Twas then I noticed the keys knocking together in his hands and saw he was half crazy with fright.

' "What do you think is it?" says I. "Would I take him to a doctor?"

' "Take him to anyone at all you like," says he, "so long as I'm shut of him. And I'm in dread 'tis little good a doctor will do him. 'Tis my firm conviction the man is bewitched."

'Next morning Long John and myself went to a priest and the priest took down a book and said a long Latin prayer over him; and to a doctor, and the doctor made him strip and sounded every inch of his skinny get-up. Then he got to slapping his knees, and 'tis my firm conviction that in the latter end he thought we were joking him.

' "Next time you're inclined to stop," says he, "take my advice and go on. Go on even if you have to go into the river. That'll cure or kill you in my belief."

'It struck us that this was very good advice, and in one way it was. But as John Cronin explained to me after he stopped the third time, the effect of it wore off after a while. Even though he mightn't be worried when he got to a corner he'd be worried before ever he reached it, wondering whether he'd be lucky and get past. The thought of that played so much on him that he got into walking slower and slower, barely dragging the legs after him, so as to put off the bad moment, until at last you'd hardly say he was walking at all. One day he stopped dead halfway along King Street.

'He only stopped there about an hour all told, for the story was going the rounds and there was a big crowd around him when the bobbies came to haul him off. After that he stopped anywhere and everywhere, without rhyme or reason, like my daughter-in-law's alarm clock, and the wonder grew till there wasn't a soul but knew of

it. That was how he lost his first job (poor man, he lost them all after). Up in one of the big houses in Montenotte it was, and he never got past Saint Luke's Cross.

'It got into the paper, all about the strange man that stopped, and advising people to call a policeman if they saw him at it. Then there was another notice from the police not to do anything of the sort, because it appeared that a young fellow couldn't be five minutes waiting for his doll without someone reporting him, and it led to a lot of crossness. Sometimes it was the young fellows beat the bobbies, and sometimes it was the bobbies beat the young fellows, but whichever it was, it was always poor John that got blamed, and in next to no time there was the devil's own ill-feeling grew up concerning him.

'One day the inspector of the police got so tearing mad he took his courage in his hands and hauled John up before the bench.

' "I'm asking your worships for a direction," says he. "Ye're sitting up there on yeer behinds for weeks, listening to cases of assault and battery, and abuse, and defamation of character, and my district is getting a bad name all on account of this one man that's getting off scot-free, and as true as the Lord God is above me," says he, thumping his chest, "damn the bit of an ould charge can I rake up against him, the law being the misfortunate, ould addled gligeen it is, what with *Habeas Corpus* and *Nulla Bona, Ne Temere* and *Noli me Tangere,* and all the rest of the bleddy ould nonsense," says he, getting hotter and hotter till he was lepping the height of the table off the floor, "and be the living Jasus," says he, "if ye don't go and do something about it quick we'll have the end of the world on top of us before we know where we are." '

'Did he say all that?' I interrupted.

'He did then,' replied the old man emphatically, 'every bleddy word of it!'

'But if the law wouldn't handle John Cronin there was a party that would, and that party was all for chucking him into the river and putting a stop to his stopping. At a special meeting of the Corpora-

tion one man denounced him as an English spy that was trying to give the country a bad name; pretending the people here had no place to go, and our own small city as he said with half a dozen sodalities and an Opera House, not to mention public-houses past human reckoning. Then the Nationalists got their knife in him and said he was trying to distract attention from the legitimate grievances of the people—English tyranny and the Sunday Closing.

'And about the same time everything began to go wrong. First there was a dry spell and diphtheria and then a wet spell and influenza, and children went down with whooping-cough and scarlatina, and Long John was blamed for it all.

'And then, of all things that could happen, one night the Lee overflowed. The people were sailing through the main streets in boats, and when they couldn't get boats they went in baths and dustbins. The same morning the paper was after coming out with the story that a woman in Midleton and a man in Bantry were both took with the stopping. Picture now the plight of Cronin when he was caught that night and he stopped dead in a foot and a half of water!

'There was—and let me impress it on you—a general commotion. There were stones flying and whistles blowing and policemen rushing out with carbines in their hands.

'And then—who should appear but the Proud Woman!'

II

'The Proud Woman! That was her title.

'Julia Cantillon was a girl you wouldn't believe the like of existed in the whole wide world. The De Cantillons were a good family, but proud and headstrong as well, and 'tis likely that the same pride brought them down. Julia took after them. She was a handsome girl and a good worker, but no man born could ever put up with her. She was the most obstinate, pigheaded, contrary child, maid and woman ever seen in this city. And the way of her obstinacy was this: whatever she was told to do she wouldn't do, and whatever she was told not to do she would do, and without a word of a lie she'd tear iron to do it. If she saw a notice in the park not to walk on the grass she'd walk on it, if 'twas to warn her against picking flowers she'd pick

them. Her father was a very religious man and leathered blood and sparks out of her, but he might as well have been leathering a wall. Nothing ever took a stir out of her. She was got apast her first communion, but confirmed she never was, because when the priest asked her would she be a strong and perfect Christian, she said in a very quiet voice "I will not," and she stuck to it.

'Before she was eighteen she was a public scandal. In those days there used to be a lot of English sailors in Cork, and after hearing a sermon about them at the sodality, Julia's father told her to stop at home of nights. That, to Julia, was as good as an invitation to do the other thing. Then he warned her flat against the sailors, and the same evening Julia walked up the lane past his very door with a sailor on her arm.

'Her father reared. Divil such a crowd was ever seen separating one couple as there was between himself and Julia. Not before he dragged one of the ear-rings out of her ear though, and a bit of the ear along with it.

' "There you are!" says he, "you night-walking vagabond! Next thing is you'll be bringing me home what I won't shock the neighbours' ears by mentioning, and as the Lord is over me," says he, raising his arm, "the day you do will be your last on God's blessed earth!"

'Julia drew herself up, and a fine tall masterful girl she was, and every bit of her the colour of the table, bar the one ear and that bleeding, and she shaking with turmoil and her eyes on fire.

' "I call on the neighbours to witness," says she in the quiet, ringing sort of voice she had when she was roused, "that and drawing the razor across my throat were the two things ever farthest from my mind, but," says she in a whisper, giving the table one quick bang, "I'll allow no man in the world to quell my spirit."

'And, signs on, she didn't. She brought home what her old fellow wouldn't shock the neighbours' ears by mentioning, and when the English sailor boy (who by all accounts was mad on her) wanted her to marry him she wouldn't, just to spite her father. So she was thrown, body and bones, into the public street. Though, indeed, bar the one little mistake, no one could ever say she was anything but a right good girl. She took a little room, and furnished it, and made

her living by doing chares. She was a fine worker, but man dear, her contrariness was a caution. Nothing would do her but right go wrong, all the married women were damned and every child that had a lawful father was a fool or next door to it.

'She lived like that, all alone but for the child, and as happy as a lark. Her only amusement was playing the concertina, and she wouldn't have been bothered with that either, only someone said 'twas no instrument for a woman. She was never what you'd call a good hand at it, because she hardly knew one note from another, but if you told her so she'd contradict you flat.

'Julia was the lady who arrived that night and found John Cronin standing like a tailor's dummy in a foot and a half of water without as much as a glimmer of a notion of the crowds that were fighting one another to get at him. One dive she made into the middle of them and scattered them. They were all frightened of her, because she was such a strange girl.

' "Away with ye!" says she. "Bad luck to ye, what do ye think ye're doing? Get off with ye!"

' "Kill him!" says someone. "Hold his head in the water!"

' "Ye'll do nothing of the sort," says Julia. "What did he ever do to ye?"

' "He's stopped," says a dirty-visaged lump of a market-woman.

' "And why the blazes wouldn't he be stopped?" says Julia. " 'Tis a thing I often thought of doing myself."

' " 'Tis he drownded the town."

' "And 'tisn't the town either," says a man. "Look at the face of him. 'Tis no town he's trying to destroy."

' "And what?" asks Julia.

' "Sun, moon and stars," says he. "A fellow like that would stop them up like a bolt in an engine."

' "Oh, God!" says someone, beginning to clap his hands and bawl. "Where's the moon!"

' "Moon my eye!" says Julia. " 'Tis going round long enough."

'So, begod, they turned on her too, but she managed to hold them

off till a couple of bobbies came. The bobbies grabbed John and started frog marching him to the barracks.

'"Move on you too!" says one of them to her.

'"I will not," says she promptly.

'"Then, begod, you'll folly your friend."

'"Folly him I will," says she. "You can take me in charge now."

'Let me remark that this was the first natural mannerly word she was ever known to pass to a man.

'Next morning the two of them were hauled up. 'Twas a different story now from what it was before. There were the papers out reporting thousands of pounds worth of damage, half a dozen people hurt and scores of cases of the stopping.

'"There's no doubt in my mind," says the Bench, "that if steps aren't taken in a hurry there'll be untold mischief done. I don't know what to make of you, Cronin. Some say you're an English spy, but you have an honest Irish face. Some say you're a lunatic, but you don't look like a lunatic to me. Some say you're Antichrist. Are you, do you think?"

'"I don't know, sir," says John.

'"I have my own opinion about that," says he. "Tell me, Cronin, do you believe in God?"

'"I don't know," says John. "One time I thought I knew everything but now I'm all upset."

'"Because," says the Bench, "we hear the divil of a lot about people who don't, but in my humble opinion 'tis all moonshine. You're the first man I met that behaved as if he didn't."

'"He's not the only one," says Julia.

'"Will you be quiet, woman?" says the magistrate.

'"I won't," says she.

'"You're a violent, contradictory woman," says he, "and I don't know how you escaped being lodged in the body of the gaol before this."

'Well, my dear, Julia mounted up like a fighting cock and thumped her two hands on the box like one demented.

'"You're a liar, mister!" says she. "You're a liar and no gentle-

man! I never contradict anyone and never did. There's nothing makes me madder than people saying I contradict them. Anything else they like to say they're welcome to say. I'd forgive anyone saying I was a liar or a thief or a drunkard or a loose-living woman, but to say that I do something I never even have the temptation to do is badness; black, bitter badness of heart."

'"John Cronin," says the magistrate, ignoring her, "what am I going to do with you? If I leave you go, they'll eat you, so for your own protection more than anything else I'm going to give you three months and be hanged to the law."

'"You'll do nothing of the kind," says Julia.

'"Shut your mouth!" says the magistrate, getting as mad as hell.

'"I will not. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take that man home with me and look after him, and I'll take my bible oath he'll never stop again."

'The magistrate looked at her as if he was between two minds. Then he smiled, and all at once the people in court began to see the joke.

'"Will you go home with her, John?" says the magistrate.

'"If 'tis all the same to you, your worship," says John, "I'd liefer go to gaol."

'"Never mind him!" shouts Julia. "He's put out by the bad reputation you gave me, a reputation I never earned. Damn the bit of sense ye have, either of ye! Leave him come home with me for a week till he see I'm the quietest-mannered woman the Almighty God gave tongue to."

'"Will you try her?" says the magistrate, and 'twas clear he was impressed.

'"I will, your worship, I will," says John.

'Out with the pair of them and the crowds of Cork looking on. And, whatever happened, no one said "boo" to them all the way back to John's lodging, whether it was that he looked such a terrible toppled-down mountain of a man in the light of day or Julia such a fine masterful woman with the fire of fighting in her eyes.

'When they came to the house they found the door locked and

the blinds drawn, and on the roadway outside were the ashes of a fire and three holy pictures no one had the courage to burn. John gave a great sigh and sat on the kerb with his head between his hands. Julia sat beside him.

'"You're not going to stop on me, John?" says she very sweetly.

'"I don't know," says he.

'"Say 'bad luck and end to them!' " says she.

'"To who, girl?" says he.

'"To the bodachs inside, of course," says Julia.

'"Why would I say that?" says John.

'" 'Tis what I always say myself," says she.

'"I won't wish anyone a bad end," says John.

'"Not even the bad luck, John?" says she, coaxing him.

'"Not even that," says he.

'"John," says she, laying her hand on his shoulder.

'"Well, girl?" says he.

'"If you stopped on me now, my pride would be gone for ever," says she.

'"Would it?" says John.

'" 'Twould," says she. "And damn the bit else I have in the wide world."

'"Haven't you your child?" asks John.

'"A child," says she, "is a gift or a loss, but no shame coming or going. I never see a crowd but I want to tear the lightning from the sky and fling it at them. You won't fail me, John?"

'She took him by the arm and off they went to the little attic room she had. After that she made him go to bed, and whether 'twas the excitement or something else, he slept and went on sleeping till she waked him next morning to give him his breakfast.

'After that the two of them went off arm-in-arm together. They travelled from house to house where John used to work, and whenever the door was opened for them Julia said in her fine ringing voice:

'"Here's the fancy gardener, the man that stopped, and now he's not going to stop any more."

'That day they got one of the jobs back, and Julia promised him

that in a few weeks he'd have them all. Signs on it, he had. In a month he was working in places he never worked in before and wherever he went Julia took him and brought him back. But the best of it was, not that he didn't stop (for Julia kept her promise and John Cronin never stopped again) but that he was putting up a fine colour and plenty of flesh. He got a house and he wasn't in it a week before he asked her to marry him. He was very put out about that, he being old enough to be her father, but what could he do and he not able to live without her? Anyway she didn't mind. She was glad enough to get him.

'They married, and, no lie on it, they were the happiest couple ever seen in this city. Up to the day of his death they could be heard coorting and kissing for miles off. Every fellow in the Marsh was cutting his throat about losing a match like Julia, for to crown her glory she turned out a right good manager. When he died they were worth two shops and three or four houses. Whenever you congratulated her over the counter she had a way of throwing out her hands and smiling that was as good as saying "I told you so."

' "'Twas pride that done it," she used to say. "What use is anyone without a bit of pride? . . . I'll let you into a great secret now," she'd say, leaning across the counter and whispering, "a secret that might be the making of you. There's only one prayer you should ever pray over a child, only one, mind you! 'God make this little child independent!' "

' 'Tis a remarkable prayer,' said I.

' 'Tis so, a remarkable prayer. But the astounding thing is—' at this point the old man gathered himself into a knot. 'The astounding thing is that to the day of his death she never by as much as one syllable contradicted John Cronin.'

'She must have been a very unusual wife, then,' said I.

'She was a divil out of hell,' said the old man with the simplicity of utter resignation. 'Women are a black bitter pool of iniquity and deceit that no man knows the bottom of. Look at my daughter-in-law!'

A MAN AND HIS BOOTS

W. B. Yeats

THERE WAS A DOUBTER IN DONEGAL, AND HE WOULD NOT HEAR OF ghosts or faeries, and there was a house in Donegal that had been haunted as long as man could remember, and this is the story of how the house got the better of the man. The man came into the house and lighted a fire in the room under the haunted one, and took off his boots and set them on the hearth, and stretched out his feet and warmed himself. For a time he prospered in his unbelief; but a little while after the night had fallen, and everything had got very dark, one of his boots began to move. It got up off the floor and gave a kind of slow jump towards the door, and then the other boot did the same, and after that the first boot jumped again. And thereupon it occurred to the man that an invisible being had got into his boots, and was now going away in them. When the boots reached the door they went upstairs slowly, and then the man heard them go tramp, tramp round the haunted room over his head. A few minutes passed, and he could hear them again upon the stairs, and after that in the passage outside, and then one of them came in at the door, and the other gave a jump past it and came in too. They jumped along towards him, and then one got up and hit him, and afterwards the other hit him, and then again the first hit him, and so on, until they drove him out of the room, and finally out of the house. In this way he was kicked out by his own boots, and Donegal was avenged upon its doubter. It is not recorded whether the invisible being was a ghost or one of the Sidhe, but the fantastic nature of the vengeance is like the work of the Sidhe who live in the heart of fantasy.

OFF THE GROUND

Walter De La Mare

THREE JOLLY FARMERS
    Once bet a pound
Each dance the others would
    Off the ground.
Out of their coats
    They slipped right soon,
And neat and nicesome
    Put each his shoon.
One—Two—Three!—
    And away they go,
Not too fast,
    And not too slow;
Out from the elm-tree's
    Noonday shadow,
Into the sun
    And across the meadow.
Past the schoolroom,
    With knees well bent
Fingers a-flicking,
    They dancing went.
Up sides and over,
    And round and round,
They crossed, click-clacking,
    The Parish bound,
By Tupman's meadow
    They did their mile,

Tee-to-tum
On a three-barred stile.
Then straight through Whipham,
Downhill to Week,
Footing it lightsome,
But not too quick,
Up fields to Watchet,
And on through Wye,
Till seven fine churches
They'd seen skip by—
Seven fine churches,
And five old mills,
Farms in the valley,
And sheep on the hills;
Old Man's Acre
And Dead Man's Pool
All left behind
As they danced through Wool.
And Wool gone by
Like tops that seem
To spin in sleep
They danced in dream:
Withy—Wellover—
Wassop—Wo—
Like an old clock
Their heels did go.
A league and a league
And a league they went,
And not one weary,
And not one spent.
And lo, and behold!
Past Willow-cum-Leigh
Stretched with its waters
The great green sea.
Says Farmer Bates,
"I puffs and I blows,

What's under the water,
Why, no man knows!"
Says Farmer Giles,
"My wind comes weak,
And a good man drownded
Is far to seek."
But Farmer Turvey,
On twirling toes
Up's with his gaiters,
And in he goes:
Down where the mermaids
Pluck and play
On their twangling harps
In a sea-green day;
Down where the mermaids,
Finned and fair,
Sleek with their combs
Their yellow hair. . . .
Bates and Giles—
On the shingle sat,
Gazing at Turvey's
Floating hat.
But never a ripple
Or bubble told
Where he was supping
Off plates of gold.
Never an echo
Rilled through the sea
Of the feasting and dancing
And minstrelsy.
They called—called—called:
Came no reply:
Nought but the ripples'
Sandy sigh.
Then glum and silent
They sat instead,

Vacantly brooding
On home and bed,
Till both together
Stood up and said:—
"Us knows not, dreams not,
Where you be,
Turvey, unless
In the deep blue sea;
But excusing silver—
And it comes most willing—
Here's us two paying
Our forty shilling;
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,
Safe and sound,
You danced us square, Turvey,
Off the ground!"

THE RIME OF TRUE THOMAS

The Tale of the Respectable Whaup and the Great Godly Man

John Buchan

THIS IS A STORY THAT I HEARD FROM THE KING OF THE NUMIDIANS, who with his tattered retinue encamps behind the peat-ricks. If you ask me where and when it happened I fear that I am scarce ready with an answer. But I will vouch my honour for its truth; and if any one seek further proof, let him go east the town and west the town and over the fields of Nomansland to the Long Muir, and if he find not the King there among the peat-ricks, and get not a courteous answer to his question, then times have changed in that part of the country, and he must continue the quest to his Majesty's castle in Spain.

Once upon a time, says the tale, there was a Great Godly Man, a shepherd to trade, who lived in a cottage among heather. If you looked east in the morning, you saw miles of moor running wide to the flames of sunrise, and if you turned your eyes west in the evening, you saw a great confusion of dim peaks with the dying eye of the sun set in a crevice. If you looked north, too, in the afternoon, when the life of the day is near its end and the world grows wise, you might have seen a country of low hills and haugh-lands with many waters running sweet among meadows. But if you looked south in the dusty forenoon or at hot midday, you saw the far-off glimmer of a white road, the roofs of the ugly little clachan of Kilmaclavers, and the rigging of the fine new kirk of Threepdaidle.

It was a Sabbath afternoon in the hot weather, and the man had been to kirk all the morning. He had heard a grand sermon from the minister (or it may have been the priest, for I am not

sure of the date and the King told the story quickly)—a fine discourse with fifteen heads and three parentheses. He held all the parentheses and fourteen of the heads in his memory, but he had forgotten the fifteenth; so for the purpose of recollecting it, and also for the sake of a walk, he went forth in the afternoon into the open heather.

The whaups were crying everywhere, making the air hum like the twanging of a bow. *Poo-eelie, Poo-eelie,* they cried, *Kirlew, Kirlew, Whaup, Wha- -up.* Sometimes they came low, all but brushing him, till they drove settled thoughts from his head. Often had he been on the moors, but never had he seen such a stramash among the feathered clan. The wailing iteration vexed him, and he *shoo'd* the birds away with his arms. But they seemed to mock him and whistle in his very face, and at the flaff of their wings his heart grew sore. He waved his great stick; he picked up bits of loose moor-rock and flung them wildly; but the godless crew paid never a grain of heed. The morning's sermon was still in his head, and the grave words of the minister still rattled in his ear, but he could get no comfort for this intolerable piping. At last his patience failed him and he swore unchristian words. "Deil rax the birds' thrapples," he cried.

At this all the noise was hushed and in a twinkling the moor was empty. Only one bird was left, standing on tall legs before him with its head bowed upon its breast, and its beak touching the heather.

Then the man repented his words and stared at the thing in the moss. "What bird are ye?" he asked thrawnly.

"I am a Respectable Whaup," said the bird, "and I kenna why ye have broken in on our family gathering. Once in a hundred years we foregather for decent conversation, and here we are interrupted by a muckle, sweerin' man."

Now the shepherd was a fellow of great sagacity, yet he never thought it a queer thing that he should be having talk in the mid-moss with a bird.

"What for were ye making siccan a din, then?" he asked.

"D'ye no ken ye were disturbing the afternoon of the holy Sabbath?"

The bird lifted its eyes and regarded him solemnly. "The Sabbath is a day of rest and gladness," it said, "and is it no reasonable that we should enjoy the like?"

The shepherd shook his head, for the presumption staggered him. "Ye little ken what ye speak of," he said. "The Sabbath is for them that have the chance of salvation, and it has been decreed that salvation is for Adam's race and no for the beasts that perish."

The whaup gave a whistle of scorn. "I have heard all that long ago. In my great-grandmother's time, which 'ill be a thousand years and mair syne, there came a people from the south with bright brass things on their heads and breasts and terrible swords at their thighs. And with them were some lang-gowned men who kenned the stars and would come out o' nights to talk to the deer and the corbies in their ain tongue. And one, I mind, foregathered with my great-grandmother and told her that the souls o' men flitted in the end to braw meadows where the gods bide or gaed down to the black pit which they ca' Hell. But the souls o' birds, he said, die wi' their bodies, and that's the end o' them. Likewise in my mother's time, when there was a great abbey down yonder by the Threepdaidle Burn which they called the House of Kilmaclavers, the auld monks would walk out in the evening to pick herbs for their distillings, and some were wise and kenned the ways of bird and beast. They would crack often o'nights with my ain family, and tell them that Christ had saved the souls o' men, but that birds and beasts were perishable as the dew o' heaven. And now ye have a black-gowned man in Threepdaidle who threeps on the same owercome. Ye may a' ken something o' your ain kitchenmidden, but certes! ye ken little o' the warld beyond it."

Now this angered the man, and he rebuked the bird. "These are great mysteries," he said, "which are no to be mentioned in the ears of an unsanctified creature. What can a thing like you wi' a lang neb and twae legs like stilts ken about the next warld?"

"Weel, weel," said the whaup, "we'll let the matter be. Everything to its ain trade, and I will not dispute with ye on meta-

pheesics. But if ye ken something about the next warld, ye ken terrible little about this."

Now this angered the man still more, for he was a shepherd reputed to have great skill in sheep and esteemed the nicest judge of hogg and wether in all the countryside. "What ken ye about that?" he asked. "Ye may gang east to Yetholm and west to Kells, and no find a better herd."

"If sheep were a'," said the bird, "ye micht be right; but what o' the wide warld and the folk in it? Ye are Simon Etterick o' the Lowe Moss. Do ye ken aucht o' your forebears?"

"My father was a God-fearing man at the Kennelhead, and my grandfather and great-grandfather afore him. One o' our name, folk say, was shot at a dykeback by the Black Westeraw."

"If that's a'," said the bird, "ye ken little. Have ye never heard o' the little man, the fourth back from yoursel', who killed the Miller o' Bewcastle at the Lammas Fair? That was in my ain time, and from my mother I have heard o' the Covenanter who got a bullet in his wame hunkering behind the divot-dyke and praying to his Maker. There were others o' your name rode in the Hermitage forays and burned Naworth and Warkworth and Castle Gay. I have heard o' an Etterick, Sim o' the Redcleuch, who cut the throat o' Jock Johnstone in his ain house by the Annan side. And my grandmother had tales o' auld Ettericks who rade wi' Douglas and the Bruce and the ancient Kings o' Scots; and she used to tell o' others in her mother's time, terrible shock-headed men, hunting the deer and rinnin' on the high moors, and bidin' in the broken stane biggings on the hill-taps."

The shepherd stared, and he, too, saw the picture. He smelled the air of battle and lust and foray, and forgot the Sabbath.

"And you yoursel'," said the bird, "are sair fallen off from the auld stock. Now ye sit and spell in books, and talk about what ye little understand, when your fathers were roaming the warld. But little cause have I to speak, for I too am a downcome. My bill is two inches shorter than my mother's, and my grandmother was taller on her feet. The warld is getting weaklier things to dwell in it, even since I mind mysel'."

"Ye have the gift o' speech, bird," said the man, "and I would hear mair." You will perceive that he had nò mind of the Sabbath day or the fifteenth head of the forenoon's discourse.

"What things have I to tell ye when ye dinna' ken the very horn-book o' knowledge? Besides, I am no clatter-vengeance to tell stories in the middle o' the muir, where there are ears open high and low. There's others than me wi' mair experience and a better skill at the telling. Our clan was well acquaint wi' the reivers and lifters o' the muirs, and could crack fine o' wars and the taking of cattle. But the blue hawk that lives in the corrie o' the Dreichil can speak o' kelpies and the dwarfs that bide in the hill. The heron, the lang solemn fellow, kens o' the greenwood fairies and the wood elfins, and the wild geese that squatter on the tap o' the Muneraw will croak to ye of the merrymaidens and the girls o' the pool. The wren—him that hops in the grass below the birks—has the story of the *Lost Ladies of the Land,* which is ower auld and sad for any but the wisest to hear; and there is a wee bird bides in the heather—hill-lintie men call him—who sings the *Lay of the West Wind,* and the *Glee of the Rowan Berries.* But what am I talking of? What are these things to you, if ye have not first heard True Thomas's Rime, which is the beginning and end o' all things?"

"I have heard no rime," said the man, "save the sacred psalms o' God's Kirk."

"Bonny rimes," said the bird. "Once I flew by the hinder end o' the Kirk and I keekit in. A wheen auld wives wi' mutches and a wheen solemn men wi' hoasts! Be sure the Rime is no like yon."

"Can ye sing it, bird?" said the man, "for I am keen to hear it."

"Me sing," cried the bird, "me that has a voice like a craw! Na, na, I canna sing it, but maybe I can take ye where ye may hear it. When I was young an auld bogblitter did the same to me, and sae began my education. But are ye willing and brawly willing?—for if ye get but a sough of it ye will never mair have an ear for other music."

"I am willing and brawly willing," said the man.

"Then meet me at the Gled's Cleuch Head at the sun's setting," said the bird, and it flew away.

Now it seemed to the man that in a twinkling it was sunset, and he found himself at the Gled's Cleuch Head with the bird flapping in the heather before him. The place was a long rift in the hill, made green with juniper and hazel, where it was said True Thomas came to drink the water.

"Turn ye to the west," said the whaup, "and let the sun fall on your face; then turn ye five times round about and say after me the Rune of the Heather and the Dew." And before he knew, the man did as he was told, and found himself speaking strange words, while his head hummed and danced as if in a fever.

"Now lay ye down and put your ear to the earth," said the bird; and the man did so. Instantly a cloud came over his brain, and he did not feel the ground on which he lay or the keen hill-air which blew about him. He felt himself falling deep into an abysm of space, then suddenly caught up and set among the stars of heaven. Then slowly from the stillness there welled forth music, drop by drop like the clear falling of rain, and the man shuddered, for he knew that he heard the beginning of the Rime.

High rose the air, and trembled among the tallest pines and the summits of great hills. And in it were the sting of rain and the blatter of hail, the soft crush of snow and the rattle of thunder among crags. Then it quieted to the low sultry croon which told of blazing midday when the streams are parched and the bent crackles like dry tinder. Anon it was evening, and the melody dwelled among the high soft notes which mean the coming of dark and the green light of sunset. Then the whole changed to a great pæan which rang like an organ through the earth. There were trumpet notes in it and flute notes and the plaint of pipes. "Come forth," it cried; "the sky is wide and it is a far cry to the world's end. The fire crackles fine o' nights below the firs, and the smell of roasting meat and wood smoke is dear to the heart of man. Fine, too, is the sting of salt and the risp of the north wind in the sheets. Come forth, one and all, to the great lands oversea, and the strange tongues and the fremit peoples. Learn before you die to follow the Piper's Son, and though your old bones bleach among grey rocks, what matter, if you have had your bellyful of life and

come to your heart's desire?" And the tune fell low and witching, bringing tears to the eyes and joy to the heart; and the man knew (though no one told him) that this was the first part of the Rime, the *Song of the Open Road*, the *Lilt of the Adventurer*, which shall be now and ever and to the end of days.

Then the melody changed to a fiercer and sadder note. He saw his forefathers, gaunt men and terrible, run stark among woody hills. He heard the talk of the bronze-clad invader, and the jar and clangour as stone met steel. Then rose the last coronach of his own people, hiding in wild glens, starving in corries, or going hopelessly to the death. He heard the cry of Border foray, the shouts of the famished Scots as they harried Cumberland, and he himself rode in the midst of them. Then the tune fell more mournful and slow, and Flodden lay before him. He saw the flower of the Scots gentry around their King, gashed to the breast-bone, still fronting the lines of the south, though the paleness of death sat on each forehead. "The flowers of the Forest are gone," cried the lilt, and through the long years he heard the cry of the lost, the desperate, fighting for kings over the water and princes in the heather. "Who cares?" cried the air. "Man must die, and how can he die better than in the stress of fight with his heart high and alien blood on his sword? Heigh-ho! One against twenty, a child against a host, this is the romance of life." And the man's heart swelled, for he knew (though no one told him) that this was the *Song of Lost Battles* which only the great can sing before they die.

But the tune was changing, and at the change the man shivered, for the air ran up to the high notes and then down to the deeps with an eldrich cry, like a hawk's scream at night, or a witch's song in the gloaming. It told of those who seek and never find, the quest that knows no fulfilment. "There is a road," it cried, "which leads to the Moon and the Great Waters. No changehouse cheers it, and it has no end; but it is a find road, a braw road—who will follow it?" And the man knew (though no one told him) that this was the *Ballad of Grey Weather*, which makes him who hears it sick all the days of his life for something which he cannot name. It is the song which the birds

sing on the moor in the autumn nights, and the old crow on the tree-top hears and flaps his wing. It is the lilt which men and women hear in the darkening of their days, and sigh for the unforgetable; and lovesick girls get catches of it and play pranks with their lovers. It is a song so old that Adam heard it in the Garden before Eve came to comfort him, so young that from it still flows the whole joy and sorrow of earth.

Then it ceased, and all of a sudden the man was rubbing his eyes on the hillside, and watching the falling dusk. "I have heard the Rime," he said to himself, and he walked home in a daze. The whaups were crying, but none came near him, though he looked hard for the bird that had spoken with him. It may be that it was there and he did not know it, or it may be that the whole thing was only a dream; but of this I cannot say.

The next morning the man rose and went to the manse.

"I am glad to see you, Simon," said the minister, "for it will soon be the Communion Season, and it is your duty to go round with the tokens."

"True," said the man, "but it was another thing I came to talk about," and he told him the whole tale.

"There are but two ways of it, Simon," said the minister. "Either ye are the victim of witchcraft, or ye are a self-deluded man. If the former (whilk I am loth to believe), then it behoves ye to watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. If the latter, then ye maun put a strict watch over a vagrom fancy, and ye'll be quit o' siccan whigmaleeries."

Now Simon was not listening, but staring out of the window. "There was another thing I had it in my mind to say," said he. "I have come to lift my lines, for I am thinking of leaving the place."

"And where would ye go?" asked the minister, aghast.

"I was thinking of going to Carlisle and trying my luck as a dealer, or maybe pushing on with droves to the South."

"But that's a cauld country where there are no faithfu' ministrations," said the minister.

"Maybe so, but I am not caring very muckle about ministrations,"

said the man, and the other looked after him in horror.

When he left the manse he went to a Wise Woman, who lived on the left side of the kirkyard above Threepdaidle burn-foot. She was very old, and sat by the ingle day and night, waiting upon death. To her he told the same tale.

She listened gravely, nodding with her head. "Ach," she said, "I have heard a like story before. And where will you be going?"

"I am going south to Carlisle to try the dealing and droving," said the man, "for I have some skill of sheep."

"And will ye bide there?" she asked.

"Maybe aye, and maybe no," he said. "I had half a mind to push on to the big toun or even to the abroad. A man must try his fortune."

"That's the way of men," said the old wife. "I, too, have heard the Rime, and many women who now sit decently spinning in Kilmaclavers have heard it. But a woman may hear it and lay it up in her soul and bide at hame, while a man, if he get but a glisk of it in his fool's heart, must needs up and awa' to the warld's end on some daft-like ploy. But gang your ways and fare-ye-weel. My cousin Francie heard it, and he went north wi' a white cockade in his bonnet and a sword at his side, singing 'Charlie's come hame.' And Tam Crichtoun o' the Bourhopehead got a sough o' it one simmer's morning, and the last we heard o' Tam he was fechting like a deil among the Frenchmen. Once I heard a tinkler play a sprig of it on the pipes, and a' the lads were wud to follow him. Gang your ways, for I am near the end o' mine." And the old wife shook with her coughing.

So the man put up his belongings in a pack on his back and went whistling down the Great South Road.

Whether or not this tale have a moral it is not for me to say. The King (who told it me) said that it had, and quoted a scrap of Latin, for he had been at Oxford in his youth before he fell heir to his kingdom. One may hear tunes from the Rime, said he, in the thick of a storm on the scarp of a rough hill, in the soft June weather, or in the sunset silence of a winter's night. But let none, he added, pray to have the full music; for it will make him who hears it a footsore traveller in the ways o' the world and a masterless man till death.

THE HAUNTED MAN

Ralph Bates

I HAD BEEN TO A MUSIC-HALL WITH DAVISON, TO HEAR A COMEDIAN named Cantinflas. We had been told that only in Mexico could we hear humour of the kind Cantinflas used. This was true, I found. There was nothing else in that music-hall worth attention, except the wise-cracking audience of artisans, street vendors and apprentices, all of whom seemed to possess an unbelievable proficiency in slang. That Mexican slang excited me. It was good slang, rich, complicated, highly technical, deft in allusion as well as forthright and contusive; and as any good *argot* must be, it dripped with the holy oil of tradition. I thought I had found another corpus of language, like that of Paris, where you may hear twenty, perhaps thirty different words for 'woman' according to whether she is thick in the arms, or short, stout and dark of complexion, or tall, high-breasted, with a garish mop of hair and so on. I began to note down the deepest expressions, and I showed the first five to Davison.

'It will peter out; everything does.'

'Need you keep it up about slang, too?' I answered, irritated by the triviality of his mood. I had borne with Davison's vast disillusion for a long time, because of its surprising quality. It was expansive and it was intense, and full of a most penetrating intuition. Davison would never have written a thing, he would have been disillusioned at the first page, but he was so . . . so haunted, yes, so haunted, that it was at times breathtaking to be beside him. I profited by his hauntedness, as I believe he profited by something in me, but to burden with tragic melancholy a bout of deep slang was absurd; though I remember that I have sometimes claimed to hear, through the loud-speaker jargon

of a pimp's bar, a voice that whispered, 'Remember O Man, that dust thou art.'

'I can tell you the word for the device of suddenly killing a man in the street, before he is aware of your resolve, and after he has accepted your challenge to mortal fight and you are on the way to the duelling plot.'

'You can!'

'Yes, it's the same word you use for snatching from a politician a favour that one, of habitual access to that politician, of your acquaintance, had planned to obtain.' I turned my attention elsewhere. Two women appeared on the stage with bowls of burning incense. The rolls of fat on their stomachs provoked more wise-cracking.

'You prefer the significance of sly killing in the street,' Davison sneered. 'Or it could be on a waste plot, with neon lights winking indifferently.'

'Shut up,' I said in Spanish. I was greedily sniffing the incense, the merest whiff of which conjures up in me a sense of lifelong familiarity with the gorgeous sins.

His remark about the neon lights reminded me that Davison had drunk rather freely before entering the music-hall, but looking about me I was reassured, seeing no one with whom he might pick a quarrel. Such curious things stirred Davison to fight; there was an affair in New York, on 54th Street, one haunted Noel. . . .

A corrupt, smooth voice on the stage began to talk into a telephone, giving us to understand that he was Delegado de Policía; there had been an assassination in the street and a policeman was demanded.

'Number Forty One,' the Delegado lisped, and we knew Cantinflas would appear as a policeman. Hearing that number I feared we should be disappointed. It was a poor beginning, to throw out that greasy old card of humour. In Mexico City one must not live in a house of that number, or be forty-one years old. 'Forty One' implies being queer, since it was the name of a club of wealthy degenerates that formerly existed in the city.

Cantinflas appeared. He was dressed as Mexican policemen used to dress, before the clean-up; tunic buttoned wrongly and three sizes too small, pants that had sagged to the middle of his rear; unshaven,

sleepy; insolently deferential. Why had he not been at his post, when the murder had occurred?

'Mire Usted,' Cantinflas began. A street car with a dent in the front; a baby that thought Cantinflas was his father, a church tower that leaned like a drunk against a lamp-post, an anonymous cough, a woman quarrelling with her husband because he had paid for a requiem in the wrong church, an Indian family filing silently through the traffic, carrying toy sheep dangling from poles slung over their shoulders. Father and mother with big sheep, the little ones with tender lambs; 'Corderitos ahorcados,' Cantinflas said, and a cold wind coming round the corner; all entered into the explanation of why Cantinflas had not been at his post. 'Ah, those gallowed lambkins, Señor Delegado,' Cantinflas said, shaking his loose jowl absently. Written down so this tells one nothing. I sat thrilled, and I roared with laughter at the end.

'Gallowed lambs,' Davison said, prodding me; but it was not that grotesque expression that had excited him. 'The place is painted the wrong colour,' he said, puzzling me.

Cantinflas's humour was untranslatable, as untranslatable as the back chat of London costers, as a whore's jibes on the ramps of Marseillee, or as the jests of a 2nd Avenue Yiddish theatre. The very essence of that humour was that in a long speech of five minutes not a single sentence had been completed, not one period had made sense, yet at the close of it one was satisfied, delighted, or thrilled. The corpse and all the grotesqueness of crime had disappeared, yet death haunted the stage as perceptibly as if a skull watched from a black velveted throne. So much I heard.

'Ah, but don't you hear its meaning?' Davison whispered as Cantinflas began another speech. I did not reply, something I had half-sensed was becoming clear. Davison's excitement had awakened my own intelligence and I suddenly heard in the speech something I had grasped at often; the idiocy of Life, the inconsequentiality . . . no, the assertion that the movement of street cars and the heroism of men, the concern of that man-about-town to select just the right perfume for his hair, the belief that God haunts the consecrated bread, the stopping of decayed teeth in a rich woman's mouth, that all of

these things are equal and without truth or significance. The speech was of the folk, expressed in words of the street's currency, every one of which carried many sharp and complex meanings. The political life of the city entered into the speech, also, and the current scandal, so that it was universal and catholic. It was as grotesque as meeting white angels whistling in a public restroom. I perceived more than jesting in that dribble of speech, I heard the final blasphemy, I heard annihilation, in it void Laughter cackled that Man was not worth saving, even at the price of a yawn. And besides this horrible perception, there was something else I could not get clear. With all my heart I have hated men who did not believe Man to be worth saving, and as terrible punishment I have wished for them the sudden necessity of saving themselves by their own efforts; nevertheless I laughed at that dribbling comedian. As I laughed, Davison looked around wildly and left his seat, and staggered up the gangway.

'Borracho perdido,' a woman screamed as he trod on her foot.

'I am not a lost drunk,' he mouthed and blundered outside. I heard him drunkenly bawling a speech in the vestibule, in the manner of Cantinflas, but there was no laughter in it.

When Cantinflas had shaken his slack jowl at the audience again and shuffled off the stage, picking his way among the bodies of adulterers whom he had blandly shot, I left the music-hall and spent an hour talking with two Mexican bankers. Shortly afterwards I went home. A policeman was standing at my door. I smiled, remembering Cantinflas, but already I felt uneasy. The attitude of the man, or the fact that he was tired, awakened a disturbing premonition in me.

'El Señor Temple?'

'Yes.'

'They want you at the Police Delegation, señor.'

'What for?'

'Officially I don't know, señor.' I rattled silver in my pocket.

'A Señor Dah-vi-son was found dead in the street.'

That was the other thing I had heard in Cantinflas's speeches, that the following of Consequence upon Cause was mere Coincidence,

that Wrong was usually rewarded to befool mankind, though sometimes punished to fool the wrongdoer; that was all Chance.

'We went to hear Cantinflas,' I said.

'How comic he is, señor,' the policeman replied. 'The gentleman was shot in the neck. The Delegado found your address in a letter in the pocket of the encountered one.'

'I'll come at once.'

'Yes, he was asking for you when I left.'

'Who was asking for me?'

'The dead man.'

'Then he could not have been dead!' The idiot conversation was horrifying me, my imagination was recoiling from the whole sequence of that night. I gave the policeman a peso.

'No, he was not dead, but Death was very near, señor,' the policeman softly said, sympathetically making a concession.

Davison had been dead five minutes when I arrived. He had been shot in the back three times, one of the bullets had slipped through the soft flesh of his neck. I had an idea as to who had shot him, but the Delegado scoffed at it. I returned to my room to write a report to the Delegado's superiors on the events that I believed had led to Davison's death. Instead, I brooded the whole night, recalling again and again the occasions of meeting Davison and defining for myself the manner of man he was. My thought drifted about among the encumbering furniture of memory, colliding with useless recollections, as if I were fumbling through a dark room; but the room of my brain was brilliantly illuminated. Futile arguments insisted upon pushing into the crowded chambers of my thought. For instance, I reasoned that Cantinflas had written his speech before Christmas, because otherwise why had the silent Indian been carrying the gallowed lambs through the streets? Unless, of course, they had supplied them to a shop and had been returning with the unsold lambs. My inconsequential thought followed the Indians to their miserable shack on the outskirts of the city, or to a crumbled village, where the failure to sell would mean hunger, but not despair, for the Indians had never hoped. I found myself arguing upon the case of the Indians who had been carrying the dangling sheep, until suddenly I recalled

Davison and found that Death for a while had withdrawn; for a full minute I had not thought of Davison, nor felt sorrow. I experienced the steady resurgence of sorrow, arising like cold from a pavement, until the horror of that night was re-established and reigned over me.

II

Davison was not an intellectual, as the word is currently used, though his subtle brain was made for fine distinctions. Once I heard him dissect various clauses of the Athanasian Creed, into sub-clauses. 'They are not simple statements, you see,' he said. 'Not precise enough for strict belief.'

'Not even the anathemas?' I laughed, amused at his arrogance.

'Of that there is no doubt, that is, what creeds are for, to encompass other peoples' casting out.'

'Is that so?' I answered, and Davison, angered at that pugnacious quiet of my voice, almost came to fighting heat.

Davison was not an intellectual, he was much nearer to being an adventurer; had he not been moderately wealthy he might have lived by his wits, driven to cynicism as a profession. He had travelled widely in a sophisticated way. He had gone through the Left Bank phase in Paris and still drank, but had given up the dream of some day writing a novel. He was a competent seaman who knew the Caribbean from a twenty-four foot deck; and he had obstinately sailed that sea two summers through, even in August; with the very clear understanding that in so doing he was challenging man's final enemy, Nature or Fate. There had been other adventures, too, of a kind many professed to think out of character with Davison. He had organized, or at least captained a rising of enslaved Indians against the chicle tyrants, somewhere along the Guatemalan frontier; he had committed a gross impropriety against the dignity of a South American dictator. Despite these incidents I swear Davison had absolutely no political beliefs.

He was just a decent American with a great measure of personal abandon and what I have called his hauntedness; and an infantile and, it seems to me, rather American capacity for taking pleasure in insulting unpleasant people. I have known Davison at sweltering

midnight to cross a swampy lagoon, that itself shuddered with fever, in order to insult a detestable Caribbean harbour master.

Some years ago, for no very good reason, he spent a summer and an autumn prospecting for gold among the ghost city regions of Colorado. To my question, he answered that he had searched for gold 'just to have a secret knowledge that people will believe I possess, when I hint at it.'

'What is the knowledge they won't believe you have?'

'I haven't any . . .' he replied, suddenly discomfited. A minute later he mumbled, as if to himself, 'You cannot cry sour grapes at the whole of life at once . . . even if the world is doomed never to ripen.'

On one occasion he went on a combination of fishing cruise and heavy bend with an actor, on the Gulf, and another time, it was hunting in Africa with an English officer. Davison complained that he never got anything out of any of his adventures, yet he sneered at his companions for just this. Of the English officer, Colonel ——, he said, 'He has crossed Africa on foot. All his stories begin, "When I was on safari in 1924," and end "so we had to break the neck of the bottle after all."'

It was that absurd prospecting trip in Colorado which, in a certain sense, originated one of the most extraordinary incidents of our friendship. That event, commonplace as its brute circumstance was, now seems so illustrative of Davison that I shall let it stand in place of lengthier account.

In the spring of that year Davison had rushed over to Paris to eat lotus again, I thought. I received a letter from him; about green buds on the Quai Voltaire, and a picture he had bought, and then he was back in New York. That summer he went out West and as suddenly he returned to the city, in the late days of the year. I do not remember how it came about but that night Davison and I found ourselves, already slightly intoxicated, at a speakeasy. It was in a cellar of one of the brownstones of the 'fifties, the days before the speakeasy had invaded the vestry. There were gambling rooms upstairs, I remember, and movements in other rooms that we, the ordinary clientele, never entered.

The gloom of the place was increased, rather than lightened, by the

acid-green paint that covered the stone walls. There were tables and chairs and a few ornaments of blown glass and an electrical piano. The drink was no viler than in other places, though for some back-stage reason or other, the speciality was gin; fake London gin poured out of Gordon bottles.

'Ah, gin,' Davison exclaimed when we entered and he picked up a glass that stood in front of a redhead. 'I approve of gin. No colour, no aroma, no sense data but the necessary minimum. Intoxication reduced to its simplest essence.'

We sat down opposite the electric piano and began drinking whisky. The gin ran out about then.

There were about twenty people present, several of them women, including two redheads, who sat one on each side of a fat man whose tongue protruded from his mouth after every gulp of drink. He drank that way. They told me he was a sheet-metal and general plumbing manufacturer from near Cleveland. One redhead, the taller one, was already drunk and jealous of the other. The fat sheetmetal man kept egging on the tall one, though it was plain he would be the sufferer if anything happened.

'One Torchy fight other Torchy; nothing like Torchies for love and war,' he kept saying. A policeman leaned in from the cellar steps but no one bothered and he went away, shutting the door quietly behind him.

There were six or seven old men, I remember, though Davison always swore that only one or two were old, and the others were merely vicious. Their viciousness was horrible, they sat drinking and snickering behind the smoke haze, and their slack, bloodless faces shook on the disease-eaten bones of their skulls. They whispered together and cackled, and made bleary eyes at the redheads. The proprietor was not deferential to them, I noticed, though they had money. They were there every night, I was told.

Music burst out of the electric piano and a young man began to squirm lecherously with a blonde, whose small teeth were set far apart.

'He's English; the best dancer in England,' Davison said. 'He has written several volumes of belles-lettres.'

'He can't dance,' I answered; the drink must have been rising for I remember I was indignant.

'He's been making a heap on the stock exchange, doesn't know a damn thing about method.'

A tall bald man whom I knew came in and sat at our table. All New York knew Fruhling, the new-comer. He had money at that time as he had had before and has now, though there had been other states in between. Fruhling was the cleverest man in real estate I ever knew. A few years ago he had manoeuvred, tricked and swindled, or downright bullied together a whole block of sites in the center of the city. He had coaxed, cajoled, blackmailed and lied together the capital necessary and he had built a skyscraper on that block. And it was a flop. He couldn't rent a half of its floorspace. No one ever will. He was a big, smooth man, with hard flesh on his frame. He had a fixed, quarrelsome gaze. 'This is as good a place to drink as any,' he said, ramming his rear on to a creaking chair.

'The best drink I ever had,' Davison said in a far-away manner, 'was in a pass of a death-grey mountain range in Arizona, or maybe it was Colorado. I ran up to the pass with a bottle in my hand, and I came to shade and it was the shade of an ore crusher, that had never been used, standing along on the pass. So I drank in the shade of the ore crusher and I chucked the empty bottle into it. The best drink I ever had, and the only load served up to that lonely, pining ore-crusher; pretty anecdote, eh?'

'You're crazy,' Fruhling said, goggling ferociously at Davison.

'Yes, it's the colour of these walls. Grass beneath an arc lamp. Such a colour was always worn by Death on his useless wedding day. However, imagine Death's recent surprise when his spouse presented him with offspring.'

'You're crazy,' Fruhling repeated.

The policeman leaned in and withdrew silently again. I watched his wooden face appear and disappear, with a kind of obsession and then saw Davison glaring at the table where the corrupt satyrs sat. Another client had come in; he had brought with him one of the loveliest girls I have ever seen. She was a virgin, I still swear; or innocence was the blood of her lovely body. I caught my breath at her

beauty; she had black waving hair that glistened even in that foul place. Her cheeks and parted lips were apple red. Davison was staring at her brow. Even now I can see her, rich blooded, rich limbed, her physical being glowing like a firm ripe apple amidst that foul decrepitude. Her brow was so young . . . I held my breath for a long time. Anger was flowing in Davison, the two flames of alcohol and anger were burning him up. 'She came in with Merriam, old stilt-leg there. He must be her uncle; he was talking about her once,' he said.

'Go on Torchy, Torchy fight other Torchy,' the fat man said and the tall redhead jumped to her feet and crowned him with her handbag. Fatty put his hands up and squealed and the other redhead kicked his shins. He held out his puffy hands to us. 'It ain't fair, I been good to 'em,' he wailed, as the redheads banged him. He held out his hands to the proprietor, and to the policeman who leaned in suddenly, but the policeman's face stayed flat for the moment he was in the room.

The redheads sat down again and Fatty clucked anxiously at them. 'There, there, let's be friends. Big Torchy be friends with little Torchy.'

'Oh fer Chrissake,' exclaimed little Torchy, and got up and began to dance with the English belle-lettrist. The tall one watched her for a while, but when the Englishman became lecherous she rose and dragged her companion away.

'How do you explain that now?' Fruhling said, his eyes sticking out ferociously.

'That's easy. Operate as a team,' a man at our table said, putting his head down on the edge of the table. I had not noticed the man before. 'Must' wanna new bathroo' . . . each,' the man said to the floor.

'I told you to keep away from my table,' Fruhling said, reproachfully.

'Now how do you 'splain that?' Davison said. 'Eyes pop out when he's not angry and pop in when he is.' Fruhling stood up over Davison for a few moments and sat down again.

'It's true,' the new-comer said, wiping his mouth and looking up. 'We're frens, ol' frens.'

Davison sprang up suddenly and shouted at the satyrs, one of whom

was patting the virgin's hand. 'Go on, seduce her, seduce her; she'll come to it in the end,' he bawled. There was a pandemonium of squeals and screeches and a rush towards our table. It was like a horde of bats coming out of a cave, Davison was on his feet and so was the new-comer.

'Insult . . . no gentleman . . . put him out,' I heard the old seducers shrieking while Davison bawled, 'Seduce her if you can.' A youth pushed his way through the old men.

'Take that back,' the youth declared, posturing in front of Davison, who put his big hand over the youth's thin-boned muzzle and pushed him back into the rank of old men. They broke and twittered a moment and then began to squeal and shriek again. The youth clung to his hand and would not let go. 'No, no,' he whimpered, his eyes closed tight.

'Pick it off me, or I'll squash it,' Davison said with a vulgarity unusual in him. Fruhling broke the youth's grasp. The new-comer began to laugh uproariously and continued long after the old men had drifted back to their table. The girl was a little frightened, I saw. Her uncle had his arm around her waist, and she was gazing at Davison, but I swear her fear was not of him. The policeman leaned in, he seemed to be coupled with the door on some system of straps and pulleys, so that his wooden body slanted in stiffly when the door opened and went back as it quietly shut.

Presently the tall redhead began to quarrel with the other one. The proprietor beckoned to two men sitting without drinks at the back of the cellar. They grabbed Redhead suddenly and the door opened by some sort of insight on the part of the policeman. The metal-plate manufacturer was too drunk to protest.

'You daren't, you daren't, you son of a bitch, bastard, bastard, Redhead screamed. Suddenly she was quiet.

'Bring him home, Alice,' she urged, with quiet vehemence.

'O.K.'

'But you bring him home, mind.'

'O.K., O.K.'

'You just dare . . .' the struggling redhead hissed. The fat man

watched her disappear as if she were owed to some debtor and there was nothing he could do about it.

The bouncers got her through the doorway. I heard a sharp scream of pain somewhere above us and I went out after her. It was raining outside and there was no one about, except a vendor of toy musical instruments standing in the next porch. A big Cadillac gleamed a little way down the street. 'Did you see a lady come out . . . a redhead?'

'Nice piece . . . got into that car,' the vendor said, shivering. I crossed the pavement and looked into the big Cadillac; its inside lights were burning. Another fat man was in the car, patting her shoulder, trying to comfort her. Redhead was weeping. The man in the car shooed me away with bunched-up lips and a wave of his hand. Inside the lighted car, mouthing words I could not hear, he was like a silly fish in an aquarium.

'Well, how do you explain that?' I said to the vendor.

'Steady, mister,' he said, and put out a hand. The drizzling rain, oblique and very cold, had at first partly cleared the alcohol out of my head, but then it became too cold. I moved to go down into the cellar, but the vendor held my arm. He was so eager for conversation he did not think to offer me an instrument. 'Nice place down there, mister?' he whispered, his face alight with excitement. As I went in, I saw the vendor's lips shape an oath of hatred, and envy. Envy.

Davison was orating; I knew from his manner of speech that he was nearly fighting drunk. He was trying to express himself in simple sentences; that meant that his imagination was not merely taunting him, or reaching out to excite him; or if you prefer it another way, that the exercise of imagination was no longer pleasant to him. I think the first is a better expression . . . his imagination, or his intuition had cupped itself over him, like a beast that has pounced and terrified its still uncrippled victim. Davison was a prisoner. He was sweating, though the cellar was not excessively hot, just as he was when he ran away from the comedian in Mexico City.

'There was a main street,' he was saying, 'and wagon ruts down it and empty saloons with no paint, and the grain of the wood naked and an assayer's office and three separate houses that had been painted, and one little house that stood high above the others. Empty. I

seemed no one had lived in it. And the sun, the sun was up there . . . up there, by God it was hot and still. You know what I mean, the ruts and the board houses and the trees were still, still as sunlight . . . and there was mining plant lying about, lumps of iron rusting under the three broken trees . . . and all those smashed hills that never had any shape and heaps of red and brown ashes . . . like slaghills in the sun . . . the heat twittered like . . . heat does twitter . . . you don't know heat that bursts your eyeballs . . . and silence. Nobody coming down the main street and a board hanging on one nail beside a door . . . I shouted . . . oh I shouted . . . but there wasn't any echo and I wished I hadn't. I sat on the biggest lump of iron. They were unpleasant . . . those lumps of iron, like lumps of flesh.'

The old man and the girl were standing by our table and the proprietor was frowning through the smoke. He kept glancing back at the bouncers but could not make up his mind. Fruhling suddenly crossed over and sat down by the electric piano, though he strained to hear Davison, trying to shake the alcohol out of his head.

'I went into the houses . . . door pulled off, brown dust . . . an empty house is the most horrible thing . . . I stood out in the middle of the street. All gone . . . people had been there, there were stains on the tavern table; that was broken down too. . . .'

'Here, that will do, sir . . .' the proprietor said and looked round at his bouncers; they came over and joined the listeners.

'You mustn't' the girl said, and the proprietor began to swear under his breath.

'I can tell you their history . . . hear me tell their history . . . They were getting out gold . . . and a crazy man came over the red range and said there was more gold in the yellow range, and they went there and got out gold, and another crazy man, perhaps it was the same one, came over the slag range and said there was more gold in the death-grey range, so they dragged their wagons and their tools and the saloon bar over and they made a town and ran the wagons up and down the main street . . . there were hundreds of men, riding, shouting, drinking, laying women, working, building houses, dragging plant, gambling, working, sweating, laughing, cursing . . .'

'Break it up,' the proprietor said, but no one paid attention.

'There were two brothers, I think, who quarrelled and fought, but could not be apart, and there was an assayer who robbed the miners and built a house that was too big and took too long to build, because a crazy man ran over the furnaces of the hills with bare feet and waving arms and their blood seethed and they scrambled over into the next valley and away, leaving the plant behind and the piano, because the range was steep. The brand new ore-crusher got stuck in the pass. And the town was silent, and the sun was up there . . . hot, the heat twittering, heat does twitter, the stones whisper. I stood in the middle of the street and shouted, there wasn't any echo and I took a bottle of drink I found in a house and I ran up to the pass.'

'Now come on, break it up,' the proprietor shouted and pushed his way through the old men; they fell back, but Davison got up and swung his arms round and the bouncers made no attempt to handle him.

'You can't put me out, you can't . . .' Davison shouted. 'I'm here with you, in this bloody cellar . . . oh yes, I'd forgotten, there was a lovely young virgin in the town, and the thieving assayer tried to seduce her but her men . . . her father or her brother watched over her. It would have been her brother, wouldn't it?' He stared at the girl as he said this.

Davison pushed them aside and shook the sleeping sheet-metal manufacturer. 'Let him sleep . . . it won't hurt him,' the redhead said; the rank of old men turned about and stared at Davison.

'Oh, yes, I know what happened. The younger of the quarrelling brothers killed the older one, the tavern keeper, because he wouldn't give him a proper share of the profits. The old man said he played the piano and entertained the drinkers, so he wouldn't pay up. Oh yes, the young one killed him when he was playing the piano, because I found his skull. His skull was on a dynamite case; he used to put his glass on the case when he played. The bones were strewn round about and his skull was on top of the dynamite case. He was playing the piano when he was killed. The only shade was the ore-crusher. The town was down there empty . . . nobody there.'

Davison lurched over to Fruhling and tapped him on his bald head. 'It's a skull, Fruhling, a death's head . . . your bones must rattle

when you walk. I'll sit in the shade of your bloody skyscraper and drink, Mr. Fruhling.'

For half a minute no one spoke while Davison drank the glass of whisky and then Fruhling punched Davison on the belly. Davison was pressing his eyes with the balls of his hands.

The policeman leaned in and shouted, 'Son of a bitch,' startling me greatly. He didn't do anything in the fight. Davison played the lovely virgin into her car with a toy trombone. The big Cadillac was still there with its inside lights on. The wind was blowing the rain about like a woman's skirts. Things ended one way or another.

III

After the bout in the cellar Davison drank nothing for two days. He came to my apartment twice, in the deepest gloom. He told me he had been learning to fly just before his visit to France. That was the first time he came. The second time he quarrelled with me because I insisted that the virgin's companions were all old men.

'You have an infantile obsession with old age,' he said and he lost his temper when I replied that an obsession with old age could hardly be infantile. His apology took the form of a long and exquisitely subtle analysis of obsession, frightful examples of which he discovered in me. Yet I noted that he had with him at least a dozen diverse prints of a little statue, 'La Chanteuse Triste,' by Gaudier-Brzeska, which I knew to be in London, a city Davison had always sworn he would never revisit, because he had sensed that it was the very source and origin of contemporary decay. The sad face, the abstracted gaze and the mouth twisted to one side, the head obliquely held and the arms clenched behind the back of that statue, about which he had often talked with passionate enthusiasm, had seemed to Davison to be the expression of all the sorrow of existence, not of love, or loss, or oppression, but of mere passing through time, as if that itself produced attrition in man's spirit and must inevitably erode him away. The statue was an obsession with him, as later, Mexican images of saints became. He had a large collection of photographs of Cristos, from villages, as well as metropolitan churches. There was one from Actopan, I remember, that he kept on his table for a month and more.

And once he dragged me into a church in Mexico City to see a horrible image of Cristo. The shins of that image are hacked through to the exposed bone, the skin is peeled back and even the colour of the blood has been darkened to imitate congealment around the puffed edges of the sore. The same has been done in every spot where Christ might have suffered contusions; on the cheek bones, I remember. It would seem that even contemporary Mexicans can hardly confront that Cristo, for they have caused the ghastly thing to be covered with a silken cape.

Such an obsession was a mere by-product of Davison's odd but profound distress. I never talked very intimately with Davison about the affair in the acid-green cellar, for our conversation resolved into that absurd quarrel about old and vicious men, but it is clear that he was suddenly visited by that ever-haunting vision of the passing away of our civilization. I know that he believed that this civilization would decay and that nothing but an idiot desolation would follow it. He believed that we should destroy ourselves, for we had entered upon a path we should never be able to abandon. He had often argued this with sophistication and learning. The affair in the cellar was an occasion when his subtle and flaring imagination saw the whole process.

And in these days since his death I have tried to reason about his horror of the comedian's speech, that he fled from it. The contempt of men, I heard, and I perceived also the implication that life is a serial collision of blind chances. I think now that Davison perceived more.

'The place is painted the wrong colour,' he said in the music-hall, puzzling me. He was recalling the hue of the cellar walls. I imagine that Davison believed that there was some spiritual connection between Cantinflas's philosophy and what he perceived in the cellar.

'You cannot cry sour grapes at the whole of Life, even though Life is doomed never to ripen,' he once said.

If you believe that Life will not ripen, then all grapes are sour. This, I set down here, is my belief about Davison. He thought he saw this, it was a vision that repeatedly flashed, lurid and remorseless, upon the screen of his perception. It is the horrible vision against

which man must devise comfort. He must fashion a comfort which shall absorb and exhaust his imagination, his sense of passing time, and eternity, and his sense of horror, his anguished intuition, and his desperate passions; he must create a Mystery Play which shall block out that vision. Or a man must put out his eyes, like victims of the Grecian Fate when they saw that Life could not ripen, because foulness and idiocy were in the set and contrivance of things. And if Mankind will not obscure the increasing vision with a miracle play; nor achieve blindness, then Mankind must become gardener, I suppose, and ripen Life.

After that second visit it was many months before I saw Davison again. During the whole of that time he was more or less drunk; quite uselessly, I imagine, because it was then that some of his acquaintances began to whisper that he was crazy.

He was not; though conduct like that he still showed when I met him in Mexico City might have prejudiced unperceptive men.

'You think I'm fond of you, don't you?' he once said in quarrelsome mood, but I had not thought so. Yet he chose to be with me, and often visited me, to tell me of things that had happened to him. It was thus that I knew of something that happened on Christmas Eve which I believe caused his death. Everyone knew of the event, for he blurted it out, or rather, bawled about it in a cafe on Madero Street. In that telling, however, he left out one detail, which he told me before we went to the music-hall. It was strange that he should have met his death by Chance that very night; for it was a chance meeting with a Greek that caused his assassination, for which the Greek was very absurdly arrested.

About a week before Christmas Davison, then of necessity in the company of a lawyer prominent in political circles opposed to the government of Mexico, encountered the Greek. The Greek made no secret to Davison that he was engaged in the illicit arms trade. These merchants, since the American government has put a stop to arms smuggling across the northern frontier, have hurried to Mexico City, estimating that the counter-revolutionaries will shortly stage something more serious than General Cedillo's clumsy rebellion. He was an affable little fellow, very polite and intelligent, and consistently

gainseeking. In the course of the evening the Greek remarked that he was in touch with the central committee of the Cristeros.

The lawyer laughed and said, 'You mean to say you have found them?' suggesting, as Mexican counter-revolutionaries do, that the Cristero massacres are just spontaneous killings.

'And they aren't a lot of ignorant peasants, are they?' Davison added.

'Why no,' answered the Greek, 'at least, I've met five of them, and they were not; the lady was away.' The lawyer, Davison told me, looked up sharply and changed his manner.

'You must have been very interested,' he said.

'Ah, it is a pity they have no money; they are very serious people; very responsible.' By 'responsible' he meant they were not frivolous.

'No money!' Davison exclaimed. 'I should like to meet them,' he added. After a while the Greek voluntarily offered to introduce him to the Cristeros committee. Davison at once accepted.

Once or twice Davison had talked to me of the Cristeros, in whom he was interested because of their fanaticism. He would have been interested in a fanatical church-burner; indeed, he once proposed to visit the State of Tabasco, where anti-clericalism still takes pernicious forms. Fanatics possessed a strange fascination for him, like alcohol on a lower plane; they were the supreme believers for him, who himself could believe in nothing. The Cristeros of Mexico are militant fanatics who, except for occasional attacks upon the ejidos, and the assassination of an anti-clerical schoolmaster, or the cutting off of his ears, are at present dormant. From time to time, however, the possibility of their awakening is discussed, and deeds equalling in horror those of twenty years ago are feared.

The Greek told Davison to await him, at seven of the evening, outside a glassware shop in Guatemala Street behind the cathedral. He waited half an hour, striding up and down, staring into the glassware shops at wide-necked and broad-necked bottles, and particularly at green-blue demijohns, four of which arranged around a doorway made him nostalgic for France, where he had never seen a demijohn. Four demijohn is an anecdotal vessel, a piece of literary latinity. Neighbouring the house of the demijohns was a religious knick-knack

shop, offering plaster images, lamps and coloured prints. Davison had begun to fear that he had been convoked to a trastienda chat, a back-shop parley with a vendor of wax and incense, when suddenly the Greek appeared. He was agitated and theatrical, and having led Davison along Argentina Street, entered a courtyard, with extravagant peeps to right and left. Here he farcically insisted upon blindfolding Davison, who was already feeling like a schoolboy conspirator.

'Is this how you sell howitzers?' Davison asked sardonically and put up his hand to the bandage.

'Upon your honour, I have promised,' the Greek whispered.

'All right, we're at the foot of wooden stairs, about eighteen steps high; a wooden gallery with square rails runs round three sides. The dome of an old convent is one side; rather like a Botticelli breast flaunted in the sky. I can hear street cars on the other. A church tower inclines at a great angle above the house, everybody knows that church. Am I right?'

'Yes,' whispered the Greek.

'Then if I want to find the place later how can you prevent me?'

'Ah, you mustn't do that,' the voice was urgent.

'Who's to stop me? All this is so damned silly,' Davison exclaimed and tore off the bandage, angered at the childish farce.

'No, no, no,' the arms dealer pleaded. 'It will be so bad for us both.' He flattened his hands before Davison's eyes and became so frantic that Davison told me that he closed his eyes, tightly. He told me that he blushed, standing in the dark, suffering the little Greek to blindfold him. He was blushing as an ashamed boy does, who has suddenly violated the rite of a schoolboy ceremony, and has been overborne by the collectivity.

They went up the gallery stairs, of soft greasy wood, and then Davison was really surprised for instead of entering one of the rooms that opened from the gallery they continued in the open air, he said, for several minutes. Stone came beneath his feet, then wood again, then cement. They stopped and the Greek rattled a chain softly; water was slowly dripping into a tank and Davison had the sensation that starlight was on his face. They went down four steps and began to turn to right and left and then entered a room, which they crossed.

A rattle of plates and cutlery resounded below, and then the atmosphere changed. Davison said he felt it change suddenly, the schoolboy conspiracy was over and they were approaching the people to whom the Greek had promised to lead him.

'Ah,' exclaimed Davison softly.

'What's the matter, what's the matter, you don't know where you are, you can't know,' he clutched Davison with feeble hands and as Davison pressed on, tried to force him back.

'Those are hands that merely merchandise death. You should be ashamed to draw near the very sanctuary of disinterested assassination.' The rhetorical speech seemed out of place, because at that moment the words felt appropriate.

'Oh do not talk, Mr. Davison. Tell me, do you know where we are?'

'Not in the least,' Davison answered, 'but we're not far away from them.'

'From whom? . . .' the Greek said in bewilderment.

'From the fanatics . . . can't you feel it, wave upon wave of malevolence, of evil, plangent in the darkness. Fanaticism is running its remorseless unfaltering hands over me.'

'You are silly,' the Greek answered briefly, 'very silly. I thought you knew where we were. You just smell incense, that's all.'

'Well, I'm damned,' Davison said. It was true, he told me; 'Everything peters out.'

'Then I may take the bandage off?'

'No!'

A door opened, not before them, but at his side, and feet shuffled. They entered, and stumbled through two rooms, blocked with heavy, brocaded furniture. A door was shut and locked behind them.

'Take off the bandage,' the Greek said.

'Put the light on first,' Davison replied.

'It is on.' He tore off the bandage and stared around, and burst into a roar of laughter. He sat down and shouted with laughter, beating the table with the plam of his hand, shaking his head from side to side. The momentary glimpse of the enormously fat lady nibbling biscuits was too much for him. The candlelight had shone fully on

her smooth puffy face, white-skinned as if she lived permanently in this gloom; her little round hand had been lifting a biscuit to her mouth, and he heard the break of biscuit and had seen the wondering eyes, in which stupidity was mingled with expectation. Laughter had been irresistible after that ridiculous approach.

'Ha, ha, ha,' Davison bellowed, lifting his head and throwing it back to laugh. As his gaze swept through an arc, he told me, his laughter changed gradually, but swiftly. His throat and his mouth still shouted Ha Ha Ha, but the second became hollow; something moved away from behind his laughter as he lifted his head; and as he lowered it again crying, 'Ha, Ha,' his mental image of the fat stupid face changed and of all that uproar of amusement only his hand was left beating the table. He sat up and stared into the biscuit eater's eyes. She nibbled more slowly and returned his stare.

'By God, you're real,' Davison quietly exclaimed.

There was nothing he could find to say. He sat fidgeting on the chair while the fat lady continued to nibble biscuits. For a few moments she removed her gaze from him and then her eyes greedily looked into the biscuit bowl. When she looked back at him the imbecility and the cruelty returned. Davison felt a surge of violent hatred go through him and then anger left him and he was afraid. Fear also vanished.

He stretched out his hand and took a biscuit and began to break little pieces from it with his teeth. The woman nodded. They had eaten two biscuits together when the door opened and four persons entered.

Until that point, Davison told me, he had felt disappointment behind his various emotions; behind his amusement, his anger and his fear. He confessed that he had preserved a romantic conception of fanatics. 'You can cease to be romantic about women, one is forced to; one necessarily relinquishes romanticism about progress, airplanes, and what not, or uprisings of oppressed Indians; but it is hard not to be romantic about fanatics. I perceive now that the Grand Inquisitor certainly stank of garlic, and collected postage stamps.'

He had expected an old and scholarly man, of penetrating gaze, and shrewd yet almost gentle mind, and so just and scrupulous his

mind, that he sighed and shook his bald head (covered with a little black silk skull cap) over the necessity of combating evil with force. Davison had anticipated enjoying subtle controversies with the chief fanatic. He had hoped for delicate analyses of the significance of pain, death and evil; or dignified conversations about history and the high polity of state.

'Your fanatic, I had thought, must be acquainted with tradition, with special tracts of history of rare and slightly morbid character. He will, for instance, know a great deal about the evolution of sacred rites. His sideline will be the biographical study of sixteenth-century didactic literature. Well, there I was, nibbling biscuits with three hundred pounds of venomous excess of carbohydrates.'

But when the others came in the affair changed. There was one old shuffling man, of depressed and haggard face, whose feet they had heard upon entering the room of brocaded furniture. Davison was sure of this, and it seemed to imply deference to the fat woman, and recognition of her pre-eminence. A youth entered; he might well have been the woman's son, so unhealthy and pre-doomed to obesity he looked, had it not been for a petulance in his gaze altogether too trivial to stem from that cruel imbecility. The three others were middle-aged men; they might have been grocers, suburban organists, or writers of books about folklore, Davison said, such apparent mediocrities they were. The joyless old man, the youth and the fat woman were the leaders.

Davison was debating whether it would be wise to ask the old man if he would recount the true story of the massacre of the passengers of the Los Angeles train or to content himself with the death of a thick-headed schoolmaster, or the mere taking off of his ears, when the Greek said, 'This is Mr. Davison; Mr. Davison is very wealthy.'

'Come, come, that's not very subtle,' Davison exclaimed, utterly astonished at this disclosure of the Greek's conjecture concerning him. The Greek was nonplussed, he was trembling with excitement, Davison saw. It was not only the appetite for profit, Davison said, which excited the Greek. These illicit dealers in death have a curious passion for their trade. They rejoice in the execution of a deal, and obtain from it not only excitement, but a moral satisfaction which is one of the

principal sustenances of their profession, Davison argued. They probably enjoy as many psychological gratifications as the licit dealers in destruction, and certainly their pleasures are finer in quality. They do not pander to governments and to tyrannies, but seek to aid the prescribed and the outcast in defiance of states whose iniquity preserves the anarchy by which illicit arms dealers thrive. Davison insisted that the illicit arms dealer, to be perfect in his profession, must not only delight in the difficult acrobatics which intrigue and conspiracy impose, but must possess a kind of holiness, or at least an awareness that he is redressing the unjust and purely arbitrary limitation of evil.

'But your Greek was trying to sell arms to imbecile fanatics,' I objected. Davison waved my remark aside and continued with his story.

'That will do later, señores, let us get to know one another first,' Davison said, feeling suddenly insecure.

'Very good, señor,' the old man said. 'You will honour and delight us if you will come to a posada in my house. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve and this lady will be giving her posada here then. It is our custom at Christmas time.' He indicated the others with an imprecise gesture. He seemed to have some obscure reason for exulting over his colleagues. He began to draw his hands up the brocaded arms of the chair, setting Davison's teeth on edge. This he did until Davison jumped to his feet, unable to bear the discomfort longer. Taking leave of the fat lady, they left the apartment with little caution and drove to another house.

The second house was not only of great age, but of a macabre gloom. At the end of a long corridor of wooden panels Davison saw a pine tree decorated with winking lights. Several other people were gathered in the salon into which they were at first taken, and among them were three shy and gloomy children. Davison spoke to one of them, a girl of twelve, but she shrank from him, whether in repugnance or fear, he could not decide.

'Let us go on our journey, hermanos,' the aged Cristero said, and everyone moved behind him, in desultory fashion. They entered the chilly corridor and halted outside a door, upon which the leader tapped. It was opened by a middle-aged woman, who said, in lifeless

voice, 'There is no room here, you must go elsewhere.' The door was closed and they continued to the next. No one whispered or laughed, the three children drifted along in the rear.

'No room, go elsewhere,' a voice said again, in thrilled, almost hysterical tones; the reek of stale incense came from the dark room, at the back of which glowed a red lamp. There were no more doors upon which to knock, and so the Christ-child having been refused admittance to the inns of Bethlehem, the party entered the room in which the pine tree glittered. No one spoke for a while, and then a servant brought in a piñata, the decorated container of paper, shaped like a pine-cone, in which were presents for the guests. The piñata was hung upon a cord and a stick given to the blindfolded Cristero youth. At the sixth or seventh stroke he burst the piñata and the presents fell upon the floor.

'Go on, pick up your presents,' the elders said to the children; after a while the children obeyed. The servant distributed the remainder among the adults.

Throughout this ceremony Davison was sinking into a profound depression, which was only relieved by visitations of fury, principally against the youth, who began to whisper with the old man in a corner of the room. Presently he felt he could not remain longer without running wild. He approached the pair in the corner and announced his desire to leave. The two exchanged glances and signs, and the old man leaned forward and whispered to the youth, in whose face suspicious hatred made itself manifest.

'God damn you, do you hear what I say? I'm going.'

'You must be blindfolded,' the youth's words were audible to everyone, for the room had become even more quiet. The whispering and the muttering had ceased.

Davison swung aside, and grasped the door handle. It was then he ensured that he would be assassinated. His next remark he did not recount to anyone else, not even during the wild evening at the café on Madero Street, where he gave out a wholly fantastic version of the evening's events. He was suddenly filled with overflowing contempt for everybody in the room, and especially the old Cristero, and

the youth. He strode back to them and grasped the petulant young man by the lapels of his coat.

'Listen, God damn you,' he said. 'I will tell you why you plot and kill, I will tell you something that will shrivel up your wretched soul. You do not assassinate for the faith that is in you. You assassinate, like every fanatic, because in your heart you know you do not believe.'

'We believe,' whispered the old man.

'You do not believe, or you would have joy in you at this time, for the very rebirth of innocence in you that any miserable sinner may feel at Christmas. Look around you, look at them! Do you think you are wise men come to praise, or perhaps shepherds; are there three men of kingly thoughts among you? By the Holy Child, I never read that the assassins and the ghouls followed the star and made offering of so much as pretty baubles of dismemberment and death, much less a train wreck in sweet love of Him.'

I gave my written account of Davison's meeting with the Cristeros to the police. Originally, upon the night of his death, they had scoffed at my story, but because I was able to give them a little precise information they now accepted part of it. As a mark of their belief they took me to the spot where they found his body. It was very near the Cristeros' house; a tower leaned across the sky above us. I stood a long while staring at the block of houses. The police were gazing at the refuge of Davison's murderer. I went back at night, and from the pavement I heard water slowly dripping into a tank.

The police arrested the Greek one day, and he promptly called upon me to clear him. I did so with the aid of lies, for I saw the police would do nothing about the fanatics. I suppose they would have found it difficult to define a charge against them. One cannot prosecute a group of people for not enjoying Christmas.

But I know who killed Davison, and why. It was not that the Cristeros thought that Davison might inform the police of their identity. It was the petulant youth, whose obese and vengeful face I can imagine so clearly, made ghastly by the freezing knowledge Davison had conveyed to him. It was that youth who crept behind Davison in the street.

I try not to fall into Davison's belief that our civilization will destroy itself, and I cannot believe that all is indifferent chance; that Life is no more than the obscure dribbling of an Idiot Comedian, though the manner of Davison's death has strained my faith. There are many who assert that Davison was crazy, but I know he was not; Davison was a haunted man.

A HORSEMAN IN THE SKY

Ambrose Bierce

I

ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON IN THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR 1861 A soldier lay in a clump of laurel by the side of a road in western Virginia. He lay at full length upon his stomach, his feet resting upon the toes, his head upon the left forearm. His extended right hand loosely grasped his rifle. But for the somewhat methodical disposition of his limbs and a slight rhythmic movement of the cartridge-box at the back of his belt he might have been thought to be dead. He was asleep at his post of duty. But if detected he would be dead shortly afterward, death being the just and legal penalty of his crime.

The clump of laurel in which the criminal lay was in the angle of a road which after ascending southward a steep acclivity to that point turned sharply to the west, running along the summit for perhaps one hundred yards. There it turned southward again and went zigzagging downward through the forest. At the salient of that second angle was a large flat rock, jutting out northward, overlooking the deep valley from which the road ascended. The rock capped a high cliff; a stone dropped from its outer edge would have fallen sheer downward one thousand feet to the tops of the pines. The angle where the soldier lay was on another spur of the same cliff. Had he been awake he would have commanded a view, not only of the short arm of the road and the jutting rock, but of the entire profile of the cliff below it. It might well have made him giddy to look.

The country was wooded everywhere except at the bottom of the valley to the northward, where there was a small natural meadow, through which flowed a stream scarcely visible from the valley's rim..

This open ground looked hardly larger than an ordinary door-yard, but was really several acres in extent. Its green was more vivid than that of the inclosing forest. Away beyond it rose a line of giant cliffs similar to those upon which we are supposed to stand in our survey of the savage scene, and through which the road had somehow made its climb to the summit. The configuration of the valley, indeed, was such that from this point of observation it seemed entirely shut in, and one could but have wondered how the road which found a way out of it had found a way into it, and whence came and whither went the waters of the stream that parted the meadow more than a thousand feet below.

No country is so wild and difficult but men will make it a theatre of war; concealed in the forest at the bottom of that military rat-trap, in which half a hundred men in possession of the exits might have starved an army to submission, lay five regiments of Federal infantry. They had marched all the previous day and night and were resting. At nightfall they would take to the road again, climb to the place where their unfaithful sentinel now slept, and descending the other slope of the ridge fall upon a camp of the enemy at about midnight. Their hope was to surprise it, for the road led to the rear of it. In case of failure, their position would be perilous in the extreme; and fail they surely would should accident or vigilance apprise the enemy of the movement.

II

The sleeping sentinel in the clump of laurel was a young Virginian named Carter Druse. He was the son of wealthy parents, an only child, and had known such ease and cultivation and high living as wealth and taste were able to command in the mountain country of western Virginia. His home was but a few miles from where he now lay. One morning he had risen from the breakfast-table and said, quietly but gravely: "Father, a Union regiment has arrived at Grafton. I am going to join it."

The father lifted his leonine head, looked at the son a moment in silence, and replied: "Well, go, sir, and whatever may occur do what you conceive to be your duty. Virginia, to which you are a traitor,

must get on without you. Should we both live to the end of the war, we will speak further of the matter. Your mother, as the physician has informed you, is in a most critical condition; at the best she cannot be with us longer than a few weeks, but that time is precious. It would be better not to disturb her."

So Carter Druse, bowing reverently to his father, who returned the salute with a stately courtesy that masked a breaking heart, left the home of his childhood to go soldiering. By conscience and courage, by deeds of devotion and daring, he soon commended himself to his fellows and his officers; and it was to these qualities and to some knowledge of the country that he owed his selection for his present perilous duty at the extreme outpost. Nevertheless, fatigue had been stronger than resolution and he had fallen asleep. What good or bad angel came in a dream to rouse him from his state of crime, who shall say? Without a movement, without a sound, in the profound silence and the languor of the late afternoon, some invisible messenger of fate touched with unsealing finger the eyes of his consciousness—whispered into the ear of his spirit the mysterious awakening word which no human lips ever have spoken, no human memory ever has recalled. He quietly raised his forehead from his arm and looked between the masking stems of the laurels, instinctively closing his right hand about the stock of his rifle.

His first feeling was a keen artistic delight. On a colossal pedestal, the cliff,—motionless at the extreme edge of the capping rock and sharply outlined against the sky,—was an equestrian statue of impressive dignity. The figure of the man sat the figure of the horse, straight and soldierly, but with the repose of a Grecian god carved in the marble which limits the suggestion of activity. The gray costume harmonized with its aërial background; the metal of accoutrement and caparison was softened and subdued by the shadow; the animal's skin had no points of high light. A carbine strikingly foreshortened lay across the pommel of the saddle, kept in place by the right hand grasping it at the "grip"; the left hand, holding the bridle rein, was invisible. In silhouette against the sky the profile of the horse was cut with the sharpness of a cameo; it looked across the heights of air to the confronting cliffs beyond. The face of the rider, turned slightly

away, showed only an outline of temple and beard; he was looking downward to the bottom of the valley. Magnified by its lift against the sky and by the soldier's testifying sense of the formidableness of a near enemy the group appeared of heroic, almost colossal, size.

For an instant Druse had a strange, half-defined feeling that he had slept to the end of the war and was looking upon a noble work of art reared upon that eminence to commemorate the deeds of an heroic past of which he had been an inglorious part. The feeling was dispelled by a slight movement of the group: the horse, without moving its feet, had drawn its body slightly backward from the verge; the man remained immobile as before. Broad awake and keenly alive to the significance of the situation, Druse now brought the butt of his rifle against his cheek by cautiously pushing the barrel forward through the bushes, cocked the piece, and glancing through the sights covered a vital spot of the horseman's breast. A touch upon the trigger and all would have been well with Carter Druse. At that instant the horseman turned his head and looked in the direction of his concealed foeman—seemed to look into his very face, into his eyes, into his brave, compassionate heart.

Is it then so terrible to kill an enemy in war—an enemy who has surprised a secret vital to the safety of one's self and comrades—an enemy more formidable for his knowledge than all his army for its numbers? Carter Druse grew pale; he shook in every limb, turned faint, and saw the statuesque group before him as black figures, rising, falling, moving unsteadily in arcs of circles in a fiery sky. His hand fell away from his weapon, his head slowly dropped until his face rested on the leaves in which he lay. This courageous gentleman and hardy soldier was near swooning from intensity of emotion.

It was not for long; in another moment his face was raised from earth, his hands resumed their places on the rifle, his forefinger sought the trigger; mind, heart, and eyes were clear, conscience and reason sound. He could not hope to capture that enemy; to alarm him would but send him dashing to his camp with his fatal news. The duty of the soldier was plain: the man must be shot dead from ambush—without warning, without a moment's spiritual preparation, with never so much as an unspoken prayer, he must be sent to his

account. But no—there is a hope; he may have discovered nothing—perhaps he is but admiring the sublimity of the landscape. If permitted, he may turn and ride carelessly away in the direction whence he came. Surely it will be possible to judge at the instant of his withdrawing whether he knows. It may well be that his fixity of attention—Druse turned his head and looked through the deeps of air downward, as from the surface to the bottom of a translucent sea. He saw creeping across the green meadow a sinuous line of figures of men and horses—some foolish commander was permitting the soldiers of his escort to water their beasts in the open, in plain view from a dozen summits!

Druse withdrew his eyes from the valley and fixed them again upon the group of man and horse in the sky, and again it was through the sights of his rifle. But this time his aim was at the horse. In his memory, as if they were a divine mandate, rang the words of his father at their parting: "Whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty." He was calm now. His teeth were firmly but not rigidly closed; his nerves were as tranquil as a sleeping babe's—not a tremor affected any muscle of his body; his breathing, until suspended in the act of taking aim, was regular and slow. Duty had conquered; the spirit had said to the body: "Peace, be still." He fired.

III

An officer of the Federal force, who in a spirit of adventure or in quest of knowledge had left the hidden *bivouac* in the valley, and with aimless feet had made his way to the lower edge of a small open space near the foot of the cliff, was considering what he had to gain by pushing his exploration further. At a distance of a quarter-mile before him, but apparently at a stone's throw, rose from its fringe of pines the gigantic face of rock, towering to so great a height above him that it made him giddy to look up to where its edge cut a sharp, rugged line against the sky. It presented a clean, vertical profile against a background of blue sky to a point half the way down, and of distant hills, hardly less blue, thence to the tops of the trees at its base. Lifting his eyes to the dizzy altitude of its summit the

officer saw an astonishing sight—a man on horseback riding down into the valley through the air!

Straight upright sat the rider, in military fashion, with a firm seat in the saddle, a strong clutch upon the rein to hold his charger from too impetuous a plunge. From his bare head his long hair streamed upward, waving like a plume. His hands were concealed in the cloud of the horse's lifted mane. The animal's body was as level as if every hoof-stroke encountered the resistant earth. Its motions were those of a wild gallop, but even as the officer looked they ceased, with all the legs thrown sharply forward as in the act of alighting from a leap.

But this was a flight!

Filled with amazement and terror by this apparition of a horseman in the sky—half believing himself the chosen scribe of some new Apocalypse, the officer was overcome by the intensity of his emotions; his legs failed him and he fell. Almost at the same instant he heard a crashing sound in the trees—a sound that died without an echo—and all was still.

The officer rose to his feet, trembling. The familiar sensation of an abraded shin recalled his dazed faculties. Pulling himself together he ran rapidly obliquely away from the cliff to a point distant from its foot; thereabout he expected to find his man; and thereabout he naturally failed. In the fleeting instant of his vision his imagination had been so wrought upon by the apparent grace and ease and intention of the marvelous performance that it did not occur to him that the line of march of aërial cavalry is directly downward, and that he could find the objects of his search at the very foot of the cliff. A half-hour later he returned to camp.

This officer was a wise man; he knew better than to tell an incredible truth. He said nothing of what he had seen. But when the commander asked him if in his scout he had learned anything of advantage to the expedition he answered:

"Yes, sir; there is no road leading down into this valley from the southward."

The commander, knowing better, smiled.

IV

After firing his shot, Private Carter Druse reloaded his rifle and resumed his watch. Ten minutes had hardly passed when a Federal sergeant crept cautiously to him on hands and knees. Druse neither turned his head nor looked at him, but lay without motion or sign of recognition.

"Did you fire?" the sergeant whispered.

"Yes."

"At what?"

"A horse. It was standing on yonder rock—pretty far out. You see it is no longer there. It went over the cliff."

The man's face was white, but he showed no other sign of emotion. Having answered, he turned away his eyes and said no more. The sergeant did not understand.

"See here, Druse," he said, after a moment's silence, "it's no use making a mystery. I order you to report. Was there anybody on the horse?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"My father."

The sergeant rose to his feet and walked away. "Good God!" he said.

THE BOWMEN

Arthur Machen

IT WAS DURING THE RETREAT OF THE EIGHTY THOUSAND, AND THE authority of the Censorship is sufficient excuse for not being more explicit. But it was on the most awful day of that awful time, on the day when ruin and disaster came so near that their shadow fell over London far away; and, without any certain news, the hearts of men failed within them and grew faint; as if the agony of the army in the battlefield had entered into their souls.

On this dreadful day, then, when three hundred thousand men in arms with all their artillery swelled like a flood against the little English company, there was one point above all other points in our battle line that was for a time in awful danger, not merely of defeat, but of utter annihilation. With the permission of the Censorship and of the military expert, this corner may, perhaps, be described as a salient, and if this angle were crushed and broken, then the English force as a whole would be shattered, the Allied left would be turned, and Sedan would inevitably follow.

All the morning the German guns had thundered and shrieked against this corner, and against the thousand or so of men who held it. Then men joked at the shells, and found funny names for them, and had bets about them, and greeted them with scraps of music-hall songs. But the shells came on and burst, and tore good Englishmen limb from limb, and tore brother from brother, and as the heat of the day increased so did the fury of that terrific cannonade. There was no help, it seemed. The English artillery was good, but there was not nearly enough of it; it was being steadily battered into scrap iron.

There comes a moment in a storm at sea when people say to one another, "it is at its worst; it can blow no harder," and then there

is a blast ten times more fierce than any before it. So it was in these British trenches.

There were no stouter hearts in the whole world than the hearts of these men; but even they were appalled as this seven-times-heated hell of the German cannonade fell upon them and overwhelmed them and destroyed them. And at this very moment they saw from their trenches that a tremendous host was moving against their lines. Five hundred of the thousand remained, and as far as they could see the German infantry was pressing on against them, column upon column, a grey world of men, ten thousand of them, as it appeared afterwards.

There was no hope at all. They shook hands, some of them. One man improvised a new version of the battle-song, "Good-bye, good-bye to Tipperary," ending with "And we shan't get there." And they all went on firing steadily. The officers pointed out that such an opportunity for high-class, fancy shooting might never occur again; the Germans dropped line after line; the Tipperary humorist asked, "What price Sidney Street?" And the few machine guns did their best. But everybody knew it was of no use. The dead grey bodies lay in companies and battalions, as others came on and on and on, and they swarmed and stirred and advanced from beyond and beyond.

"World without end. Amen," said one of the British soldiers with some irrelevance as he took aim and fired. And then he remembered—he says he cannot think why or wherefore—a queer vegetarian restaurant in London where he had once or twice eaten eccentric dishes of cutlets made of lentils and nuts that pretended to be steak. On all the plates in this restaurant there was printed a figure of St. George in blue, with the motto, *Adsit Anglis Sanctus Georgius*—May St. George be a present help to the English. This soldier happened to know Latin and other useless things, and now, as he fired at his man in the grey advancing mass—300 yards away—he uttered the pious vegetarian motto. He went on firing to the end, and at last Bill on his right had to clout him cheerfully over the head to make him stop, pointing out as he did so that the King's ammunition cost money and was not lightly to be wasted in drilling funny patterns into dead Germans.

For as the Latin scholar uttered his invocation he felt something between a shudder and an electric shock pass through his body. The roar of the battle died down in his ears to a gentle murmur; instead of it, he says, he heard a great voice and a shout louder than a thunder-peal crying, "Array, array, array!"

His heart grew hot as a burning coal, it grew cold as ice within him, as it seemed to him that a tumult of voices answered to his summons. He heard, or seemed to hear, thousands shouting: "St. George! St. George!"

"Ha! messire; ha! sweet Saint, grant us good deliverance!"

"St. George for merry England!"

"Harow! Harow! Monseigneur St. George, succour us."

"Ha! St. George! Ha! St. George! a long bow and a strong bow."

"Heaven's Knight, aid us!"

And as the soldier heard these voices he saw before him, beyond the trench, a long line of shapes, with a shining about them. They were like men who drew the bow, and with another shout their cloud of arrows flew singing and tingling through the air towards the German hosts.

. . . .

The other men in the trench were firing all the while. They had no hope; but they aimed just as if they had been shooting at Bisley.

Suddenly one of them lifted up his voice in the plainest English.

"Gawd help us!" he bellowed to the man next to him, "but we're blooming marvels! Look at those grey . . . gentlemen, look at them! D'ye see them? They're not going down in dozens, nor in 'undreds; it's thousands, it is. Look! look! there's a regiment gone while I'm talking to ye."

"Shut it!" the other soldier bellowed, taking aim, "what are ye gassing about?"

But he gulped with astonishment even as he spoke, for, indeed, the grey men were falling by the thousands. The English could hear the guttural scream of the German officers, the crackle of their revolvers as they shot the reluctant; and still line after line crashed to the earth.

. . . .

All the while the Latin-bred soldier heard the cry:

"Harow! Harow! Monseigneur, dear saint, quick to our aid! St. George help us!"

"High Chevalier, defend us!"

The singing arrows fled so swift and thick that they darkened the air; the heathen horde melted from before them.

. . . .

"More machine guns!" Bill yelled to Tom.

"Don't hear them," Tom yelled back. "But, thank God, anyway; they've got it in the neck."

In fact, there were ten thousand dead German soldiers left before that salient of the English army, and consequently there was no Sedan. In Germany, a country ruled by scientific principles, the Great General Staff decided that the contemptible English must have employed shells containing an unknown gas of a poisonous nature, as no wounds were discernible on the bodies of the dead German soldiers. But the man who knew what nuts tasted like when they called themselves steak knew also that St. George had brought his Agincourt Bowmen to help the English.

BEFORE THE BATTLE AT LAKE TRASIMENUS

Livy

MEN'S FEARS WERE AUGMENTED BY THE PRODIGIES REPORTED simultaneously from many places: that in Sicily the javelins of several soldiers had taken fire, and that in Sardinia as a horseman was making the round of the night-watch the same thing had happened to the truncheon which he held in his hand; that many fires had blazed up on the shore; that two shields had sweated blood; that certain soldiers had been struck with lightning; that the sun's disk had seemed to be contracted; that glowing stones had fallen from the sky at Praeneste; that at Arpi bucklers had appeared in the sky and the sun had seemed to be fighting with the moon; that at Capena two moons had risen in the daytime; that the waters of Caere had flowed mixed with blood, and that bloodstains had appeared in the water that trickled from the spring of Hercules itself; that at Antium, when some men were reaping, bloody ears of corn had fallen into their basket; that at Falerii the sky had seemed to be rent as it were with a great fissure; and through the opening a bright light had shone; and that lots had shrunk, and that one had fallen out on which was written, "Mars brandishes his spear"; that in Rome, about the same time, the statue of Mars on the Appian Way and the images of the wolves had sweated; that at Capua there had been the appearance of the sky on fire and of a moon that fell in the midst of a shower of rain. Afterwards less memorable prodigies were also given credence: that certain folk had found their goats to have got wooly fleeces; that a hen had changed into a cock, and a cock into a hen.

(Translated by B. O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library)

PRIVATE MARTIN PASSY

William March

THE BOYS ALL WONDERED ABOUT MY LACK OF FEAR. I DIDN'T LET on, but deep in my heart I knew I didn't deserve any credit like Harold Dresser or Sergeant Tietjen for the things I did. At first I used to worry about the war and getting killed, and then that day in Baltimore, while on leave, I saw a sign on a door:

MADAME BONAVENTURA

The Seeress of the East

Tells Your Past, Present and Future

I went into her parlor and we sat there talking for a time. Then she lowered the blinds and lighted a tiny lamp that shone on her face, and looked into a crystal ball. A funny expression came into her eyes and she began to twitch. Then she started talking in a sleepy voice, telling me the names of my two brothers, the number of my company and many other things. Finally she seemed to get excited: she began to talk hoarsely. "Ask me a question, and I will answer it," she said.

"Well," I thought, "I might as well know once and for all and get it off my mind. . . ."

"Ask me a question—any question you want," she said.

"Will you really tell me the truth, even if the answer is bad?" I asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Then tell me if I will be killed in the war."

Madame Bonaventura looked into the crystal ball for a long time

before answering. I wanted to say, "No!—Don't tell me! Don't answer!" but I wouldn't do it. "I might as well know the truth now, as any time," I thought. Finally the Madame began to speak, and I caught my breath again. "You will not be killed, or even wounded," she said. "You will be returned to those you love, will marry the girl of your choice and live happily ever after."

So you see I didn't really deserve all the credit I got. I wasn't any braver than anybody else and besides that I knew all the time that nothing could possibly happen to me, no matter what I did.

BALLAD OF THE BURIED SWORD

Ernest Rhys

IN A WINTER'S DREAM, ON GAMELLYN MOOR,
I found the lost grave of Lord Glyndwr.

I followed three shadows against the moon,
That marched while the thin reed whistled the tune,

Three swordsmen they were out of Harry's wars,
That made a Welsh song of their Norman scars,

But they sang no longer of Agincourt,
When they came to a grave, for there lay Glyndwr.

Said the one, "My sword, th'art rust, my dear,
I but brought thee home to break thee here."

And the second, "Ay, here is the narrow home,
To which our tired hearts are come!"

And the third, "We are all that are left, Glyndwr,
To guard thee now on Gamellyn moor."

Straightway I saw the dead forth-stand,
His good sword bright in his right hand,

And the marsh-reeds with a whistling sound,
To a thousand gray swordsmen were turned around.

The moon did shake in the south to see,
The dead man stand with his soldiery.

But the brighter his sword, the grave before,
Turned its gate of death to a radiant door.

Therein the thousand, before their Lord,
Marched at the summons of his bright sword.

Then the night grew strange, the blood left my brain,
And I stood alone by the grave again.

But brightly his sword still before me shone,
Across the dark moor as I passed alone.

And still it shines, a silver flame,
Across the dark night of the Cymraec shame.

THE PERFECT GAME

G. K. Chesterton

WE HAVE ALL MET THE MAN WHO SAYS THAT SOME ODD THINGS have happened to him, but that he does not really believe that they were supernatural. My own position is the opposite of this. I believe in the supernatural as a matter of intellect and reason, not as a matter of personal experience. I do not see ghosts; I only see their inherent probability. But it is entirely a matter of the mere intelligence, not even of the motions; my nerves and body are altogether of this earth, very earthy. But upon people of this temperament one weird incident will often leave a peculiar impression. And the weirdest circumstance that ever occurred to me occurred a little while ago. It consisted in nothing less than my playing a game, and playing it quite well for some seventeen consecutive minutes. The ghost of my grandfather would have astonished me less.

On one of these blue and burning afternoons I found myself, to my inexpressible astonishment, playing a game called croquet. I had imagined that it belonged to the epoch of Leach and Anthony Trollope, and I had neglected to provide myself with those very long and luxuriant side whiskers which are really essential to such a scene. I played it with a man whom we will call Parkinson, and with whom I had a semi-philosophical argument which lasted through the entire contest. It is deeply implanted in my mind that I had the best of the argument; but it is certain and beyond dispute that I had the worst of the game.

"Oh, Parkinson, Parkinson!" I cried, patting him affectionately on the head with a mallet, "how far you really are from the pure love of the sport—you who can play. It is only we who play badly who love the Game itself. You love glory; you love applause; you love the earth-

quake voice of victory; you do not love croquet. You do not love croquet until you love being beaten at croquet. It is we the bunglers who adore the occupation in the abstract. It is we to whom it is art for art's sake. If we may see the face of Croquet herself (if I may so express myself) we are content to see her face turned upon us in anger. Our play is called amateurish; and we wear proudly the name of amateur, for amateurs is but the French for Lovers. We accept all adventures from our Lady, the most disastrous or the most dreary. We wait outside her iron gates (I allude to the hoops), vainly essaying to enter. Our devoted balls, impetuous and full of chivalry, will not be confined within the pedantic boundaries of the mere croquet ground. Our balls seek honour in the ends of the earth; they turn up in the flowerbeds and the conservatory; they are to be found in the front garden and the next street. No, Parkinson! The good painter has skill. It is the bad painter who loves his art. The good musician loves being a musician, the bad musician loves music. With such a pure and hopeless passion do I worship croquet. I love the game itself. I love the parallelogram of grass marked out with chalk or tape, as if its limits were the frontiers of my sacred Fatherland, the four seas of Britain. I love the mere swing of the mallets, and the click of the balls is music. The four colours are to me sacramental and symbolic, like the red of martyrdom, or the white of Easter Day. You lose all this, my poor Parkinson. You have to solace yourself for the absence of this vision by the paltry consolation of being able to go through hoops and to hit the stick."

And I waved my mallet in the air with a graceful gaiety.

"Don't be too sorry for me," said Parkinson, with his simple sarcasm. "I shall get over it in time. But it seems to me that the more a man likes a game the better he would want to play it. Granted that the pleasure in the thing itself comes first, does not the pleasure of success come naturally and inevitably afterwards? Or, take your own simile of the Knight and his Lady-love. I admit the gentleman does first and foremost want to be in the lady's presence. But I never yet heard of a gentleman who wanted to look an utter ass when he was there."

"Perhaps not; though he generally looks it," I replied. "But the

truth is that there is a fallacy in the simile, although it was my own. The happiness at which the lover is aiming is an infinite happiness, which can be extended without limit. The more he is loved, normally speaking, the jollier he will be. It is definitely true that the stronger the love of both lovers, the stronger will be the happiness. But it is not true that the stronger the play of both croquet players the stronger will be the game. It is logically possible—(follow me closely here, Parkinson!)—it is logically possible, to play croquet too well to enjoy it at all. If you could put this blue ball through that distant hoop as easily as you could pick it up with your hand, then you would not put it through that hoop any more than you pick it up with your hand; it would not be worth doing. If you could play unerringly you would not play at all. The moment the game is perfect the game disappears."

"I do not think, however," said Parkinson, "that you are in any immediate danger of effecting that sort of destruction. I do not think your croquet will vanish through its own faultless excellence. You are safe for the present."

I again caressed him with the mallet, knocked a ball about, wired myself, and resumed the thread of my discourse.

The long, warm evening had been gradually closing in, and by this time it was almost twilight. By the time I had delivered four more fundamental principles, and my companion had gone through five more hoops, the dusk was verging upon dark.

"We shall have to give this up," said Parkinson, as he missed a ball almost for the first time, "I can't see a thing."

"Nor can I," I answered, "and it is a comfort to reflect that I could not hit anything if I saw it."

With that I struck a ball smartly, and sent it away into the darkness towards where the shadowy figure of Parkinson moved in the hot haze. Parkinson immediately uttered a loud and dramatic cry. The situation, indeed, called for it. I had hit the right ball.

Stunned with astonishment, I crossed the gloomy ground, and hit my ball again. It went through a hoop. I could not see the hoop; but it was the right hoop. I shuddered from head to foot.

Words were wholly inadequate, so I slouched heavily after that

impossible ball. Again I hit it away into the night, in what I supposed was the vague direction of the quite invisible stick. And in the dead silence I heard the stick rattle as the ball struck it heavily.

I threw down my mallet. "I can't stand this," I said. "My ball has gone right three times. These things are not of this world."

"Pick your mallet up," said Parkinson, "have another go."

"I tell you I daren't. If I made another hoop like that I should see all the devils dancing there on the blessed grass."

"Why devils?" asked Parkinson; "they may be only fairies making fun of you. They are sending you the 'Perfect Game,' which is no game."

I looked about me. The garden was full of a burning darkness, in which the faint glimmers had the look of fire. I stepped across the grass as if it burnt me, picked up the mallet, and hit the ball somewhere—somewhere where another ball might be. I heard the dull click of the balls touching, and ran into the house like one pursued.

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Oscar Wilde

I

WHEN MR. HIRAM B. OTIS, THE AMERICAN MINISTER, BOUGHT Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising im-

presarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan, of West 53d Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually

called the "Stars and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and with the exception of the worthy Minister the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a waggonette to meet them, and they started on the drive in high spirits. It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech-trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each a low courtesy as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, "I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase." Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained-glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, "I am afraid something has been spilt there."

"Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, "blood has been spilt on that spot."

"How horrid," cried Mrs. Otis; "I don't at all care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once."

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, "It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was

murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed."

"That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis; "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

"I knew Pinkerton would do it," he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the sombre room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

"What a monstrous climate!" said the American Minister calmly, as he lit a long cheroot. "I guess the old country is so over-populated that they have not enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of opinion that emigration is the only thing for England."

"My dear Hiram," cried Mrs. Otis, "what can we do with a woman who faints?"

"Charge it to her like breakages," answered the Minister; "she won't faint after that"; and in a few moments Mrs. Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr. Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

"I have seen things with my own eyes, sir," she said, "that would make any Christian's hair stand on end, and many and many a night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here." Mr. Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of Providence on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.

II

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. "I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent," said Washington, "for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost." He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself, and the key carried upstairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial of the existence of ghosts, Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Myers and Podmore on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime. That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasmata were removed for ever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till nine o'clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of receptive expectation which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. The subjects discussed, as I have since learned from Mr. Otis, were merely such as form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class, such as the immense superiority of Miss Fanny Davenport over Sara Bernhardt as an actress; the difficulty of obtaining green corn, buckwheat cakes, and hominy, even in the best English houses; the importance of Boston in the development of the world-soul; the advantages of the baggage check system in railway travelling; and the sweetness of the New York accent as compared to the London drawl. No mention at all was made of the supernatural, nor was Sir Simon de Canterville alluded to in any way. At eleven o'clock the family retired, and by half-past all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor, outside his room. It

sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red as burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by my bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it." With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing the door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realise his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted. He thought of the Dowager Duchess, whom he had frightened into a fit as she stood before the glass in her lace and diamonds; of the four housemaids, who had gone off into hysterics when he merely grinned at them

through the curtains of one of the spare bedrooms; of the rector of the parish, whose candle he had blown out as he was coming late one night from the library, and who had been under the care of Sir William Gull ever since, a perfect martyr to nervous disorders; and of old Madame de Tremouillac, who, having wakened up one morning early and seen a skeleton seated in an armchair by the fire reading her diary, had been confined to her bed for six weeks with an attack of brain fever, and, on her recovery, had become reconciled to the Church, and broken off her connection with that notorious sceptic Monsieur de Voltaire. He remembered the terrible night when the wicked Lord Canterville was found choking in his dressing-room, with the knave of diamonds half-way down his throat, and confessed, just before he died, that he had cheated Charles James Fox out of £50,000 at Crockford's by means of that very card, and swore that the ghost had made him swallow it. All his great achievements came back to him again, from the butler who had shot himself in the pantry because he had seen a green hand tapping at the window pane, to the beautiful Lady Stutfield, who was always obliged to wear a black velvet band round her throat to hide the mark of five fingers burnt upon her white skin, and who drowned herself at last in the carp-pond at the end of the King's Walk. With the enthusiastic egotism of the true artist he went over his most celebrated performances, and smiled bitterly to himself as he recalled to mind his last appearance as "Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe," his *début* as "Gaunt Gibeon, the Blood-sucker of Bexley Moor," and the *furore* he had excited one lovely June evening by merely playing ninepins with his own bones upon the lawn-tennis ground. And after all this, some wretched modern Americans were to come and offer him the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at his head! It was quite unbearable. Besides, no ghost in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly, he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep thought.

III

The next morning, when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was

naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted. "I have no wish," he said, "to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him"—a very just remark, at which I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. "Upon the other hand," he continued, "if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep, with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms."

For the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis, and the windows kept closely barred. The chameleon-like colour, also, of the stain excited a good deal of comment. Some mornings it was a dull (almost Indian) red, then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once when they came down for family prayers, according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopalian Church, they found it a bright emerald-green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearful crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a large suit of old armour had become detached from its stand, and had fallen on the stone floor, while, seated in a high-backed chair, was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their pea-shooters with them, at once discharged two pellets on him, with that accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him with a revolver, and called upon him, in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands! The ghost started up with a wild

shriek of rage, and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis's candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the top of the staircase he recovered himself, and determined to give his celebrated peal of demoniac laughter. This he had on more than one occasion found extremely useful. It was said to have turned Lord Raker's wig grey in a single night, and had certainly made three of Lady Canterville's French governesses give warning before their month was up. He accordingly laughed his most horrible laugh, till the old vaulted roof rang and rang again, but hardly had the fearful echo died away when a door opened, and Mrs. Otis came out in a light blue dressing-gown. "I am afraid you are far from well," she said, "and have brought you a bottle of Dr. Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy." The ghost glared at her in fury, and began at once to make preparations for turning himself into a large black dog, an accomplishment for which he was justly renowned, and to which the family doctor always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Hon. Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.

On reaching his room he entirely broke down, and became a prey to the most violent agitation. The vulgarity of the twins, and the gross materialism of Mrs. Otis, were naturally extremely annoying, but what really distressed him most was, that he had been unable to wear the suit of mail. He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a Spectre In Armour, if for no more sensible reason, at least out of respect for their national poet Longfellow, over whose graceful and attractive poetry he himself had whiled away many a weary hour when the Cantervilles were up in town. Besides, it was his own suit. He had worn it with great success at the Kenilworth tournament, and had been highly complimented on it by no less a person than the Virgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breastplate and steel casque, and had fallen

heavily on the stone pavement, barking both his knees severely, and bruising the knuckles of his right hand.

For some days after this he was extremely ill, and hardly stirred out of his room at all, except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself, he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, the 17th of August, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favour of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled at the wrists and neck, and a rusty dagger. Towards evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact, it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this. He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of low music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain, by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the reckless and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient, or, if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralysed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl round the room, with white, bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of "Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton," a *rôle* in which he had on more than one occasion pro-

duced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of "Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery."

At half-past ten he heard the family going to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, who with the light-hearted gaiety of school-boys, were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest, but at a quarter past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he sallied forth. The owl beat against the window panes, the raven croaked from the old yew-tree, and the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept unconscious of their doom, and high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady snoring of the Minister of the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange sixteenth-century curses, and ever and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air. Finally he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long grey locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so, than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back, and hid his blanched face in his long, bony hands. Right in front of him was standing a horrible spectre, motionless as a carven image, and monstrous as a madman's dream! Its head was bald and burnished; its face round, and fat, and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters, some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins, some awful calendar of

crime, and, with its right hand, it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and, after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning by the butler. Once in the privacy of his own apartment, he flung himself down on a small pallet-bed, and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave old Canterville spirit asserted itself, and he determined to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with silver, he returned towards the spot where he had first laid eyes on the grisly phantom, feeling that, after all, two ghosts were better than one, and that, by the aid of his new friend, he might safely grapple with the twins. On reaching the spot, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. Something had evidently happened to the spectre, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming falchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wall in a strained and uncomfortable attitude. He rushed forward and seized it in his arms, when, to his horror, the head slipped off and rolled on the floor, the body assumed a recumbent posture, and he found himself clasping a white dimity bedcurtain, with a sweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet! Unable to understand this curious transformation, he clutched the placard with feverish haste, and there, in the grey morning light, he read these fearful words: —

YE OTIS GHOSTE.
Ye onlie True and Originale Spook.
Beware of Ye Imitationes.
All others are Counterfeite.

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground

his toothless gums together; and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore, according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and Murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain oath and baffled purpose. There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion on which this oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. "Perdition seize the naughty fowl," he muttered, "I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the gorge, and made him crow for me an 'twere in death!" He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.

IV

The next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most con-

scientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old worm-eaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains. I am bound to acknowledge that it was with a good deal of difficulty that he brought himself to adopt this last mode of protection. However, one night, while the family were at dinner, he slipped into Mr. Otis's bedroom and carried off the bottle. He felt a little humiliated at first, but afterwards was sensible enough to see that there was a great deal to be said for the invention, and, to a certain degree, it served his purpose. Still, in spite of everything, he was not left unmolested. Strings were continually being stretched across the corridor, over which he tripped in the dark, and on one occasion, while dressed for the part of "Black Isaac, or the Huntsman of Hogley Woods," he met with a severe fall, through treading on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed from the entrance of the Tapestry Chamber to the top of the oak staircase. This last insult so enraged him, that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity and social position, and determined to visit the insolent young Etonians the next night in his celebrated character of "Reckless Rupert, or the Headless Earl."

He had not appeared in this disguise for more than seventy years: in fact, not since he had so frightened pretty Lady Barbara Modish by means of it, that she suddenly broke off her engagement with the present Lord Canterville's grandfather, and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castletown, declaring that nothing in the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however, an extremely difficult "make-up," if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-

natural world, and it took him fully three hours to make his preparations. At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebuse, in case he should be attacked by the twins. The final blow he received occurred on the 19th of September. He had gone downstairs to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested, and was amusing himself by making satirical remarks on the large Saroni photographs of the United States Minister and his wife, which had now taken the place of the Canterville family pictures. He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with churchyard mould, had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of "Jonas the Graveless, or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn," one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervilles had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with their neighbour, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no

one was stirring. As he was strolling towards the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood-stain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads, and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear.

Seized with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe; and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for him on several occasions, and strewed the passages with nutshells every night to the great annoyance of their parents and the servants, but it was of no avail. It was quite evident that his feelings were so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Otis consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic Party, on which he had been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organized a wonderful clam-bake, which amazed the whole county; the boys took to lacrosse, euchre, poker, and other American national games; and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Canterville Chase. It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his best congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

The Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville ghost, and was found next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state, that though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say any-

thing again but "Double Sixes." The story was well known at the time, though, of course, out of respect to the feelings of the two noble families, every attempt was made to hush it up; and a full account of all the circumstances connected with it will be found in the third volume of Lord Tattle's *Recollections of the Prince Regent and his Friends*. The ghost, then, was naturally very anxious to show that he had not lost his influence over the Stiltons, with whom, indeed, he was distantly connected, his own first cousin having been married *en secondes noces* to the Sieur de Bulkeley, from whom, as every one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire are lineally descended. Accordingly, he made arrangements for appearing to Virginia's little lover in his celebrated impersonation of "The Vampire Monk, or the Bloodless Benedictine," a performance so horrible that when old Lady Startup saw it, which she did on one fatal New Year's Eve, in the year 1764, she went off into the most piercing shrieks, which culminated in violent apoplexy, and died in three days, after disinheriting the Cantervilles, who were her nearest relations, and leaving all her money to her London apothecary. At the last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal Bedchamber, and dreamed of Virginia.

V

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge, that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look,

that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, "but my brothers are going back to Eton to-morrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you."

"It is absurd asking me to behave myself," he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, "quite absurd. I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing."

"It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife."

"Well, I quite admit it," said the Ghost petulantly, "but it was a purely family matter, and concerned no one else."

"It is very wrong to kill any one," said Virginia, who at times had a sweet Puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor.

"Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent up to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her."

"Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?"

"No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family."

"Stop!" cried Virginia stamping her foot, "it is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and

I couldn't do any more sunsets, then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?"

"Well, really," said the Ghost, rather meekly, "what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Detergent, I certainly saw no reason why I should not have your paints. As for colour, that is always a matter of taste: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instance, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind."

"You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage, and though there is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost."

"I don't think I should like America."

"I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities," said Virginia satirically.

"No ruins! no curiosities!" answered the Ghost; "you have your navy and your manners."

"Good evening; I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday."

"Please don't go, Miss Virginia," he cried; "I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot."

"That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not very clever."

"I have not slept for three hundred years," he said sadly, and Vir-

ginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder; "for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired."

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little lips trembled like rose-leaves. She came towards him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

"Poor, poor Ghost," she murmured; "have you no place where you can sleep?"

"Far away beyond the pinewoods," he answered, in a low dreamy voice, "there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold, crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers."

Virginia's eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

"You mean the Garden of Death," she whispered.

"Yes, Death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of Death's house, for Love is always with you, and Love is stronger than Death is."

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she was in a terrible dream.

Then the Ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?"

"Oh, often," cried the little girl, looking up; "I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.

But I don't know what they mean."

"They mean," he said sadly, "that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail."

Virginia made no answer, and the Ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. "I am not afraid," she said, firmly, "and I will ask the Angel to have mercy on you."

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, as he led her across the dusky room. On the faded green tapestry were broidered little huntsmen. They blew their tasselled horns and with their tiny hands waved to her to go back. "Go back! little Virginia," they cried, "go back!" but the Ghost clutched her hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard tails, and goggle eyes, blinked at her from the carven chimney-piece, and murmured "Beware! little Virginia, beware! we may never see you again," but the Ghost glided on more swiftly, and Virginia did not listen. When they reached the end of the room he stopped, and muttered some words she could not understand. She opened her eyes, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a mist, and a great black cavern in front of her. A bitter cold wind swept round them, and she felt something pulling at her dress. "Quick, quick," cried the Ghost, "or it will be too late," and, in a moment, the wainscoting had closed behind them, and the Tapestry Chamber was empty.

VI

About ten minutes later, the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden

every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck, and Virginia did not appear, she became really agitated, and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half-past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere. They were all now in the greatest state of excitement, and did not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gipsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants. The little Duke of Cheshire, who was perfectly frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow him, as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. On arriving at the spot, however, he found that the gipsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass. Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and despatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the county, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gipsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and, after insisting on his wife and the three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles, when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed and no hat. "I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis," gasped out the boy, "but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!"

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young scapegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia, so leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said, "Well, Cecil, if you won't go back I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot."

"Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!" cried the little Duke,

laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station. There Mr. Otis inquired of the station-master if any one answering to the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station-master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept for her, and, after having bought a hat for the little Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting up his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Bexley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a well-known haunt of the gipsies, as there was a large common next to it. Here they roused up the rural policeman, but could get no information from him, and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heart-broken. They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gate-house with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gipsies had been caught on Brockley meadows, but she was not with them, and they had explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they might be late. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had stayed behind to help in the search. The carp-pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Virginia was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony. In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau-de-cologne by the old housekeeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they had finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be

done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately. Just as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful peal of thunder shook the house, a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, and out on the landing, looking very pale and white, with a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. In a moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

"Good heavens! child, where have you been?" said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. "Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more."

"Except on the Ghost! except on the Ghost!" shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

"My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again," murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child, and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

"Papa," said Virginia quietly, "I have been with the Ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died."

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained to it was a gaunt skeleton, that was stretched out at full length on the stone floor, and seemed to be trying to grasp

with its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned trencher and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was covered inside with green mould. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of dust. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, and, folding her little hands together, began to pray silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was now disclosed to them.

"Hallo!" suddenly exclaimed one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try and discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. "Hallo! the old withered almond-tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite plainly in the moonlight."

"God has forgiven him," said Virginia gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

"What an angel you are!" cried the young Duke, and he put his arm round her neck, and kissed her.

VII

Four days after these curious incidents a funeral started from Canterville Chase at about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich-plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up specially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him. A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard, just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Rev. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia

stepped forward, and laid on it a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver the little churchyard, and from a distant copse a nightingale began to sing. She thought of the ghost's description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke a word during the drive home.

The next morning, before Lord Canterville went up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly magnificent, especially a certain ruby necklace with old Venetian setting, which was really a superb specimen of sixteenth-century work, and their value was so great that Mr. Otis felt considerable scruples about allowing his daughter to accept them.

"My lord," he said, "I know that in this country mortmain is held to apply to trinkets as well as to land, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms in your family. I must beg you, accordingly, to take them to London with you, and to regard them simply as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain strange conditions. As for my daughter, she is merely a child, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but little interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. I am also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say, is no mean authority upon Art—having had the privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl—that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a tall price. Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognise how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain gauds and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe immortal, principles of Republican simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box, as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and consequently a good deal out of repair, you may perhaps think fit to comply with her request. For my own part, I confess I am a good deal surprised to find a child of mine

expressing sympathy with mediævalism in any form, and can only account for it by the fact that Virginia was born in one of your London suburbs shortly after Mrs. Otis had returned from a trip to Athens."

Lord Canterville listened very gravely to the worthy Minister's speech, pulling his grey moustache now and then to hide an involuntary smile, and when Mr. Otis had ended, he shook him cordially by the hands, and said, "My dear sir, your charming little daughter rendered my unlucky ancestor, Sir Simon, a very important service, and I and my family are much indebted to her for her marvellous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers, and, egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life. As for their being heirlooms, nothing is an heirloom that is not so mentioned in a will or legal document, and the existence of these jewels has been quite unknown. I assure you I have no more claim on them than your butler, and when Miss Virginia grows up I daresay she will be pleased to have pretty things to wear. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and anything that belonged to the ghost passed at once into your possession, as, whatever activity Sir Simon may have shown in the corridor at night, in point of law he was really dead, and you acquired his property by purchase."

Mr. Otis was a good deal distressed at Lord Canterville's refusal, and begged him to reconsider his decision, but the good-natured peer was quite firm, and finally induced the Minister to allow his daughter to retain the present the ghost had given her, and when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet, which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose, and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself. Mr. Otis was extremely fond

of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, "was not without apprehension lest amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of Republican simplicity should be forgotten." His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Canterville Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pine-woods. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window. The Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by it for some time they strolled into the ruined chancel of the old abbey. There the Duchess sat down on a fallen pillar, while her husband lay at her feet smoking a cigarette and looking up at her beautiful eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette away, took hold of her hand, and said to her, "Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband."

"Dear Cecil! I have no secrets from you."

"Yes, you have," he answered, smiling, "you have never told me what happened to you when you were locked up with the ghost."

"I have never told any one, Cecil," said Virginia gravely.

"I know that, but you might tell me."

"Please don't ask me, Cecil, I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe him a great deal. Yes, don't laugh, Cecil, I really do. He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both."

The Duke rose and kissed his wife lovingly.

"You can have your secret as long as I have your heart," he murmured.

"You have always had that, Cecil."

"And you will tell our children some day, won't you?"

Virginia blushed.

THE RIVAL BEAUTIES

W. W. Jacobs

"IF YOU HADN'T ASKED ME," SAID THE NIGHT WATCHMAN, "I should never have told you; but, seeing as you've put the question point blank, I will tell you my experience of it. You're the first person I've ever opened my lips to upon the subject, for it was so eggstraordinary that all our chaps swore as they'd keep it to theirselves for fear of being disbelieved and jeered at.

"It happened in '84, on board the steamer *George Washington,* bound from Liverpool to New York. The first eight days passed without anything unusual happening, but on the ninth I was standing aft with the first mate, hauling in the log, when we hears a yell from aloft, an' a chap what we called Stuttering Sam come down as if he was possessed, and rushed up to the mate with his eyes nearly starting out of his 'ed.

" 'There's the s-s-s-s-s-s-sis-sis-sip!' ses he.

" 'The what?' ses the mate.

" 'The s-s-sea-sea-sssssip!'

" 'Look here, my lad,' ses the mate, taking out a pocket-handkerchief an' wiping his face, 'you just tarn your 'ed away till you get your breath. It's like opening a bottle o' soda water to stand talking to you. Now, what is it?'

" 'It's the ssssssis-sea-sea-sea-sarpint!' ses Sam, with a bust.

" 'Rather a long un by your account of it,' ses the mate, with a grin.

" 'What's the matter?' ses the skipper, who just came up.

" 'This man has seen the sea-sarpint, sir, that's all,' ses the mate.

" 'Y-y-yes,' said Sam, with a sort o' sob.

" 'Well, there ain't much doing just now,' ses the skipper, 'so you'd better get a slice o' bread and feed it.'

"The mate bust out larfing, an' I could see by the way the skipper smiled he was rather tickled at it himself.

"The skipper an' the mate was still larfing very hearty when we heard a dreadful 'owl from the bridge, an' one o' the chaps suddenly leaves the wheel, jumps on to the deck, and bolts below as though he was mad. T'other one follows 'm a'most d'reckly, and the second mate caught hold o' the wheel as he left it, and called out something we couldn't catch to the skipper.

" 'What the d——'s the matter?' yells the skipper.

"The mate pointed to starboard, but as 'is 'and was shaking so that one minute it was pointing to the sky an' the next to the bottom o' the sea, it wasn't much of a guide to us. Even when he got it steady we couldn't see anything, till all of a sudden, about two miles off, something like a telegraph pole stuck up out of the water for a few seconds, and then ducked down again and made straight for the ship.

"Sam was the fust to speak, and, without wasting time stuttering or stammering, he said he'd go down and see about that bit o' bread, an' he went afore the skipper or the mate could stop 'im.

"In less than 'arf a minute there was only the three officers an' me on deck. The second mate was holding the wheel, the skipper was holding his breath, and the first mate was holding me. It was one o' the most exciting times I ever had.

" 'Better fire the gun at it,' ses the skipper, in a trembling voice, looking at the little brass cannon we had for signalling.

" 'Better not give him any cause for offence,' ses the mate, shaking his head.

" 'I wonder whether it eats men,' ses the skipper. 'Perhaps it'll come for some of us.'

" 'There ain't many on deck for it to choose from,' ses the mate, looking at 'im significant like.

" 'That's true,' ses the skipper, very thoughtful; 'I'll go an' send all hands on deck. As captain, it's my duty not to leave the ship till the *last,* if I can anyways help it.'

"How he got them on deck has always been a wonder to me, but he did it. He was a brutal sort o' a man at the best o' times, an' he carried on so much that I s'pose they thought even the sarpint couldn't

be worse. Anyway, up they came, an' we all stood in a crowd watching the sarpint as it came closer and closer.

"We reckoned it to be about a hundred yards long, an' it was about the most awful-looking creetur you could ever imagine. If you took all the ugliest things in the earth and mixed 'em up—gorillas an' the like—you'd only make a hangel compared to what that was. It just hung off our quarter, keeping up with us, and every now and then it would open its mouth and let us see about four yards down its throat.

" 'It seems peaceable,' whispers the fust mate, arter awhile.

" 'P'raps it ain't hungry,' ses the skipper. 'We'd better not let it get peckish. Try it with a loaf o' bread.'

"The cook went below and fetched up half-a-dozen, an' one o' the chaps, plucking up courage, slung it over the side, an' afore you could say 'Jack Robinson' the sarpint had woffled it up an' was looking for more. It stuck its head up and came close to the side just like the swans in Victoria Park, an' it kept that game up until it had 'ad ten loaves an' a hunk o' pork.

" 'I'm afraid we're encouraging it,' ses the skipper, looking at it as it swam alongside with an eye as big as a saucer cocked on the ship.

" 'P'raps it'll go away soon if we don't take no more notice of it,' ses the mate. 'Just pretend it isn't here.'

"Well, we did pretend as well as we could; but everybody hugged the port side o' the ship, and was ready to bolt down below at the shortest notice; and at last, when the beast got craning its neck up over the side as though it was looking for something, we gave it some more grub. We thought if we didn't give it he might take it, and take it off the wrong shelf, so to speak. But, as the mate said, it was encouraging it, and long arter it was dark we could hear it snorting and splashing behind us, until at last it 'ad such an effect on us the mate sent one o' the chaps down to rouse the skipper.

" 'I don't think it'll do no 'arm,' ses the skipper, peering over the side, and speaking as though he knew all about sea-sarpints and their ways.

" 'S'pose it puts its 'ead over the side and takes one o' the men,' ses the mate.

" 'Let me know at once,' ses the skipper firmly; an' he went below agin and left us.

"Well, I was jolly glad when eight bells struck, an' I went below; an' if ever I hoped anything I hoped that when I go up that ugly brute would have gone, but, instead o' that, when I went on deck it was playing alongside like a kitten a'most, an' one o' the chaps told me as the skipper had been feeding it agin.

" 'It's a wonderful animal,' ses the skipper, 'an' there's none of you now but has seen the sea-sarpint; but I forbid any man here to say a word about it when we get ashore.'

" 'Why not, sir?' ses the second mate.

" 'Becos you wouldn't be believed,' said the skipper sternly. 'You might all go ashore and kiss the Book an' make affidavits an' not a soul 'ud believe you. The comic papers 'ud make fun of it, and the respectable papers 'ud say it was seaweed or gulls.'

" 'Why not take it to New York with us?' ses the fust mate suddenly.

" 'What?' ses the skipper.

" 'Feed it every day,' ses the mate, getting excited, 'and bait a couple of shark hooks and keep 'em ready, together with some wire rope. Git 'im to foller us as far as he will, and then hook him. We might git him in alive and show him at a sovereign a head. Anyway, we can take in his carcase if we manage it properly.'

" 'By Jove! if we only could,' ses the skipper, getting excited too.

" 'We can try,' ses the mate. 'Why, we could have noosed it this mornin' if we had liked; and if it breaks the lines we must blow its head to pieces with the gun.'

"It seemed a most eggstraordinary thing to try and catch it that way; but the beast was so tame, and stuck so close to us, that it wasn't quite so ridikilous as it seemed at fust.

"Arter a couple o' days nobody minded the animal a bit, for it was about the most nervous thing of its size you ever saw. It hadn't got the soul of a mouse; and one day when the second mate, just for a lark, took the line of the foghorn in his hand and tooted it a bit, it flung up its 'ead in a scared sort o' way, and, after backing a bit, turned clean round and bolted.

"I thought the skipper 'ud have gone mad. He chucked over loaves o' bread, bits o' beef and pork, an' scores o' biskits, and by-and-bye, when the brute plucked up heart an' came arter us again, he fairly beamed with joy. Then he gave orders that nobody was to touch the horn for any reason whatever, not even if there was a fog, or chance of collision, or anything of the kind; an' he also gave orders that the bells wasn't to be struck, but that the bosen was just to shove 'is 'ead in the fo'c's'le and call 'em out instead.

"Arter three days had passed, and the thing was still follering us, everybody made certain of taking it to New York, an' I b'leeve if it hadn't been for Joe Cooper the question about the sea-sarpint would ha' been settled long ago. He was a most eggstraordinary ugly chap was Joe. He had a perfic cartoon of a face, an' he was so delikit-minded and sensitive about it that if a chap only stopped in the street and whistled as he passed him, or pointed him out to a friend, he didn't like it. He told me once when I was symperthizing with him, that the only time a woman ever spoke civilly to him was one night down Poplar way in a fog, an' he was so 'appy about it that they both walked into the canal afore he knew where they was.

"On the fourth morning, when we was only about three days from Sandy Hook, the skipper got out o' bed wrong side, an' when he went on deck he was ready to snap at anybody, an' as luck would have it, as he walked a bit forrard, he sees Joe a-sticking his phiz over the side looking at the sarpint.

" 'What the d—— are you doing?' shouts the skipper. 'What do you mean by it?'

" 'Mean by what, sir?' asks Joe.

" 'Putting your black ugly face over the side o' the ship an' frightening my sea-sarpint!' bellows the skipper. 'You know how easy it's skeered.'

" 'Frightening the sea-sarpint?' ses Joe, trembling all over, an' turning very white.

" 'If I see that face o' yours over the side agin, my lad,' ses the skipper very fierce, 'I'll give it a black eye. Now cut!'

"Joe cut, an' the skipper, having worked off some of his ill-temper, went aft again and began to chat with the mate quite pleasant like.

I was down below at the time, an' didn't know anything about it for hours arter, and then I heard it from one o' the firemen. He comes up to me very mysterious like, an' ses, 'Bill,' he ses, 'you're a pal o' Joe's; come down here an' see what you can make of 'im.'

"Not knowing what he meant, I follered 'im below to the engine-room, an' there was Joe sitting on a bucket staring wildly in front of 'im, and two or three of 'em standing round looking at 'im with their 'eads on one side.

" 'He's been like that for three hours,' ses the second engineer in a whisper, 'dazed like.'

"As he spoke Joe gave a little shudder, 'Frighten the sea-sarpint!' ses he, 'O Lord!'

" 'It's turned his brain,' ses one o' the firemen, 'he keeps saying nothing but that.'

" 'If we could only make 'im cry,' ses the second engineer, who had a brother what was a medical student, 'it might save his reason. But how to do it, that's the question.'

" 'Speak kind to 'im, sir,' ses the fireman. 'I'll have a try if you don't mind.' He cleared his throat first, an' then he walks over to Joe and puts his hand on his shoulder an' ses very soft an' pitiful like:

" 'Don't take on, Joe, don't take on, there's many a ugly mug 'ides a good 'art.'

"Afore he could think o' anything else to say, Joe ups with his fist an' gives 'im one in the ribs as nearly broke 'em. Then he turns away 'is 'ead an' shivers again, an' the old dazed look come back.

" 'Joe,' I ses, shaking him, 'Joe!'

" 'Frightened the sea-sarpint!' whispers Joe, staring.

" 'Joe,' I ses, 'Joe. You know me, I'm your pal, Bill.'

" 'Ay, ay,' ses Joe, coming round a bit.

" 'Come away,' I ses, 'come an' git to bed, that's the best place for you.'

"I took 'im by the sleeve, and he gets up quiet an' obedient and follers me like a little child. I got 'im straight into 'is bunk, an' arter a time he fell into a soft slumber, an' I thought the worst had passed, but I was mistaken. He got up in three hours' time an' seemed all right, 'cept that he walked about as though he was thinking very hard

about something, an' before I could make out what it was he had a fit.

"He was in that fit ten minutes, an' he was no sooner out o' that one than he was in another. In twenty-four hours he had six full-sized fits, and I'll allow I was fairly puzzled. What pleasure he could find in tumbling down hard and stiff an' kicking at everybody an' everything I couldn't see. He'd be standing quiet and peaceable like one minute, and the next he'd catch hold o' the nearest thing to him and have a bad fit, and lie on his back and kick us while we was trying to force open his hands to pat 'em.

"The other chaps said the skipper's insult had turned his brain, but I wasn't quite so soft, an' one time when he was alone I put it to him.

" 'Joe, old man,' I ses, 'you an' me's been very good pals.'

" 'Ay, ay,' ses he, suspicious like.

" 'Joe,' I whispers, 'what's yer little game?'

" 'Wodyermean?' ses he, very short.

" 'I mean the fits,' ses I, looking at 'im very steady. 'It's no good looking hinnercent like that, 'cos I see yer chewing soap with my own eyes.'

" 'Soap,' ses Joe, in a nasty sneering way, 'you wouldn't reckernise a piece if you saw it.'

"Arter that I could see there was nothing to be got out of 'im, an' I just kept my eyes open and watched. The skipper didn't worry about his fits, 'cept that he said he wasn't to let the sarpint see his face when he was in 'em for fear of scaring it; an' when the mate wanted to leave him out o' the watch, he ses, 'No, he might as well have fits while at work as well as anywhere else.'

"We were about twenty-four hours from port, an' the sarpint was still following us; and at six o'clock in the evening the officers puffected all their arrangements for ketching the creetur at eight o'clock next morning. To make quite sure of it an extra watch was kept on deck all night to chuck it food every half-hour; an' when I turned in at ten o'clock that night it was so close I could have reached it with a clothes-prop.

"I think I'd been abed about 'arf-an-hour when I was awoke by the most infernal row I ever heard. The foghorn was going incessantly,

an' there was a lot o' shouting and running about on deck. It struck us all as 'ow the sarpint was gitting tired o' bread, and was misbehaving himself, consequently we just shoved our 'eds out o' the forescuttle and listened. All the hullaballoo seemed to be on the bridge, an' as we didn't see the sarpint there we plucked up courage and went on deck.

"Then we saw what had happened. Joe had 'ad another fit while at the wheel, and, *not knowing what he was doing*, had clutched the line of the foghorn, and was holding on to it like grim death, and kicking right and left. The skipper was in his bedclothes, raving worse than Joe; and just as we got there Joe came round a bit, and, letting go o' the line, asked in a faint voice what the foghorn was blowing for. I thought the skipper 'ud have killed him; but the second mate held him back, an', of course, when things quieted down a bit, an' we went to the side, we found the sea-sarpint had vanished.

"We stayed there all that night, but it warn't no use. When day broke there wasn't the slightest trace of it, an' I think the men was as sorry to lose it as the officers. All 'cept Joe, that is, which shows how people should never be rude, even to the humblest; for I'm sartin that if the skipper hadn't hurt his feelings the way he did we should now know as much about the sea-sarpint as we do about our own brothers."

THE DONG WITH THE LUMINOUS NOSE

Edward Lear

WHEN AWFUL DARKNESS AND SILENCE REIGN
Over the great Gromboolian plain,
    Through the long, long wintry nights;
When the angry breakers roar
As they beat on the rocky shore;
    When Storm-clouds brood on the towering heights
Of the Hills of the Chankly Bore,—

Then, through the vast and gloomy dark
There moves what seems a fiery spark,—
    A lonely spark with silvery rays
        Piercing the coal-black night,—
        A Meteor strange and bright:
    Hither and thither the vision strays,
        A single lurid light.
Slowly it wanders, pauses, creeps,—
Anon it sparkles, flashes, and leaps;
And ever as onward it gleaming goes
A light on the Bong-tree stems it throws.

And those who watch at that midnight hour
From Hall or Terrace or lofty Tower,
Cry, as the wild light passes along,—
        "The Dong! the Dong!
    The wandering Dong through the forest goes!
        The Dong! the Dong!
    The Dong with a luminous Nose!"

Long years ago
The Dong was happy and gay,
Till he fell in love with a Jumbly Girl
Who came to those shores one day.
For the Jumblies came in a sieve, they did,—
Landing at eve near the Zemmery Fidd
Where the Oblong Oysters grow,
And the rocks are smooth and grey.
And all the woods and the valleys rang
With the Chorus they daily and nightly sang,—
"Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to a sea in a sieve."

Happily, happily passed those days!
While the cheerful Jumblies staid;
They danced in circlets all night long,
To the plaintive pipe of the lively Dong,
In moonlight, shine, or shade.
For day and night he was always there
By the side of the Jumbly Girl so fair,
With her sky-blue hands and her sea-green hair;
Till the morning came of that hateful day
When the Jumblies sailed in their sieve away,
And the Dong was left on the cruel shore
Gazing, gazing for evermore,—
Ever keeping his weary eyes on
That pea-green sail on the far horizon,—
Singing the Jumbly Chorus still
As he sate all day on the grassy hill,—
"Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a sieve."

But when the sun was low in the West,
The Dong arose and said,—
"What little sense I once possessed
Has quite gone out of my head!"
And since that day he wanders still
By lake and forest, marsh and hill,
Singing, "O somewhere, in valley or plain,
Might I find my Jumbly Girl again!
For ever I'll seek by lake and shore
Till I find my Jumbly Girl once more!"
Playing a pipe with silvery squeaks,
Since then his Jumbly Girl he seeks;
And because by night he could not see,
He gathered the bark of the Twangum Tree
On the flowery plain that grows.
And he wove him a wondrous Nose,—
A Nose as strange as a Nose could be!
Of vast proportions and painted red,
And tied with cords to the back of his head.
In a hollow rounded space it ended
With a luminous lamp within suspended,
All fenced about
With a bandage stout
To prevent the wind from blowing it out;
And with holes all round to send the light
In gleaming rays on the dismal night.

And now each night, and all night long,
Over those plains still roams the Dong;
And above the wail of the Chimp and Snipe
You may hear the squeak of his plaintive pipe,
While ever he seeks, but seeks in vain,
To meet with his Jumbly Girl again;
Lonely and wild, all night he goes,—
The Dong with a luminous Nose!
And all who watch at the midnight hour,

From Hall or Terrace or lofty Tower,
Cry, as they trace the Meteor bright,
Moving along through the dreary night,—
"This is the hour when forth he goes,
The Dong with a luminous Nose!
Yonder, over the plain he goes,—
He goes!
He goes,—
The Dong with a luminous Nose!"

A HAUNTED HOUSE

Pliny

IN ATHENS THERE WAS A CERTAIN HOUSE, LARGE IN SIZE, BUT EVIL in reputation. In the silence of the night the clanking of chains was heard there, far off at first, then closer and closer. Soon a phantom would appear, an old man, skinny and squalid, with shackles on his legs, and his hands bound in chains. The inhabitants of the house would lie awake through the terrible and gloomy nights; disease followed their wakefulness, and death the disease. So the house was abandoned, condemned, entirely given over to the apparition. The Philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens, noticed the bill of sale, learned the price, wondered why the house was such a bargain, asked questions, learned the whole story, and nevertheless, in fact all the more, took over the property. As evening came on, he ordered his bed to be placed in the hall of the house, sent for his tablets, a stylus, and a light, and devoted his hands and eyes and mind to writing, lest his mind, being idle, would invent images like those of which he had been told. At first, there was complete silence, not a sound anywhere; then the clank and rattle of chains being shaken. The man did not lift his eyes, nor put down his stylus. The noise grew louder, came closer and closer, was heard, first, just beyond, and then across the threshold. He looked up, saw and recognized the phantom as it had been described. It stood there, beckoning, as if in summons; Athenodorus made a gesture, as if to say "Wait a little," and resumed his writing. The phantom raised its hands and shook the chains, fearfully, over the philosopher's head. He saw it, beckoning as before, rose, took up the light, and followed. It led the way slowly, as if weighed down by the weight of the chains, out to the courtyard of the house, and suddenly vanished; Athenodorus raked together a

little pile of grass and leaves to mark the spot. Next day he went to the magistrates, asking for a warrant to have the place dug up. A skeleton was found, with the bones still bound in chains; the remains were taken up and given public burial. Thereafter the spirit was laid to rest, and the house no longer knew its visitations.

THE TRANSFERRED GHOST

Frank R. Stockton

THE COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF MR. JOHN HINCKMAN WAS A DELIGHTFUL place to me, for many reasons. It was the abode of a genial, though somewhat impulsive, hospitality. It had broad, smooth-shaven lawns and towering oaks and elms; there were bosky shades at several points, and not far from the house there was a little rill spanned by a rustic bridge with the bark on; there were fruits and flowers, pleasant people, chess, billiards, rides, walks, and fishing. These were great attractions, but none of them, nor all of them together, would have been sufficient to hold me to the place very long. I had been invited for the trout season, but should probably have finished my visit early in the summer had it not been that upon fair days, when the grass was dry, and the sun was not too hot, and there was but little wind, there strolled beneath the lofty elms, or passed lightly through the bosky shades, the form of my Madeline.

This lady was not, in very truth, my Madeline. She had never given herself to me, nor had I, in any way, acquired possession of her. But, as I considered her possession the only sufficient reason for the continuance of my existence, I called her, in my reveries, mine. It may have been that I would not have been obliged to confine the use of this possessive pronoun to my reveries had I confessed the state of my feelings to the lady.

But this was an unusually difficult thing to do. Not only did I dread, as almost all lovers dread, taking the step which would in an instant put an end to that delightful season which may be termed the ante-interrogatory period of love, and which might at the same time terminate all intercourse or connection with the object of my passion, but I was also dreadfully afraid of John Hinckman. This

gentleman was a good friend of mine, but it would have required a bolder man than I was at that time to ask him for the gift of his niece, who was the head of his household, and, according to his own frequent statement, the main prop of his declining years. Had Madeline acquiesced in my general views on the subject, I might have felt encouraged to open the matter to Mr. Hinckman; but, as I said before, I had never asked her whether or not she would be mine. I thought of these things at all hours of the day and night, particularly the latter.

I was lying awake one night, in the great bed in my spacious chamber, when, by the dim light of the new moon, which partially filled the room, I saw John Hinckman standing by a large chair near the door. I was very much surprised at this, for two reasons: in the first place, my host had never before come into my room, and, in the second place, he had gone from home that morning, and had not expected to return for several days. Therefore it was that I had been able that evening to sit much later than usual with Madeline on the moonlit porch. The figure was certainly that of John Hinckman in his ordinary dress, but there was a vagueness and indistinctness about it which presently assured me that it was a ghost. Had the good old man been murdered, and had his spirit come to tell me of the deed, and to confide to me the protection of his dear—? My heart fluttered, but I felt that I must speak. "Sir," said I.

"Do you know," interrupted the figure, with a countenance that indicated anxiety, "whether or not Mr. Hinckman will return to-night?"

I thought it well to maintain a calm exterior, and I answered:

"We do not expect him."

"I am glad of that," said he, sinking into the chair by which he stood. "During the two years and a half that I have inhabited this house, that man has never before been away for a single night. You can't imagine the relief it gives me."

As he spoke he stretched out his legs and leaned back in the chair. His form became less vague, and the colors of his garments more distinct and evident, while an expression of gratified relief succeeded to the anxiety of his countenance.

"Two years and a half!" I exclaimed. "I don't understand you."

"It is fully that length of time," said the ghost, "since I first came here. Mine is not an ordinary case. But before I say anything more about it, let me ask you again if you are sure Mr. Hinckman will not return to-night."

"I am as sure of it as I can be of anything," I answered. "He left to-day for Bristol, two hundred miles away."

"Then I will go on," said the ghost, "for I am glad to have the opportunity of talking to some one who will listen to me. But if John Hinckman should come in and catch me here, I should be frightened out of my wits."

"This is all very strange," I said, greatly puzzled by what I had heard. "Are you the ghost of Mr. Hinckman?"

This was a bold question, but my mind was so full of other emotions that there seemed to be no room for that of fear.

"Yes, I am his ghost," my companion replied, "and yet I have no right to be. And this is what makes me so uneasy and so much afraid of him. It is a strange story, and, I truly believe, without precedent. Two years and a half ago, John Hinckman was dangerously ill in this very room. At one time he was so far gone that he was really believed to be dead. It was in consequence of too precipitate a report in regard to this matter that I was, at that time, appointed to be his ghost. Imagine my surprise and horror, sir, when, after I had accepted the position and assumed its responsibilities, that old man revived, became convalescent, and eventually regained his usual health. My situation was now one of extreme delicacy and embarrassment. I had no power to return to my original unembodiment, and I had no right to be the ghost of a man who was not dead. I was advised by my friends to quietly maintain my position, and was assured, that, as John Hinckman was an elderly man, it could not be long before I could rightfully assume the position for which I had been selected. But I tell you, sir," he continued with animation, "the old fellow seems as vigorous as ever, and I have no idea how much longer this annoying state of things will continue. I spend my time trying to get out of that old man's way. I must not leave this house, and he seems to follow me everywhere. I tell you, sir, he haunts me."

"That is truly a queer state of things," I remarked. "But why are you afraid of him? He couldn't hurt you."

"Of course he couldn't," said the ghost. "But his very presence is a shock and terror to me. Imagine, sir, how you would feel if my case were yours."

I could not imagine such a thing at all. I simply shuddered.

"And if one must be a wrongful ghost at all," the apparition continued, "it would be much pleasanter to be the ghost of some man other than John Hinckman. There is in him an irascibility of temper, accompanied by a facility of invective, which is seldom met with; and what would happen if he were to see me, and find out, as I am sure he would, how long and why I had inhabited his house, I can scarcely conceive. I have seen him in his bursts of passion, and although he did not hurt the people he stormed at any more than he would hurt me, they seemed to shrink before him."

All this I knew to be very true. Had it not been for this peculiarity of Mr. Hinckman, I might have been more willing to talk to him about his niece.

"I feel sorry for you," I said, for I really began to have a sympathetic feeling toward this unfortunate apparition. "Your case is indeed a hard one. It reminds me of those persons who have had doubles; and I suppose a man would often be very angry indeed when he found that there was another being who was personating himself."

"Oh, the cases are not similar at all," said the ghost. "A double, or doppelgänger, lives on the earth with a man, and being exactly like him, he makes all sorts of trouble, of course. It is very different with me. I am not here to live with Mr. Hinckman. I am here to take his place. Now, it would make John Hinckman very angry if he knew that. Don't you know it would?"

I assented promptly.

"Now that he is away, I can be easy for a little while," continued the ghost, "and I am so glad to have an opportunity of talking to you. I have frequently come into your room and watched you while you slept, but did not dare to speak to you for fear that if you talked with me Mr. Hinckman would hear you, and come into the room to know why you were talking to yourself."

"But would he not hear you?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" said the other. "There are times when any one may see me, but no one hears me except the person to whom I address myself."

"But why did you wish to speak to me?" I asked.

"Because," replied the ghost, "I like occasionally to talk to people, and especially to some one like yourself, whose mind is so troubled and perturbed that you are not likely to be frightened by a visit from one of us. But I particularly want to ask you to do me a favor. There is every probability, so far as I can see, that John Hinckman will live a long time, and my situation is becoming insupportable. My great object at present is to get myself transferred, and I think that you may, perhaps, be of use to me."

"Transferred!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean by that?"

"What I mean," said the other, "is this: now that I have started on my career, I have got to be the ghost of somebody, and I want to be the ghost of a man who is really dead."

"I should think that would be easy enough," I said. "Opportunities must continually occur."

"Not at all! not at all!" said my companion, quickly. "You have no idea what a rush and pressure there is for situations of this kind. Whenever a vacancy occurs, if I may express myself in that way, there are crowds of applications for the ghostship."

"I had no idea that such a state of things existed," I said, becoming quite interested in the matter. "There ought to be some regular system, or order of precedence, by which you could all take your turns, like customers in a barber's shop."

"Oh, dear, that would never do at all!" said the other. "Some of us would have to wait forever. There is always a great rush whenever a good ghostship offers itself—while, as you know, there are some positions that no one would care for. It was in consequence of my being in too great a hurry on an occasion of the kind that I got myself into my present disagreeable predicament, and I have thought that it might be possible that you would help me out of it. You might know of a case where an opportunity for a ghostship was not generally expected, but which might present itself at any moment. If you would give me a short notice, I know I could arrange for a transfer."

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed. "Do you want me to commit suicide or to undertake a murder for your benefit?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" said the other, with a vapory smile. "I mean nothing of that kind. To be sure, there are lovers who are watched with considerable interest, such persons having been known, in moments of depression, to offer very desirable ghostships, but I did not think of anything of that kind in connection with you. You were the only person I cared to speak to, and I hoped that you might give me some information that would be of use; and, in return, I shall be very glad to help you in your love affair."

"You seem to know that I have such an affair," I said.

"Oh, yes!" replied the other, with a little yawn. "I could not be here so much as I have been without knowing all about that."

There was something horrible in the idea of Madeline and myself having been watched by a ghost, even, perhaps, when we wandered together in the most delightful and bosky places. But then, this was quite an exceptional ghost, and I could not have the objections to him which would ordinarily arise in regard to beings of his class.

"I must go now," said the ghost, rising, "but I will see you somewhere to-morrow night; and remember—you help me, and I'll help you."

I had doubts the next morning as to the propriety of telling Madeline anything about this interview, and soon convinced myself that I must keep silent on the subject. If she knew there was a ghost about the house, she would probably leave the place instantly. I did not mention the matter, and so regulated my demeanor that I am quite sure Madeline never suspected what had taken place.

For some time I had wished that Mr. Hinckman would absent himself, for a day at least, from the premises. In such case I thought I might more easily nerve myself up to the point of speaking to Madeline on the subject of our future collateral existence. But now that the opportunity for such speech had really occurred, I did not feel ready to avail myself of it. What would become of me if she refused me?

I had an idea, however, that the lady thought that if I were going to speak at all, this was the time. She must have known that certain

sentiments were afloat within me, and she was not unreasonable in her wish to see the matter settled one way or the other. But I did not feel like taking a bold step in the dark. If she wished me to ask her to give herself to me, she ought to offer me some reason to suppose that she would make the gift. If I saw no probability of such generosity, I would prefer that things should remain as they were.

That evening I was sitting with Madeline on the moonlit porch. It was nearly ten o'clock, and ever since supper-time I had been working myself up to the point of making an avowal of my sentiments. I had not positively determined to do this, but wished gradually to reach the proper point when, if the prospect looked bright, I might speak. My companion appeared to understand the situation—at least, I imagined that the nearer I came to a proposal the more she seemed to expect it. It was certainly a very critical and important epoch in my life. If I spoke, I should make myself happy or miserable forever; and if I did not speak, I had every reason to believe that the lady would not give me another chance to do so.

Sitting thus with Madeline, talking a little, and thinking very hard over these momentous matters, I looked up and saw the ghost, not a dozen feet away from us. He was sitting on the railing of the porch, one leg thrown up before him, the other dangling down as he leaned against a post. He was behind Madeline, but almost in front of me, as I sat facing the lady. It was fortunate that Madeline was looking out over the landscape, for I must have appeared very much startled. The ghost had told me that he would see me some time this night, but I did not think he would make his appearance when I was in the company of Madeline. If she should see the spirit of her uncle, I could not answer for the consequences. I made no exclamation, but the ghost evidently saw that I was troubled.

"Don't be afraid," he said; "I shall not let her see me, and she cannot hear me speak unless I address myself to her, which I do not intend to do."

I suppose I looked grateful.

"So you need not trouble yourself about that," the ghost continued. "But it seems to me that you are not getting along very well

with your affair. If I were you, I should speak out without waiting any longer. You will never have a better chance. You are not likely to be interrupted, and, so far as I can judge, the lady seems disposed to listen to you favorably—that is, if she ever intends to do so. There is no knowing when John Hinckman will go away again; certainly not this summer. If I were in your place, I shall never dare to make love to Hinckman's niece if he were anywhere about the place. If he should catch any one offering himself to Miss Madeline, he would then be a terrible man to encounter."

I agreed perfectly to all this.

"I cannot bear to think of him!" I ejaculated aloud.

"Think of whom?" asked Madeline, turning quickly toward me.

Here was an awkward situation. The long speech of the ghost, to which Madeline paid no attention, but which I heard with perfect distinctness, had made me forget myself.

It was necessary to explain quickly. Of course, it would not do to admit that it was of her dear uncle that I was speaking, and so I mentioned hastily the first name I thought of.

"Mr. Vilars," I said.

This statement was entirely correct, for I never could bear to think of Mr. Vilars, who was a gentleman who had, at various times, paid much attention to Madeline.

"It is wrong for you to speak in that way of Mr. Vilars," she said. "He is a remarkably well educated and sensible young man, and has very pleasant manners. He expects to be elected to the legislature this fall, and I should not be surprised if he made his mark. He will do well in a legislative body, for whenever Mr. Vilars has anything to say he knows just how and when to say it."

This was spoken very quietly, and without any show of resentment, which was all very natural, for if Madeline thought at all favorably of me she could not feel displeased that I should have disagreeable emotions in regard to a possible rival. The concluding words contained a hint which I was not slow to understand. I felt very sure that if Mr. Vilars were in my present position he would speak quickly enough.

"I know it is wrong to have such ideas about a person," I said, "but I cannot help it."

The lady did not chide me, and after this she seemed even in a softer mood. As for me, I felt considerably annoyed, for I had not wished to admit that any thought of Mr. Vilars had ever occupied my mind.

"You should not speak aloud that way," said the ghost, "or you may get yourself into trouble. I want to see everything go well with you, because then you may be disposed to help me, especially if I should chance to be of any assistance to you, which I hope I shall be."

I longed to tell him that there was no way in which he could help me so much as by taking his instant departure. To make love to a young lady with a ghost sitting on the railing near by, and that ghost the apparition of a much-dreaded uncle, the very idea of whom in such a position and at such a time made me tremble, was a difficult, if not an impossible, thing to do. But I forbore to speak, although I may have looked my mind.

"I suppose," continued the ghost, "that you have not heard anything that might be of advantage to me. Of course, I am very anxious to hear, but if you have anything to tell me, I can wait until you are alone. I will come to you to-night in your room, or I will stay here until the lady goes away."

"You need not wait here," I said; "I have nothing at all to say to you."

Madeline sprang to her feet, her face flushed and her eyes ablaze.

"Wait here!" she cried. "What do you suppose I am waiting for? Nothing to say to me, indeed! I should think so! What should you have to say to me?"

"Madeline," I exclaimed, stepping toward her, "let me explain."

But she had gone.

Here was the end of the world for me! I turned fiercely to the ghost.

"Wretched existence!" I cried, "you have ruined everything. You have blackened my whole life! Had it not been for you—"

But here my voice faltered. I could say no more.

"You wrong me," said the ghost. "I have not injured you. I have tried only to encourage and assist you, and it is your own folly that

has done this mischief. But do not despair. Such mistakes as these can be explained. Keep up a brave heart. Good-by."

And he vanished from the railing like a bursting soap-bubble.

I went gloomily to bed, but I saw no apparitions that night except those of despair and misery which my wretched thoughts called up. The words I had uttered had sounded to Madeline like the basest insult. Of course, there was only one interpretation she could put upon them.

As to explaining my ejaculations, that was impossible. I thought the matter over and over again as I lay awake that night, and I determined that I would never tell Madeline the facts of the case. It would be better for me to suffer all my life than for her to know that the ghost of her uncle haunted the house. Mr. Hinckman was away, and if she knew of his ghost she could not be made to believe that he was not dead. She might not survive the shock! No, my heart might bleed, but I would never tell her.

The next day was fine, neither too cool nor too warm. The breezes were gentle, and nature smiled. But there were no walks or rides with Madeline. She seemed to be much engaged during the day, and I saw but little of her. When we met at meals she was polite, but very quiet and reserved. She had evidently determined on a course of conduct, and had resolved to assume that, although I had been very rude to her, she did not understand the import of my words. It would be quite proper, of course, for her not to know what I meant by my expressions of the night before.

I was downcast and wretched, and said but little, and the only bright streak across the black horizon of my woe was the fact that she did not appear to be happy, although she affected an air of unconcern. The moonlit porch was deserted that evening, but wandering about the house, I found Madeline in the library alone. She was reading, but I went in and sat down near her. I felt that, although I could not do so fully, I must in a measure explain my conduct of the night before. She listened quietly to a somewhat labored apology I made for the words I had used.

"I have not the slightest idea what you meant," she said, "but you were very rude."

I earnestly disclaimed any intention of rudeness, and assured her, with a warmth of speech that must have made some impression upon her, that rudeness to her would be an action impossible to me. I said a great deal upon the subject, and implored her to believe that if it were not for a certain obstacle I could speak to her so plainly that she would understand everything.

She was silent for a time, and then she said, rather more kindly, I thought, than she had spoken before:

"Is that obstacle in any way connected with my uncle?"

"Yes," I answered, after a little hesitation, "it is, in a measure, connected with him."

She made no answer to this, and sat looking at her book, but not reading. From the expression of her face, I thought she was somewhat softened toward me. She knew her uncle as well as I did, and she may have been thinking that if he were the obstacle that prevented my speaking (and there were many ways in which he might be that obstacle), my position would be such a hard one that it would excuse some wildness of speech and eccentricity of manner. I saw, too, that the warmth of my partial explanations had had some effect on her, and I began to believe that it might be a good thing for me to speak my mind without delay. No matter how she should receive my proposition, my relations with her could not be worse than they had been the previous night and day, and there was something in her face which encouraged me to hope that she might forget my foolish exclamations of the evening before if I began to tell her my tale of love.

I drew my chair a little nearer to her, and as I did so the ghost burst into the room from the doorway behind her. I say burst, although no door flew open and he made no noise. He was wildly excited, and waved his arms above his head. The moment I saw him, my heart fell within me. With the entrance of that impertinent apparition, every hope fled from me. I could not speak while he was in the room.

I must have turned pale, and I gazed steadfastly at the ghost, almost without seeing Madeline, who sat between us.

"Do you know," he cried, "that John Hinckman is coming up the hill? He will be here in fifteen minutes, and if you are doing anything in the way of lovemaking, you had better hurry it up. But this is not

what I came to tell you. I have glorious news! At last I am transferred! Not forty minutes ago a Russian nobleman was murdered by the Nihilists. Nobody ever thought of him in connection with an immediate ghostship. My friends instantly applied for the situation for me, and obtained my transfer. I am off before that horrid Hinckman comes up the hill. The moment I reach my new position, I shall put off this hated semblance. Good-by! You can't imagine how glad I am to be, at last, the real ghost of somebody."

"Oh!" I cried, rising to my feet and stretching out my arms in utter wretchedness, "I would to Heaven you were mine!"

"I *am* yours," said Madeline, raising to me her tearful eyes.

HOW A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN CHANGED INTO A FROG AND LEAPED UPON THE FACE OF THE MOON

C. E. S. Wood

In the year 1878 the Bannacks, Piutes and Umatillas went on the warpath. In the campaign I was much with the scouts and guides (they were under me) ; and riding side by side, beneath the pines, John McBean, interpreter and half-breed, told me this tale.

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WERE TWO SUNS, BROTHERS. THEY LIVED in a beautiful valley beyond the western mountains. One would fly through the heavens by day, the other by night: only there was no night, as the face and hair of one were as dazzling as the face and hair of the other. In the days not long after The People had come down from the north, they could change themselves into animals, and the animals could change themselves into people, and they could understand one another, for they were brothers. There was a young girl, a maid, exceeding beautiful, who loved the younger Sun-brother; and when the older one had finished his flight in the sky and veiled his face with the mountains, then the maid would bare her bosom, and, turning her face and hands to the sky, would beseech the one she loved to come to her. But he heeded not her love nor her cries. One day as she stood alone upon the prairie, imploring her beloved, the Coyote came and asked what troubled her. O Coyote! said she, you are wise and cunning beyond all The People: tell me how I shall win the sun; for I love him and long to sleep in his teepee. Foolish maid, said the Coyote, you do not know what you say; the love of the sun will kill

you: forget it. But she gave the Coyote no peace till he promised to get her the sun as a husband. Then he changed himself into a four-footed coyote and they set out upon the journey. For many days they journeyed to the southward and westward, till the maid was held captive by a chief. But the Coyote told her to seem glad; then he went to the river and caught some fish. When he visits you in your teepee, fill your bosom with these fish. When the chief visited her, he saw her breast was shining like silver; and putting out his hand, he found her colder than the dead. Away with you—witch! Then they fled, still to the southward and westward, till they came to a great river, too wide for the maid to swim; but the Coyote called on the otters and they carried her over. To some the Coyote said she was his sister; to some that she was the daughter of the sun: so they were afraid to molest her. At last, after a weary time, through many seasons, by the lies and cunning of the Coyote they came through all adventures to the foot of the mountains beyond which lay the Beautiful Valley of the Sun. But the pass was guarded by a sorcerer bear who sat in the way, so none might enter. Then the maid, by order of the Coyote, changed herself into a fox and crept towards the gateway. The Coyote drew to one side and in a little bare spot commenced to circle after his own tail: around and around he went, and the bear looked wonderingly; faster and faster turned the Coyote, till no one could tell what it was that was whirling in the dust. The bear could not resist any longer, but ran over to see what this thing was. Then the fox and the Coyote flew through the pass toward the Valley. Now, said the Coyote, you must go to yonder spring and wash yourself and make yourself beautiful; for if the sun does not like you, he will slay you. I can go no further. Go to him; but do not look at his uncovered face, or you will die. The maid did as she was told, and walked alone toward the great lodge of the sun, her eyes cast down, a necklace of shell upon her breast, gold shining on her wrists and ankles and her hair about her like a veil. The birds followed her and sang, the fawns came to look at her; there were rivers and forests and herds of deer and buffalo; there was no winter in this place. So she came to the lodge and the sun looked upon her and loved her and set her apart from his other wives in a bower of her own. He visited

her there; and when he left for his journey across the sky he hurried back to put his head in her lap. They were happy for they loved each other, but always his face was covered when he came to her. More and more she begged him to show her his naked face: but he refused, saying, you cannot look upon my face and live. But ever she insisted, even weeping. At last he said, I will show you my face and hair, bare and uncovered, but you must change yourself into a frog and get beneath the water of the crystal spring and look at me through the water; otherwise you will surely be burned to a cinder. Therefore she changed herself into a frog and got beneath the water; and the sun came and stood before her and bared his face, and his hair. When she saw the glory of his face she loved him the more, and, forgetful that she was a frog, she sprang from the water to embrace him. She leaped upon his face and instantly she was withered to a ghost; and there she remains to this day. But the sun's glory was quenched so that now he is the cold pale moon. When he turns his face full upon the earth, any one may see like a shadow upon it his wife, in the shape of a frog. The Coyote was so starved and frightened on his long journey home that he became the lean little animal that he is now. He prefers the moon to the sun, the night to the day; and when the moon is full he will talk to it all night long.

AN IMPERFECT CONFLAGRATION

Ambrose Bierce

EARLY ONE JUNE MORNING IN 1872 I MURDERED MY FATHER—AN act which made a deep impression on me at the time. This was before my marriage, while I was living with my parents in Wisconsin. My father and I were in the library of our home, dividing the proceeds of a burglary which we had committed that night. These consisted of household goods mostly, and the task of equitable division was difficult. We got on very well with the napkins, towels and such things, and the silverware was parted pretty nearly equally, but you can see for yourself that when you try to divide a single music-box by two without a remainder you will have trouble. It was that music-box which brought disaster and disgrace upon our family. If we had left it my poor father might now be alive.

It was a most exquisite and beautiful piece of workmanship—inlaid with costly woods and carven very curiously. It would not only play a great variety of tunes, but would whistle like a quail, bark like a dog, crow every morning at daylight whether it was wound up or not, and break the Ten Commandments. It was this last-mentioned accomplishment that won my father's heart and caused him to commit the only dishonourable act of his life, though possibly he would have committed more if he had been spared: he tried to conceal that music-box from me, and declared upon his honour that he had not taken it, though I knew very well that, so far as he was concerned, the burglary had been undertaken chiefly for the purpose of obtaining it.

My father had the music-box hidden under his cloak; we had worn cloaks by way of disguise. He had solemnly assured me that he did not take it. I knew that he did, and knew something of which he was evidently ignorant; namely, that the box would crow at daylight and

betray him if I could prolong the division of profits till that time. All occurred as I wished: as the gaslight began to pale in the library and the shape of the windows was seen dimly behind the curtains, a long cock-a-doodle-doo came from beneath the old gentleman's cloak, followed by a few bars of an aria from *Tannhäuser,* ending with a loud click. A small hand-axe, which we had used to break into the unlucky house, lay between us on the table; I picked it up. The old man seeing that further concealment was useless took the box from under his cloak and set it on the table. 'Cut it in two if you prefer that plan,' said he; 'I tried to save it from destruction.'

He was a passionate lover of music and could himself play the concertina with expression and feeling.

I said: 'I do not question the purity of your motive: it would be presumptuous in me to sit in judgment on my father. But business is business, and with this axe I am going to effect a dissolution of our partnership unless you will consent in all future burglaries to wear a bell-punch.'

'No,' he said, after some reflection, 'no, I could not do that; it would look like a confession of dishonesty. People would say that you distrusted me.'

I could not help admiring his spirit and sensitiveness; for a moment I was proud of him and disposed to overlook his fault, but a glance at the richly jewelled music-box decided me, and, as I said, I removed the old man from this vale of tears. Having done so, I was a trifle uneasy. Not only was he my father—the author of my being—but the body would be certainly discovered. It was now broad daylight and my mother was likely to enter the library at any moment. Under the circumstances, I thought it expedient to remove her also, which I did. Then I paid off all the servants and discharged them.

That afternoon I went to the chief of police, told him what I had done and asked his advice. It would be very painful to me if the facts became publicly known. My conduct would be generally condemned; the newspapers would bring it up against me if ever I should run for office. The chief saw the force of these considerations; he was himself an assassin of wide experience. After consulting with the presiding

Judge of the Court of Variable Jurisdiction he advised me to conceal the bodies in one of the bookcases, get a heavy insurance on the house and burn it down. This I proceeded to do.

In the library was a bookcase which my father had recently purchased of some cranky inventor and had not filled. It was in shape and size something like the old-fashioned 'wardrobes' which one sees in bedrooms without closets, but opened all the way down, like a woman's night-dress. It had glass doors. I had recently laid out my parents and they were now rigid enough to stand erect; so I stood them in this bookcase, from which I had removed the shelves. I locked them in and tacked some curtains over the glass doors. The inspector from the insurance office passed a half-dozen times before the case without suspicion.

That night, after getting my policy, I set fire to the house and started through the woods to town, two miles away, where I managed to be found about the time the excitement was at its height. With cries of apprehension for the fate of my parents, I joined the rush and arrived at the fire some two hours after I had kindled it. The whole town was there as I dashed up. The house was entirely consumed, but in one end of the level bed of glowing embers, bolt upright and uninjured, was that bookcase! The curtains had burned away, exposing the glass doors, through which the fierce, red light illuminated the interior. There stood my dear father 'in his habit as he lived,' and at his side the partner of his joys and sorrows. Not a hair of them was singed, their clothing was intact. On their heads and throats the injuries which in the accomplishment of my designs I had been compelled to inflict were conspicuous. As in the presence of a miracle, the people were silent; awe and terror had stilled every tongue. I was myself greatly affected.

Some three years later, when the events herein related had nearly faded from my memory, I went to New York to assist in passing some counterfeit United States bonds. Carelessly looking into a furniture store one day, I saw the exact counterpart of that bookcase. 'I bought it for a trifle from a reformed inventor,' the dealer explained. 'He said it was fireproof, the pores of the wood being filled with alum

under hydraulic pressure and the glass made of asbestos. I don't suppose it is really fireproof—you can have it at the price of an ordinary bookcase.'

'No,' I said, 'if you cannot warrant it fireproof I won't take it'—and I bade him good morning.

I would not have had it at any price: it revived memories that were exceedingly disagreeable.

THE PHANTOM FENCE RIDER OF SAN MIGUEL

Henry Yelvington

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER BEEN IN THE SAN MIGUEL COUNTRY, DOWN in McMullen County, Texas, especially up the San Miguel from where the Tilden road crosses the stream on to the old schoolhouse and graveyard which are on a hill out in a pasture, can easily imagine the narrative Old John Piedra tells of the phantom fence rider. This strip of country was some of the wildest of the old frontier during open range days and is still cattle country. A ranch house every four or five miles, except right near where the road crosses the stream, is all the sign of habitation you find there today. The valley is fertile, but narrow, and most of the inhabitants being ranchmen, very little farming is done. The San Miguel crossing is thirty-five miles from a railroad and there is no paving of any kind in McMullen County. In fact, there are only a few hundred votes in the entire county. The nature of the country is mostly rough and brushy hills with now and then a fertile valley. Southward on to Tilden, the village county seat, some twenty miles away, it is the same kind of country and then going on South from Tilden one jumps into the wildest of the wild southwest, for there is nothing except hills and brush, coyotes and cattle, a panther now and then, some deer, houses about ten miles apart and graves marked by piles of stone or crosses. There are many graves too, not marked at all, and many more persons have been buried there whose graves have long been lost, for they were those without the law, who lived by their guns and when caught marauding or stealing cattle, were shot, and buried where they fell, unless they happened to be quicker than the rangers or posses of ranchmen who trailed them.

Coming on back to the San Miguel and the graveyard there where pioneers and members of their families are buried decently, let us consider its location. You leave the Tilden road about a mile before you reach the crossing, going south, and turn to the right at Tom Franklin's ranch house. Then you go a quarter mile or so, and go over a cattle guard, after which you pass the Henry ranch home, leaving it to the right. Then on for some distance through brush, you come suddenly to about two acres of fenced grounds. In the south side of the enclosure stands the schoolhouse where some five or six children of ranchmen get the beginning of their learning for a few months each year. In the northeast corner of the enclosure on the side of the hill, and fenced to itself, is the graveyard. Markers on the graves show that the first persons were buried in the plot some sixty years ago. People who have camped in the schoolhouse at nights, for it is the only shelter a person has in that locality unless they go to some ranch house, claim that many kinds of weird sounds come from the vicinity of the graveyard and that there is a constant knocking, and also murmuring as of distant voices. This present schoolhouse, which is a one-room affair, has not been there for more than twenty years, for the old building was burned. It stood nearer the graveyard. In fact, the back door was within fifty feet of the graveyard fence.

Old John Piedra is much older than the oldest grave in the graveyard. He went into that country in the early days when the war of open range and fencing was on in earnest. He was a rough and tumble cowboy who knew how to get the wildest cattle out of the thickets and was much in demand because of his ability in that line. Old John speaks English brokenly, but I am going to try and tell of the phantom fence rider as nearly in his words as I possibly can.

"In dem days I talk to you about, not many fences. Just few" said John. "I work then most time South from Oakville, but I have to go up on San Miguel to get some horses a feller buy from ranchman there and send me for. It take all day to ride from Oakville to Tilden road crossing. When I get to crossing it is get dark and I start rid on to ranch house which is about seven miles, I guess, up San Miguel. It been cloudy all day and thunder some. Before I get mile away from crossing it start rain. I don't have my slicker, only just my duck jacket

and chaps. I think shure I get wet. Before it start rain hard I come to graveyard and see schoolhouse. I say to myself, maybeso I sleep here tonight and go on to ranch tomorrow, I don't want get wet. I find schoolhouse door close, but easy to open. I find good grass right by, to stake my horse. I done water him at river crossing. I make camp in schoolhouse. Pretty soon it begin rain hard.

"All night he rain, sometimes hard, sometimes not too hard. All night, you bet, I stay wake. I can sleep not good. All kinds noises. When I start sleep I hear somebody walk on floor. I look, nobody there. I get near sleep again, somebody knock. I say 'who you are, what you want, come in.' Nobody answer, nobody come. Lightning flashes, I look out I don't see nothing but graves, but maybe so look like they move. I say to myself 'graves he can't move, dead mans, he don't hurt nobody.' I try go sleep. My horse he snort like he see something. I look out window again, see just graves. By golly I don't sleep. For sure I am glad when daylight come.

"In morning it still rain. I don't be in big hurry, so I say I wait till he quit raining. I sit in schoolhouse door and watch rain and see my horse he eat grass. By golly, plenty good grass there. On south of schoolhouse run string of barbed wire fence. Not many fences in that time, but these fellow I go to for horses, we have ranch fenced. This fence he come close to schoolhouse. Maybe so fifty feet, maybe so sixty. Maybe so about ten o'clock I look down fence I see man coming horseback. He ride big bay horse. He have one wide black hat, black coat and chaps. He don't have on slicker. He have Winchester in scabbard on saddle and moral hang on horn of saddle. I see hatchet handle stick out of moral. I know he fence rider. I think, maybe so this man one of dem fellows I go see for horses for that his pasture fence. When I get close I say 'Hello.' He don't stop and don't look and don't say nothing. I say loud 'Hello Compadre.' He just ride on. I say 'What hell the matter with you,' but he just ride on. I think maybe so this fellow he can't hear no time, poor fellow. He look all time at ground, just like he look for tracks.

"Maybe one hour, maybe more, I see this fellow he come back up fence line. I walk out to fence in rain, but it not rain too hard now, think I stop him. But when I look again this fellow he on my side of

the fence. I think 'damn, how you get this side.' Then I think fence down here he ride across. But this fellow he not come back to schoolhouse. He turn and ride to graveyard and go down under hill. Last I see is top of his hat. I don't think nothing only this fellow he darn fool ride in rain, poor fellow he don't can hear.

"In maybe so two hours," continued John, "he stop raining. I saddle up horse and ride on to ranch house. When I get to house I find them mens all there. Old man and his five boys. They say 'rain too much, we don't work today.' I say 'that fence rider, he work in rain, what for?' The old mans he say 'what hell fence rider you talk about?'

" 'Don't you got fence rider these morning ride big bay horse, wear black hat, ride east by your fence and come back, come through gap, then ride down under hill by graveyard and go somewhere else?' "

"When I say this these old man and all his boys they get excite. 'When you see that? How long he gone before come back?' I think maybe so I got no business talk, I get trouble for somebody. But I done tell so I tell all I know about me not can sleep in schoolhouse and wait there this morning and see this fellow. This old mans he say 'Get your guns, boys. We ride queeck.' He say to me 'you wait here' and all them fellows they get guns and saddle horses and ride fast back down fence line. He leave me at house, nobody else there. I think 'what in hell he matter with this country. Everybody go crazy. One man's can't hear, other man's no tell you nothing, just ran off.'

"I go in house and make cafe, and eat it somethings I find there. I wait there long time. When sun go down again, here come those fellow and have three Mexicans with hands tied behind, all riding on horsees. I think 'what hell is thees?' "

John rolled a cigarette and then continued his narrative. "Them fellows they bring back all cow thieves. Old mans he tell me they take all to Oakville next day when go with horses. But me, I can't tell how he know cow thieves because this fellow ride fence. He not with these three fellows, he bring in. I ask old mans, 'is this fellow I see cow thief too an he get away?'

" 'Hell no' say old mans 'that fellow you see, he been dead ten years. He ghost.' I say 'damn, what hell all this?'

"Old mans he tell me fellow's name, I forget what it is. He say this fellow fence rider on ranch long time, ever since first build fence. He say ten years ago this fellow he ride fence, run across cow thieves cut fence and steal cattle and cow thieves he kill him. This man he buried down under hill in this graveyard. This fence rider, damn good fence rider, say old man and I say 'you betcher.' Old man say 'Every time cow thieves cut fence this fence rider he ride down to where cut, then come back and go in grave. You tell us how long he gone, and what direction he go, and that how we know about where cow thieves cut fence. We go there find place, trail easy in mud and catch these fellows with one hundred five steers down near Frio.'

"You betcher," concluded Old John, "these San Miguel country damn funny country. Me I don't like him."

OLD CHRISTMAS

Roy Helton

"WHERE YOU COMING FROM, LOMEY CARTER,
So early over the snow?
What's them pretties you got in your hand,
And where you aiming to go?

Step in, Honey. Old Christmas morning
We hain't got nothing much;
Maybe a bite of sweetness and corn bread,
A little ham meat and such.

But come in, Lomey. Sally Ann Barton's
Hungering after your face.
Wait till I light my candle up.
Set down. There's your old place.

Where you been, so early this morning?"
"Graveyard, Sally Ann:
Up by the trace in the Salt Lick meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man."

"Taulbe hain't to home this morning.
Wisht I could scratch me a light:
Dampness gits in the heads of the matches;
I'll blow up the embers bright."

"Needn't trouble. I won't be stopping:
Going a long ways still."

"You didn't see nothing, Lomey Carter,
Up on the graveyard hill?"

"What should I see there, Sally Ann Barton?"
"Spirits walk loose last night."
"There was an elder bush a blooming
While the moon still give some light."

"Yes, elder bushes they bloom, Old Christmas,
And critters kneel down in their straw.
Anything else? Up in the graveyard?"
"One thing more I saw:

I saw my man with his head all bleeding
Where Taulbe's shot went through."
"What did he say?" "He stooped and kissed me."
"What did he say to you?"

"Said Lord Jesus forgive your Taulbe;
But he told me another word;
Said it soft when he stooped and kissed me;
That was the last I heard."

"Taulbe hain't come home this morning."
"I know that, Sally Ann,
For I kilt him, coming down through the meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man.

I met him up on the meadow trace
When the moon was fainting fast;
I had my dead man's rifle gun,
And kilt him as he come past."

"I heard two shots." "'Twas his was second:
He got me 'fore he died.
You'll find us at daybreak, Sally Ann Barton:
I'm laying there dead at his side."

THE REAL RIGHT THING

Henry James

I

WHEN, AFTER THE DEATH OF ASHTON DOYNE—BUT THREE MONTHS after—George Withermore was approached, as the phrase is, on the subject of a 'volume,' the communication came straight from his publishers, who had been, and indeed much more, Doyne's own; but he was not surprised to learn, on the occurrence of the interview they next suggested, that a certain pressure as to the early issue of a Life had been brought to bear upon them by their late client's widow. Doyne's relations with his wife had been, to Withermore's knowledge, a very special chapter—which would present itself, by the way, as a delicate one for the biographer; but a sense of what she had lost, and even of what she had lacked, had betrayed itself, on the poor woman's part, from the first days of her bereavement, sufficiently to prepare an observer at all initiated for some attitude of reparation, some espousal even exaggerated of the interests of a distinguished name. George Withermore was, as he felt, initiated; yet what he had not expected was to hear that she had mentioned him as the person in whose hands she would most promptly place the materials for a book.

These materials—diaries, letters, memoranda, notes, documents of many sorts—were her property, and wholly in her control, no conditions at all attaching to any portion of her heritage; so that she was free at present to do as she liked—free, in particular, to do nothing. What Doyne would have arranged had he had time to arrange could be but supposition and guess. Death had taken him too soon and too suddenly, and there was all the pity that the only wishes he was known to have expressed were wishes that put it positively out of account. He had broken short off—that was the way of it; and the end was

ragged and needed trimming. Withermore was conscious, abundantly, how close he had stood to him, but he was not less aware of his comparative obscurity. He was young, a journalist, a critic, a hand-to-mouth character, with little, as yet, as was vulgarly said, to show. His writings were few and small, his relations scant and vague. Doyne, on the other hand, had lived long enough—above all had had talent enough—to become great, and among his many friends gilded also with greatness were several to whom his wife would have struck those who knew her as much more likely to appeal.

The preference she had, at all events, uttered—and uttered in a roundabout, considerate way that left him a measure of freedom—made our young man feel that he must at least see her and that there would be in any case a good deal to talk about. He immediately wrote to her, she as promptly named an hour, and they had it out. But he came away with his particular idea immensely strengthened. She was a strange woman, and he had never thought her an agreeable one; only there was something that touched him now in her bustling, blundering impatience. She wanted the book to make up, and the individual whom, of her husband's set, she probably believed she might most manipulate was in every way to help it to make up. She had not taken Doyne seriously enough in life, but the biography should be a solid reply to every imputation on herself. She had scantly known how such books were constructed, but she had been looking and had learned something. It alarmed Withermore a little from the first to see that she would wish to go in for quantity. She talked of 'volumes'—but he had his notion of that.

'My thought went straight to *you*, as his own would have done,' she had said almost as soon as she rose before him there in her large array of mourning—with her big black eyes, her big black wig, her big black fan and gloves, her general gaunt, ugly, tragic, but striking and, as might have been thought from a certain point of view, 'elegant' presence. 'You're the one he liked most; oh, *much!*'—and it had been quite enough to turn Withermore's head. It little mattered that he could afterward wonder if she had known Doyne enough, when it came to that, to be sure. He would have said for himself indeed that her testimony on such a point would scarcely have counted. Still,

there was no smoke without fire; she knew at least what she meant, and he was not a person she could have an interest in flattering. They went up together, without delay, to the great man's vacant study, which was at the back of the house and looked over the large green garden—a beautiful and inspiring scene, to poor Withermore's view—common to the expensive row.

'You can perfectly work here, you know,' said Mrs. Doyne; 'you shall have the place quite to yourself—I'll give it all up to you; so that in the evenings, in particular, don't you see? for quiet and privacy, it will be perfection.'

Perfection indeed, the young man felt as he looked about—having explained that, as his actual occupation was an evening paper and his earlier hours, for a long time yet, regularly taken up, he would have to come always at night. The place was full of their lost friend; everything in it had belonged to him; everything they touched had been part of his life. It was for the moment too much for Withermore—too great an honour and even too great a care; memories still recent came back to him, and, while his heart beat faster and his eyes filled with tears, the pressure of his loyalty seemed almost more than he could carry. At the sight of his tears Mrs. Doyne's own rose to her lids, and the two, for a minute, only looked at each other. He half expected her to break out: 'Oh, help me to feel as I know you know I want to feel!' And after a little one of them said, with the other's deep assent—it didn't matter which: 'It's here that we're *with* him.' But it was definitely the young man who put it, before they left the room, that it was there he was with *them*.

The young man began to come as soon as he could arrange it, and then it was, on the spot, in the charmed stillness, between the lamp and the fire and with the curtains drawn, that a certain intenser consciousness crept over him. He turned in out of the black London November; he passed through the large, hushed house and up the red-carpeted staircase where he only found in his path the whisk of a soundless trained maid, or the reach, out of a doorway, of Mrs. Doyne's queenly weeds and approving tragic face; and then, by a mere touch of the well-made door that gave so sharp and pleasant a click, shut himself in for three or four warm hours with the spirit—

as he had always distinctly declared it—of his master. He was not a little frightened when, even the first night, it came over him that he had really been most affected, in the whole matter, by the prospect, the privilege, and the luxury, of this sensation. He had not, he could now reflect, definitely considered the question of the book—as to which there was here, even already, much to consider: he had simply let his affection and admiration—to say nothing of his gratified pride —meet, to the full, the temptation Mrs. Doyne had offered them.

How did he know, without more thought, he might begin to ask himself, that the book was, on the whole, to be desired? What warrant had he ever received from Ashton Doyne himself for so direct and, as it were, so familiar an approach? Great was the art of biography, but there were lives and lives, there were subjects and subjects. He confusedly recalled, so far as that went, old words dropped by Doyne over contemporary compilations, suggestions of how he himself discriminated as to other heroes and other panoramas. He even remembered how his friend, at moments, would have seemed to show himself as holding that the 'literary' career might—save in the case of a Johnson and a Scott, with a Boswell and a Lockhart to help—best content itself to be represented. The artist was what he *did*—he was nothing else. Yet how, on the other hand, was not *he*, George Withermore, poor devil, to have jumped at the chance of spending his winter in an intimacy so rich? It had been simply dazzling—that was the fact. It hadn't been the 'terms,' from the publishers—though these were, as they said at the office, all right; it had been Doyne himself, his company and contact and presence—it had been just what it was turning out, the possibility of an intercourse closer than that of life. Strange that death, of the two things, should have the fewer mysteries and secrets! The first night our young man was alone in the room it seemed to him that his master and he were really for the first time together.

II

Mrs. Doyne had for the most part let him expressively alone, but she had on two or three occasions looked in to see if his needs had been met, and he had had the opportunity of thanking her on the spot

for the judgment and zeal with which she had smoothed his way. She had to some extent herself been looking things over and had been able already to muster several groups of letters; all the keys of drawers and cabinets she had, moreover, from the first placed in his hands, with helpful information as to the apparent whereabouts of different matters. She had put him, in a word, in the fullest possible possession, and whether or no her husband had trusted her, she at least, it was clear, trusted her husband's friend. There grew upon Withermore, nevertheless, the impression that, in spite of all these offices, she was not yet at peace, and that a certain unappeasable anxiety continued even to keep step with her confidence. Though she was full of consideration, she was at the same time perceptibly *there:* he felt her, through a supersubtle sixth sense that the whole connection had already brought into play, hover, in the still hours, at the top of landings and on the other side of doors, gathered from the soundless brush of her skirts the hint of her watchings and waitings. One evening when, at his friend's table, he had lost himself in the depths of correspondence, he was made to start and turn by the suggestion that some one was behind him. Mrs. Doyne had come in without his hearing the door, and she gave a strained smile as he sprang to his feet. 'I hope,' she said, 'I haven't frightened you.'

'Just a little—I was so absorbed. It was as if, for the instant,' the young man explained, 'it had been himself.'

The oddity of her face increased in her wonder. 'Ashton?'

'He does seem so near,' said Withermore.

'To you too?'

This naturally struck him. 'He does then to you?'

She hesitated, not moving from the spot where she had first stood, but looking round the room as if to penetrate its duskier angles. She had a way of raising to the level of her nose the big black fan which she apparently never laid aside and with which she thus covered the lower half of her face, her rather hard eyes, above it, becoming the more ambiguous. 'Sometimes.'

'Here,' Withermore went on, 'it's as if he might at any moment come in. That's why I jumped just now. The time is so short since he really used to—it only *was* yesterday. I sit in his chair, I turn his

books, I use his pens, I stir his fire, exactly as if, learning he would presently be back from a walk, I had come up here contentedly to wait. It's delightful—but it's strange.'

Mrs. Doyne, still with her fan up, listened with interest. 'Does it worry you?'

'No—I like it.'

She hesitated again. 'Do you ever feel as if he were—a—quite—a—personally in the room?'

'Well, as I said just now,' her companion laughed, 'on hearing you behind me I seemed to take it so. What do we want, after all,' he asked, 'but that he shall be with us?'

'Yes, as you said he would be—that first time.' She stared in full assent. 'He *is* with us.'

She was rather portentous, but Withermore took it smiling. 'Then we must keep him. We must do only what he would like.'

'Oh, only that, of course—only. But if he *is* here——?' And her sombre eyes seemed to throw it out, in vague distress, over her fan.

'It shows that he's pleased and wants only to help? Yes, surely; it must show that.'

She gave a light gasp and looked again round the room. 'Well,' she said as she took leave of him, 'remember that I too want only to help.' On which, when she had gone, he felt sufficiently—that she had come in simply to see he was all right.

He was all right more and more, it struck him after this, for as he began to get into his work he moved, as it appeared to him, but the closer to the idea of Doyne's personal presence. When once this fancy had begun to hang about him he welcomed it, persuaded it, encouraged it, quite cherished it, looking forward all day to feeling it renew itself in the evening, and waiting for the evening very much as one of a pair of lovers might wait for the hour of their appointment. The smallest accidents humoured and confirmed it, and by the end of three or four weeks he had come quite to regard it as the consecration of his enterprise. Wasn't it what settled the question of what Doyne would have thought of what they were doing? What they were doing was what he wanted done, and they could go on, from step to step, without scruple or doubt. Withermore rejoiced indeed at moments to

feel this certitude: there were times of dipping deep into some of Doyne's secrets when it was particularly pleasant to be able to hold that Doyne desired him, as it were, to know them. He was learning many things that he had not suspected, drawing many curtains, forcing many doors, reading many riddles, going, in general, as they said, behind almost everything. It was at an occasional sharp turn of some of the duskier of these wanderings 'behind' that he really, of a sudden, most felt himself, in the intimate, sensible way, face to face with his friend; so that he could scarcely have told, for the instant, if their meeting occurred in the narrow passage and tight squeeze of the past, or at the hour and in the place that actually held him. Was it '67, or was it but the other side of the table?

Happily, at any rate, even in the vulgarest light publicity could ever shed, there would be the great fact of the way Doyne was 'coming out.' He was coming out too beautifully—better yet than such a partisan as Withermore could have supposed. Yet, all the while, as well, how would this partisan have represented to any one else the special state of his own consciousness? It wasn't a thing to talk about—it was only a thing to feel. There were moments, for instance, when, as he bent over his papers, the light breath of his dead host was as distinctly in his hair as his own elbows were on the table before him. There were moments when, had he been able to look up, the other side of the table would have shown him this companion as vividly as the shaded lamplight showed him his page. That he couldn't at such a juncture look up was his own affair, for the situation was ruled —that was but natural—by deep delicacies and fine timidities, the dread of too sudden or too rude an advance. What was intensely in the air was that if Doyne *was* there it was not nearly so much for himself as for the young priest of his altar. He hovered and lingered, he came and went, he might almost have been, among the books and the papers, a hushed, discreet librarian, doing the particular things, rendering the quiet aid, liked by men of letters.

Withermore himself, meanwhile, came and went, changed his place, wandered on quests either definite or vague; and more than once, when, taking a book down from a shelf and finding in it marks of Doyne's pencil, he got drawn on and lost, he had heard documents

on the table behind him gently shifted and stirred, had literally, on his return, found some letter he had mislaid pushed again into view, some wilderness cleared by the opening of an old journal at the very date he wanted. How should he have gone so, on occasion, to the special box or drawer, out of fifty receptacles, that would help him, had not his mystic assistant happened, in fine prevision, to tilt its lid, or to pull it half open, in just the manner that would catch his eye?—in spite, after all, of the fact of lapses and intervals in which, *could* one have really looked, one would have seen somebody standing before the fire a trifle detached and over-erect—somebody fixing one the least bit harder than in life.

III

That this auspicious relation had in fact existed, had continued, for two or three weeks, was sufficiently proved by the dawn of the distress with which our young man found himself aware that he had, for some reason, from a certain evening, begun to miss it. The sign of that was an abrupt, surprised sense—on the occasion of his mislaying a marvellous unpublished page which, hunt where he would, remained stupidly, irrecoverably lost—that his protected state was, after all, exposed to some confusion and even to some depression. If, for the joy of the business, Doyne and he had, from the start, been together, the situation had, within a few days of his first new suspicion of it, suffered the odd change of their ceasing to be so. That was what was the matter, he said to himself, from the moment an impression of mere mass and quantity struck him as taking, in his happy outlook at his material, the place of his pleasant assumption of a clear course and a lively pace. For five nights he struggled; then, never at his table, wandering about the room, taking up his references only to lay them down, looking out of the window, poking the fire, thinking strange thoughts, and listening for signs and sounds not as he suspected or imagined, but as he vainly desired and invoked them, he made up his mind that he was, for the time at least, forsaken.

The extraordinary thing thus became that it made him not only sad not to feel Doyne's presence, but in a high degree uneasy. It was stranger, somehow, that he shouldn't be there than it had ever been

that he *was*—so strange, indeed, at last that Withermore's nerves found themselves quite inconsequently affected. They had taken kindly enough to what was of an order impossible to explain, perversely reserving their sharpest state for the return to the normal, the supersession of the false. They were remarkably beyond control when, finally, one night, after resisting an hour or two, he simply edged out of the room. It had only now, for the first time, become impossible to him to remain there. Without design, but panting a little and positively as a man scared, he passed along his usual corridor and reached the top of the staircase. From this point he saw Mrs. Doyne looking up at him from the bottom quite as if she had known he would come; and the most singular thing of all was that, though he had been conscious of no notion to resort to her, had only been prompted to relieve himself by escape, the sight of her position made him recognise it as just, quickly feel it as a part of some monstrous oppression that was closing over both of them. It was wonderful how, in the mere modern London hall, between the Tottenham Court Road rugs and the electric light, it came up to him from the tall black lady, and went again from him down to her, that he knew what she meant by looking as if he would know. He descended straight, she turned into her own little lower room, and there, the next thing, with the door shut, they were, still in silence and with queer faces, confronted over confessions that had taken sudden life from these two or three movements. Withermore gasped as it came to him why he had lost his friend. 'He has been with *you*?'

With this it was all out—out so far that neither had to explain and that, when 'What do you suppose is the matter?' quickly passed between them, one appeared to have said it as much as the other. Withermore looked about at the small, bright room in which, night after night, she had been living her life as he had been living his own upstairs. It was pretty, cosy, rosy; but she had by turns felt in it what he had felt and heard in it what he had heard. Her effect there—fantastic black, plumed and extravagant, upon deep pink—was that of some 'decadent' coloured print, some poster of the newest school. 'You understood he had left me?' he asked.

She markedly wished to make it clear. 'This evening—yes. I've made things out.'

'You knew—before—that he was with me?'

She hesitated again. 'I felt he wasn't with *me*. But on the stairs——'

'Yes?'

'Well—he passed, more than once. He was in the house. And at your door——'

'Well?' he went on as she once more faltered.

'If I stopped I could sometimes tell. And from your face,' she added, 'to-night, at any rate, I knew your state.'

'And that was why you came out?'

'I thought you'd come to me.'

He put out to her, on this, his hand, and they thus, for a minute, in silence, held each other clasped. There was no peculiar presence for either, now—nothing more peculiar than that of each for the other. But the place had suddenly become as if consecrated, and Withermore turned over it again his anxiety. 'What *is* then the matter?'

'I only want to do the real right thing,' she replied after a moment.

'And are we not doing it?'

'I wonder. Are *you* not?'

He wondered too. 'To the best of my belief. But we must think.'

'We must think,' she echoed. And they did think—thought, with intensity, the rest of that evening together, and thought, independently—Withermore at least could answer for himself—during many days that followed. He intermitted for a little his visits and his work, trying, in meditation, to catch himself in the act of some mistake that might have accounted for their disturbance. Had he taken, on some important point—or looked as if he might take—some wrong line or wrong view? had he somewhere benightedly falsified or inadequately insisted? He went back at last with the idea of having guessed two or three questions he might have been on the way to muddle; after which he had, above stairs, another period of agitation, presently followed by another interview, below, with Mrs. Doyne, who was still troubled and flushed.

'He's there?'

'He's there.'

'I knew it!' she returned in an odd gloom of triumph. Then as to make it clear: 'He has not been again with *me*.'

'Nor with me again to help,' said Withermore.

She considered. 'Not to help?'

'I can't make it out—I'm at sea. Do what I will, I feel I'm wrong.'

She covered him a moment with her pompous pain. 'How do you feel it?'

'Why, by things that happen. The strangest things. I can't describe them—and you wouldn't believe them.'

'Oh yes, I would!' Mrs. Doyne murmured.

'Well, he intervenes.' Withermore tried to explain. 'However I turn, I find him.'

She earnestly followed. '"Find" him?'

'I meet him. He seems to rise there before me.'

Mrs. Doyne, staring, waited a little. 'Do you mean you see him?'

'I feel as if at any moment I may. I'm baffled. I'm checked.' Then he added: 'I'm afraid.'

'Of *him?*' asked Mrs. Doyne.

He thought. 'Well—of what I'm doing.'

'Then what, that's so awful, *are* you doing?'

'What you proposed to me. Going into his life.'

She showed, in her gravity, now, a new alarm. 'And don't you *like* that?'

'Doesn't *he?* That's the question. We lay him bare. We serve him up. What is it called? We give him to the world.'

Poor Mrs. Doyne, as if on a menace to her hard atonement, glared at this for an instant in deeper gloom. 'And why shouldn't we?'

'Because we don't know. There are natures, there are lives, that shrink. He mayn't wish it,' said Withermore. 'We never asked him.'

'How *could* we?'

He was silent a little. 'Well, we ask him now. That's, after all, what our start has, so far, represented. We've put it to him.'

'Then—if he has been with us—we've had his answer.'

Withermore spoke now as if he knew what to believe. 'He hasn't been "with" us—he has been against us.'

'Then why did you think——'

'What I *did* think, at first—that what he wishes to make us feel is his sympathy? Because, in my original simplicity, I was mistaken. I was—I don't know what to call it—so excited and charmed that I didn't understand. But I understand at last. He only wanted to communicate. He strains forward out of his darkness; he reaches toward us out of his mystery; he makes us dim signs out of his horror.'

'"Horror"?' Mrs. Doyne gasped with her fan up to her mouth.

'At what we're doing.' He could by this time piece it all together. 'I see now that at first——'

'Well, what?'

'One had simply to feel he was there, and therefore not indifferent. And the beauty of that misled me. But he's there as a protest.'

"Against *my* Life?' Mrs. Doyne wailed.

'Against *any* Life. He's there to *save* his Life. He's there to be let alone.'

'So you give up?' she almost shrieked.

He could only meet her. 'He's there as a warning.'

For a moment, on this, they looked at each other deep. 'You *are* afraid!' she at last brought out.

It affected him, but he insisted. 'He's there as a curse!'

With that they parted, but only for two or three days; her last word to him continuing to sound so in his ears that, between his need really to satisfy her and another need presently to be noted, he felt that he might not yet take up his stake. He finally went back at his usual hour and found her in her usual place. 'Yes, I *am* afraid,' he announced as if he had turned that well over and knew now all it meant. 'But I gather that you're not.'

She faltered, reserving her word. 'What is it you fear?'

'Well, that if I go on I *shall* see him.'

'And then——?'

"Oh, then,' said George Withermore, 'I *should* give up!'

She weighed it with her lofty but earnest air. 'I think, you know, we must have a clear sign.'

'You wish me to try again?'

She hesitated. 'You see what it means—for me—to give up.'

'Ah, but *you* needn't,' Withermore said.

She seemed to wonder, but in a moment she went on. 'It would mean that he won't take from me——' But she dropped for despair.

'Well, what?'

"Anything,' said poor Mrs. Doyne.

He faced her a moment more. 'I've thought myself of the clear sign. I'll try again.'

As he was leaving her, however, she remembered. 'I'm only afraid that to-night there's nothing ready—no lamp and no fire.'

'Never mind,' he said from the foot of the stairs; 'I'll find things.'

To which she answered that the door of the room would probably, at any rate, be open; and retired again as if to wait for him. She had not long to wait; though, with her own door wide and her attention fixed, she may not have taken the time quite as it appeared to her visitor. She heard him, after an interval, on the stair, and he presently stood at her entrance, where, if he had not been precipitate, but rather, as to step and sound, backward and vague, he showed at least as livid and blank.

'I give up.'

'Then you've seen him?'

'On the threshold—guarding it.'

'Guarding it?' She glowed over her fan. 'Distinct?'

'Immense. But dim. Dark. Dreadful,' said poor George Withermore.

She continued to wonder. 'You didn't go in?'

The young man turned away. 'He forbids!'

'You say *I* needn't,' she went on after a moment. 'Well then, need I?'

'See him?' George Withermore asked.

She waited an instant. 'Give up.'

'You must decide.' For himself he could at last but drop upon the sofa with his bent face in his hands. He was not quite to know afterwards how long he had sat so; it was enough that what he did next know was that he was alone among her favourite objects. Just as he gained his feet, however, with this sense and that of the door standing open to the hall, he found himself afresh confronted, in the light,

the warmth, the rosy space, with her big black perfumed presence. He saw at a glance, as she offered him a huger, bleaker stare over the mask of her fan, that she had been above; and so it was that, for the last time, they faced together their strange question. 'You've seen him?' Withermore asked.

He was to infer later on from the extraordinary way she closed her eyes, and, as if to steady herself, held them tight and long, in silence, that beside the unutterable vision of Ashton Doyne's wife his own might rank as an escape. He knew before she spoke that all was over. 'I give up.'

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

Finley Peter Dunne

MR. DOOLEY AND MR. MC KENNA SAT OUTSIDE THE AMPLE DOOR of the little liquor store, the evening being hot, and wrapped their legs around the chair, and their lips around two especially long and soothing drinks. They talked politics and religion, the people up and down the street, the chances of Murphy, the tinsmith, getting on the force, and a great deal about the weather. A woman in white started Mr. McKenna's nerves.

"Glory be, I thought it was a ghost!" said Mr. McKenna, whereupon the conversation drifted to those interesting phenomena. Mr. Dooley asked Mr. McKenna if he had ever seen one. Mr. McKenna replied that he hadn't, and didn't want to. Had Mr. Dooley? "No," said the philosopher, "I niver did; an' it's always been more thin sthrange to me that annywan shud come back afther he'd been stuck in a crate five feet deep, with a ton iv mud upon him. 'Tis onplisint iv thim, annyhow, not to say ongrateful. F'r mesilf, if I was wanst pushed off, an' they'd waked me kindly, an' had a solemn rayqueem high mass f'r me, an' a funeral with Roddey's Hi-beryan band, an' th' A-ho-aitches, I have too much pride to come back f'r an encore. I wud so, Jawn. Whin a man's dead, he ought to make th' best iv a bad job, an' not be thrapsin' around, lookin' f'r throuble among his own kind.

"No, I niver see wan, but I know there are such things; f'r twinty years ago all th' road was talkin' about how Flaherty, th' tailor, laid out th' ghost iv Tim O'Grady. O'Grady was a big sthrappin' Connock man, as wide across th' shoulders as a freight car. He was a plastherer be thrade whin wages was high, an' O'Grady was rowlin' in wealth. Ivry Sundah ye'd see him, with his horse an' buggy an'

his goold watch an' chain, in front iv th' Sullivan's house, waitin' f'r Mary Ann Sullivan to go f'r a buggy ride with him over to McAllister Place; an' he fin'lly married her, again th' wishes iv Flaherty, who took to histin' in dhrinks, an' missed his jooty, an' was a scandal in th' parish f'r six months.

"O'Grady didn't improve with mathrimony, but got to lanin' again th' ol' stuff, an' walkin' up an' down th' sidewalk in his shirt-sleeves, with his thumbs stuck in his vest, an' his little pipe turned upside down; an', whin he see Flaherty, 'twas his custom to run him up an alley, so that th' little tailor man niver had a minyit iv peace. Ivry wan supposed he lived in a three most iv th' time, to be out iv th' way iv O'Grady.

"Well, wan day O'Grady he seen Flaherty walkin' down th' sthreet with a pair iv lavender pants f'r Willum Joyce to wear to th' Ogden Grove picnic, an' thried to heave a brick at him. He lost his balance, an' fell fr'm th' scaffoldin' he was wurrukin' on; an' th' last wurruds he said was, 'Did I get him or didn't I?' Mrs. O'Grady said it was th' will iv Gawd; an' he was burrid at Calvary with a funeral iv eighty hacks, an' a great manny people in their own buggies. Dorsey, th' conthractor, was there with his wife. He thought th' wurruld an' all iv O'Grady.

"Wan year aftherward Flaherty begun makin' up to Mrs. O'Grady; an' ivry wan in th' parish seen it, an' was glad iv it, an' said it was scandalous. How it iver got out to O'Grady's pew in th' burryin' ground, I'll niver tell ye, an' th' Lord knows; but wan evenin' th' ghost iv O'Grady come back. Flaherty was settin' in th' parlor, smokin' a seegar, with O'Grady's slippers on his feet, whin th' spook come in in th' mos' natural way in the wurruld, kickin' th' dog. 'What ar-re ye doin' here, ye little farryer iv pants?' he says. Mrs. O'Grady was f'r faintin'; but O'Flaherty he says, says he: 'Be quite,' he says. 'I'll dale with him.' Thin to th' ghost: 'Have ye paid th' rint here, ye big ape?' he says. 'What d'ye mane be comin' back, whin th' landlord ain't heerd fr'm ye f'r a year?' he says. Well, O'Grady's ghost was that surprised he cud hardly speak. 'Ye ought to have betther manners thin insultin' th' dead,' he says. 'Ye ought to have betther manners thin to be lavin' ye'er coffin at this hour iv th' night,

an' breakin' in on dacint people,' says Flaherty. 'What good does it do to have rayqueem masses f'r th' raypose iv th' like iv you,' he says, 'that doesn't know his place?' he says. 'I'm masther iv this house,' says th' ghost. 'Not on ye'er life,' says Flaherty. 'Get out iv here, or I'll make th' ghost iv a ghost out iv ye. I can lick anny dead man that iver lived,' he said.

"With that th' ghost iv O'Grady made a pass at him, an' they clinched an' rowled on th' flure. Now a ghost is no aisy mark f'r anny man, an' O'Grady's ghost was as sthrong as a cow. It had Flaherty down on th' flure an' was feedin' him with a book they call th' 'Christyan Martyrs,' whin Mrs. O'Grady put a bottle in Flaherty's hands. 'What's this?' says Flaherty. 'Howly wather,' says Mrs. O'Grady. 'Sprinkle it on him,' says Mrs. O'Grady. 'Woman,' says th' tailor between th' chapter iv th' book, 'this is no time f'r miracles,' he says. An' he give O'Grady's ghost a treminjous wallop on th' head. Now, whether it was th' wather or th' wallop, I'll not tell ye; but, annyhow, th' ghost give wan yell an' disappeared. An' th' very next Sundah, whin Father Kelly wint into th' pulpit at th' gospel, he read th' names iv Roger Kickham Flaherty an' Mary Ann O'Grady."

"Did the ghost ever come back?" asked Mr. McKenna.

"Niver," said Mr. Dooley. "Wanst was enough. But, mind ye, I'd hate to have been wan iv th' other ghosts th' night O'Grady got home fr'm th' visit to O'Flaherty's. There might be ghosts that cud stand him off with th' gloves, but in a round an' tumble fight he cud lick a St. Patrick's Day procession iv thim."

LADY INTO FOX

David Garnett

WONDERFUL OR SUPERNATURAL EVENTS ARE NOT SO UNCOMMON, rather they are irregular in their incidence. Thus there may be not one marvel to speak of in a century, and then often enough comes a plentiful crop of them; monsters of all sorts swarm suddenly upon the earth, comets blaze in the sky, eclipses frighten nature, meteors fall in rain, while mermaids and sirens beguile, and sea-serpents engulf every passing ship, and terrible cataclysms beset humanity.

But the strange event which I shall here relate came alone, unsupported, without companions into a hostile world, and for that very reason claimed little of the general attention of mankind. For the sudden changing of Mrs. Tebrick into a vixen is an established fact which we may attempt to account for as we will. Certainly it is in the explanation of the fact, and the reconciling of it with our general notions that we shall find most difficulty, and not in accepting for true a story which is so fully proved, and that not by one witness but by a dozen, all respectable, and with no possibility of collusion between them.

But here I will confine myself to an exact narrative of the event and all that followed on it. Yet I would not dissuade any of my readers from attempting an explanation of this seeming miracle because up till now none has been found which is entirely satisfactory. What adds to the difficulty to my mind is that the metamorphosis occurred when Mrs. Tebrick was a full-grown woman, and that it happened suddenly in so short a space of time. The sprouting of a tail, the gradual extension of hair all over the body, the slow change of the whole anatomy by a process of growth, though it would have been monstrous, would not have been so difficult to reconcile to our ordinary

conceptions, particularly had it happened in a young child.

But here we have something very different. A grown lady is changed straightway into a fox. There is no explaining that away by any natural philosophy. The materialism of our age will not help us here. It is indeed *a miracle;* something from outside our world altogether; an event which we would willingly accept if we were to meet it invested with the authority of Divine Revelation in the Scriptures, but which we are not prepared to encounter almost in our time, happening in Oxfordshire amongst our neighbours.

The only things which go any way towards an explanation of it are but guesswork, and I give them more because I would not conceal anything, than because I think they are of any worth.

Mrs. Tebrick's maiden name was certainly Fox, and it is possible that such a miracle happening before, the family may have gained their name as a *soubriquet* on that account. They were an ancient family, and have had their seat at Tangley Hall time out of mind. It is also true that there was a half-tame fox once upon a time chained up at Tangley Hall in the inner yard, and I have heard many speculative wiseacres in the public-houses turn that to great account—though they could not but admit that "there was never one there in Miss Silvia's time." At first I was inclined to think that Silvia Fox, having once hunted when she was a child of ten and having been blooded, might furnish more of an explanation. It seems she took great fright or disgust at it, and vomited after it was done. But now I do not see that it has much bearing on the miracle itself, even though we know that after that she always spoke of the "poor foxes" when a hunt was stirring and never rode to hounds till after her marriage when her husband persuaded her to it.

She was married in the year 1879 to Mr. Richard Tebrick, after a short courtship, and went to live after their honeymoon at Rylands, near Stokoe, Oxon. One point indeed I have not been able to ascertain and that is how they first became acquainted. Tangley Hall is over thirty miles from Stokoe, and is extremely remote. Indeed to this day there is no proper road to it, which is all the more remarkable as it is the principal, and indeed the only, manor house for several miles around.

Whether it was from a chance meeting on the roads, or less romantic but more probable, by Mr. Tebrick becoming acquainted with her uncle, a minor canon at Oxford, and thence being invited by him to visit Tangley Hall, it is impossible to say. But however they became acquainted the marriage was a very happy one. The bride was in her twenty-third year. She was small, with remarkably small hands and feet. It is perhaps worth noting that there was nothing at all foxy or vixenish in her appearance. On the contrary, she was a more than ordinarily beautiful and agreeable woman. Her eyes were of a clear hazel but exceptionally brilliant, her hair dark, with a shade of red in it, her skin brownish, with a few dark freckles and little moles. In manner she was reserved almost to shyness, but perfectly self-possessed, and perfectly well-bred.

She had been strictly brought up by a woman of excellent principles and considerable attainments, who died a year or so before the marriage. And owing to the circumstance that her mother had been dead many years, and her father bedridden, and not altogether rational for a little while before his death, they had few visitors but her uncle. He often stopped with them a month or two at a stretch, particularly in winter, as he was fond of shooting snipe, which are plentiful in the valley there. That she did not grow up a country hoyden is to be explained by the strictness of her governess and the influence of her uncle. But perhaps living in so wild a place gave her some disposition to wildness, even in spite of her religious upbringing. Her old nurse said: "Miss Silvia was always a little wild at heart," though if this was true it was never seen by anyone else except her husband.

On one of the first days of the year 1880, in the early afternoon, husband and wife went for a walk in the copse on the little hill above Rylands. They were still at this time like lovers in their behaviour and were always together. While they were walking they heard the hounds and later the huntsman's horn in the distance. Mr. Tebrick had persuaded her to hunt on Boxing Day, but with great difficulty, and she had not enjoyed it (though of hacking she was fond enough).

Hearing the hunt, Mr. Tebrick quickened his pace so as to reach the edge of the copse, where they might get a good view of the hounds if they came that way. His wife hung back, and he, holding

her hand, began almost to drag her. Before they gained the edge of the copse she suddenly snatched her hand away from his very violently and cried out, so that he instantly turned his head.

Where his wife had been the moment before was a small fox, of a very bright red. It looked at him very beseechingly, advanced towards him a pace or two, and he saw at once that his wife was looking at him from the animal's eyes. You may well think if he were aghast: and so maybe was his lady at finding herself in that shape, so they did nothing for nearly half-an-hour but stare at each other, he bewildered, she asking him with her eyes as if indeed she spoke to him: "What am I now become? Have pity on me, husband, have pity on me for I am your wife."

So that with his gazing on her and knowing her well, even in such a shape, yet asking himself at every moment: "Can it be she? Am I not dreaming?" and her beseeching and lastly fawning on him and seeming to tell him that it was she indeed, they came at last together and he took her in his arms. She lay very close to him, nestling under his coat and fell to licking his face, but never taking her eyes from his.

The husband all this while kept turning the thing in his head and gazing on her, but he could make no sense of what had happened, but only comforted himself with the hope that this was but a momentary change, and that presently she would turn back again into the wife that was one flesh with him.

One fancy that came to him, because he was so much more like a lover than a husband, was that it was his fault, and this because if anything dreadful happened he could never blame her but himself for it.

So they passed a good while, till at last the tears welled up in the poor fox's eyes and she began weeping (but quite in silence), and she trembled too as if she were in a fever. At this he could not contain his own tears, but sat down on the ground and sobbed for a great while, but between his sobs kissing her quite as if she had been woman, and not caring in his grief that he was kissing a fox on the muzzle.

They sat thus till it was getting near dusk, when he recollected

himself, and the next thing was that he must somehow hide her, and then bring her home.

He waited till it was quite dark that he might the better bring her into her own house without being seen, and buttoned her inside his topcoat, nay, even in his passion tearing open his waistcoat and his shirt that she might lie the closer to his heart. For when we are overcome with the greatest sorrow we act not like men or women but like children whose comfort in all their troubles is to press themselves against their mother's breast, or if she be not there to hold each other tight in one another's arms.

When it was dark he brought her in with infinite precautions, yet not without the dogs scenting her, after which nothing could moderate their clamour.

Having got her into the house, the next thing he thought of was to hide her from the servants. He carried her to the bedroom in his arms and then went downstairs again.

Mr. Tebrick had three servants living in the house, the cook, the parlourmaid, and an old woman who had been his wife's nurse. Besides these women there was a groom or a gardener (whichever you choose to call him), who was a single man and so lived out, lodging with a labouring family about half a mile away.

Mr. Tebrick going downstairs pitched upon the parlourmaid.

"Janet," says he, "Mrs. Tebrick and I have had some bad news, and Mrs. Tebrick was called away instantly to London and left this afternoon, and I am staying to-night to put our affairs in order. We are shutting up the house, and I must give you and Mrs. Brant a month's wages and ask you to leave to-morrow morning at seven o'clock. We shall probably go away to the Continent, and I do not know when we shall come back. Please tell the others, and now get me my tea and bring it into my study on a tray."

Janet said nothing for she was a shy girl, particularly before gentlemen, but when she entered the kitchen Mr. Tebrick heard a sudden burst of conversation with many exclamations from the cook.

When she came back with his tea, Mr. Tebrick said: "I shall not require you upstairs. Pack your own things and tell James to have the wagonette ready for you by seven o'clock to-morrow morning to take

you to the station. I am busy now, but I will see you again before you go."

When she had gone Mr. Tebrick took the tray upstairs. For the first moment he thought the room was empty, and his vixen got away, for he could see no sign of her anywhere. But after a moment he saw something stirring in a corner of the room, and then behold! she came forth dragging her dressing-gown, into which she had somehow struggled.

This must surely have been a comical sight, but poor Mr. Tebrick was altogether too distressed then or at any time afterwards to divert himself at such ludicrous scenes. He only called to her softly:

"Silvia—Silvia. What do you do there?" And then in a moment saw for himself what she would be at, and began once more to blame himself heartily—because he had not guessed that his wife would not like to go naked, no notwithstanding the shape she was in. Nothing would satisfy him then till he had clothed her suitably, bringing her dresses from the wardrobe for her to choose. But as might have been expected, they were too big for her now, but at last he picked out a little dressing-jacket that she was fond of wearing sometimes in the mornings. It was made of a flowered silk, trimmed with lace, and the sleeves short enough to sit very well on her now. While he tied the ribands his poor lady thanked him with gentle looks and not without some modesty and confusion. He propped her up in an armchair with some cushions, and they took tea together, she very delicately drinking from a saucer and taking bread and butter from his hands. All this showed him, or so he thought, that his wife was still herself; there was so little wildness in her demeanour and so much delicacy and decency, especially in her not wishing to run naked, that he was very much comforted, and began to fancy they could be happy enough if they could escape the world and live always alone.

From this too sanguine dream he was aroused by hearing the gardener speaking to the dogs, trying to quiet them, for ever since he had come in with his vixen they had been whining, barking and growling, and all as he knew because there was a fox within doors and they would kill it.

He started up now, calling to the gardener that he would come

down to the dogs himself to quiet them, and bade the man go indoors again and leave it to him. All this he said in a dry, compelling kind of voice which made the fellow do as he was bid, though it was against his will, for he was curious. Mr. Tebrick went downstairs, and taking his gun from the rack loaded it and went out into the yard. Now there were two dogs, one a handsome Irish setter that was his wife's dog (she had brought it with her from Tangley Hall on her marriage); the other was an old fox terrier called Nelly that he had had ten years or more.

When he came out into the yard both dogs saluted him by barking and whining twice as much as they did before, the setter jumping up and down at the end of his chain in a frenzy, and Nelly shivering, wagging her tail, and looking first at her master and then at the house door, where she could smell the fox right enough.

There was a bright moon, so that Mr. Tebrick could see the dogs as clearly as could be. First he shot his wife's setter dead, and then looked about him for Nelly to give her the other barrel, but he could see her nowhere. The bitch was clean gone, till, looking to see how she had broken her chain, he found her lying hid in the back of her kennel. But that trick did not save her, for Mr. Tebrick, after trying to pull her out by her chain and finding it useless—she would not come,—thrust the muzzle of his gun into the kennel, pressed it into her body and so shot her. Afterwards, striking a match, he looked in at her to make certain she was dead. Then, leaving the dogs as they were, chained up, Mr. Tebrick went indoors again and found the gardener, who had not yet gone home, gave him a month's wages in lieu of notice and told him he had a job for him yet—to bury the two dogs and that he should do it that same night.

But by all this going on with so much strangeness and authority on his part, as it seemed to them, the servants were much troubled. Hearing the shots while he was out in the yard his wife's old nurse, or Nanny, ran up to the bedroom though she had no business there, and so opening the door saw the poor fox dressed in my lady's little jacket lying back in the cushions, and in such a reverie of woe that she heard nothing.

Old Nanny, though she was not expecting to find her mistress

there, having been told that she was gone that afternoon to London, knew her instantly, and cried out:

"Oh, my poor precious! Oh, poor Miss Silvia! What dreadful change is this?" Then, seeing her mistress start and look at her, she cried out:

"But never fear, my darling, it will all come right, your old Nanny knows you, it will all come right in the end."

But though she said this she did not care to look again, and kept her eyes turned away so as not to meet the foxy slit ones of her mistress, for that was too much for her. So she hurried out soon, fearing to be found there by Mr. Tebrick, and who knows, perhaps shot, like the dogs, for knowing the secret.

Mr. Tebrick had all this time gone about paying off his servants and shooting his dogs as if he were in a dream. Now he fortified himself with two or three glasses of strong whisky and went to bed, taking his vixen into his arms, where he slept soundly. Whether she did or not is more than I or anybody else can say.

In the morning when he woke up they had the place to themselves, for on his instructions the servants had all left first thing: Janet and the cook to Oxford, where they would try and find new places, and Nanny going back to the cottage near Tangley, where her son lived, who was the pigman there.

So with that morning there began what was now to be their ordinary life together. He would get up when it was broad day, and first thing light the fire downstairs and cook the breakfast, then brush his wife, sponge her with a damp sponge, then brush her again, in all this using scent very freely to hide somewhat her rank odour. When she was dressed he carried her downstairs and they had their breakfast together, she sitting up to table with him, drinking her saucer of tea, and taking her food from his fingers, or at any rate being fed by him. She was still fond of the same food that she had been used to before her transformation, a lightly boiled egg or slice of ham, a piece of buttered toast or two, with a little quince and apple jam. While I am on the subject of her food, I should say that reading in the encyclopedia he found that foxes on the Continent are inordinately fond of grapes, and that during the autumn season they abandon

their ordinary diet for them, and then grow exceedingly fat and lose their offensive odour.

This appetite for grapes is so well confirmed by Æsop, and by passages in the Scriptures, that it is strange Mr. Tebrick should not have known it. After reading this account he wrote to London for a basket of grapes to be posted to him twice a week and was rejoiced to find that the account in the encyclopedia was true in the most important of these particulars. His vixen relished them exceedingly and seemed never to tire of them, so that he increased his order first from one pound to three pounds and afterwards to five. Her odour abated so much by this means that he came not to notice it at all except sometimes in the mornings before her toilet.

What helped him most to make living with her bearable for him was that she understood him perfectly—yes, every word he said, and though she was dumb she expressed herself very fluently by looks and signs though never by the voice.

Thus he frequently conversed with her, telling her all his thoughts and hiding nothing from her, and this the more readily because he was very quick to catch her meaning and her answers.

"Puss, Puss," he would say to her, for calling her that had been a habit with him always. "Sweet Puss, some men would pity me living alone here with you after what has happened, but I would not change places while you were living with any man for the whole world. Though you are a fox I would rather live with you than any woman. I swear I would, and that too if you were changed to anything." But then, catching her grave look, he would say: "Do you think I jest on these things, my dear? I do not. I swear to you, my darling, that all my life I will be true to you, will be faithful, will respect and reverence you who are my wife. And I will do that not because of any hope that God in His mercy will see fit to restore your shape, but solely because I love you. However you may be changed, my love is not."

Then anyone seeing them would have sworn that they were lovers, so passionately did each look on the other.

Often he would swear to her that the devil might have power to work some miracles, but that he would find it beyond him to change his love for her.

These passionate speeches, however they might have struck his wife in an ordinary way, now seemed to be her chief comfort. She would come to him, put her paw on his hand and look at him with sparkling eyes shining with joy and gratitude, would pant with eagerness, jump at him and lick his face.

Now he had many little things which busied him in the house—getting his meals, setting the room straight, making the bed and so forth. When he was doing this housework it was comical to watch his vixen. Often she was as it were beside herself with vexation and distress to see him in his clumsy way doing what she could have done so much better had she been able. Then, forgetful of the decency and the decorum which she had at first imposed upon herself never to run upon all fours, she followed him everywhere, and if he did one thing wrong she stopped him and showed him the way of it. When he had forgot the hour for his meal she would come and tug his sleeve and tell him as if she spoke: "Husband, are we to have no luncheon to-day?"

This womanliness in her never failed to delight him, for it showed she was still his wife, buried as it were in the carcase of a beast but with a woman's soul. This encouraged him so much that he debated with himself whether he should not read aloud to her, as he often had done formerly. At last, since he could find no reason against it, he went to the shelf and fetched down a volume of the "History of Clarissa Harlowe," which he had begun to read aloud to her a few weeks before. He opened the volume where he had left off, with Lovelace's letter after he had spent the night waiting fruitlessly in the copse.

"Good God!

What is now to become of me?

My feet benumbed by midnight wanderings through the heaviest dews that ever fell; my wig and my linen dripping with the hoarfrost dissolving on them!

Day but just breaking . . ." etc.

While he read he was conscious of holding her attention, then after a few pages the story claimed all his, so that he read on for about half-an-hour without looking at her. When he did so he saw that she was not listening to him, but was watching something with strange

eagerness. Such a fixed intent look was on her face that he was alarmed and sought the cause of it. Presently he found that her gaze was fixed on the movements of her pet dove which was in its cage hanging in the window. He spoke to her, but she seemed displeased, so he laid "Clarissa Harlowe" aside. Nor did he ever repeat the experiment of reading to her.

Yet that same evening, as he happened to be looking through his writing table drawer with Puss beside him looking over his elbow, she spied a pack of cards, and then he was forced to pick them out to please her, then draw them from their case. At last, trying first one thing, then another, he found that what she was after was to play piquet with him. They had some difficulty at first in contriving for her to hold her cards and then to play them, but this was at last overcome by his stacking them for her on a sloping board, after which she could flip them out very neatly with her claws as she wanted to play them. When they had overcome this trouble they played three games, and most heartily she seemed to enjoy them. Moreover she won all three of them. After this they often played a quiet game of piquet together, and cribbage too. I should say that in marking the points at cribbage on the board he always moved her pegs for her as well as his own, for she could not handle them or set them in the holes.

The weather, which had been damp and misty, with frequent downpours of rain, improved very much in the following week, and, as often happens in January, there were several days with the sun shining, no wind and light frosts at night, these frosts becoming more intense as the days went on till bye and bye they began to think of snow.

With this spell of fine weather it was but natural that Mr. Tebrick should think of taking his vixen out of doors. This was something he had not yet done, both because of the damp rainy weather up till then and because the mere notion of taking her out filled him with alarm. Indeed he had so many apprehensions beforehand that at one time he resolved totally against it. For his mind was filled not only with the fear that she might escape from him and run away, which he knew was groundless, but with more rational visions, such as wandering curs, traps, gins, spring guns, beside a dread of being seen with her

by the neighbourhood. At last however he resolved on it, and all the more as his vixen kept asking him in the gentlest way: "Might she not go into the garden?" Yet she always listened very submissively when he told her that he was afraid if they were seen together it would excite the curiosity of their neighbours; besides this, he often told her of his fears for her on account of dogs. But one day she answered this by leading him into the hall and pointing boldly to his gun. After this he resolved to take her, though with full precautions. That is he left the house door open so that in case of need she could beat a swift retreat, then he took his gun under his arm, and lastly he had her well wrapped up in a little fur jacket lest she should take cold.

He would have carried her too, but that she delicately disengaged herself from his arms and looked at him very expressively to say that she would go by herself. For already her first horror of being seen to go upon all fours was worn off; reasoning no doubt upon it, that either she must resign herself to go that way or else stay bed-ridden all the rest of her life.

Her joy at going into the garden was inexpressible. First she ran this way, then that, though keeping always close to him, looking very sharply with ears cocked forward first at one thing, then another and then up to catch his eye.

For some time indeed she was almost dancing with delight, running round him, then forward a yard or two, then back to him and gambolling beside him as they went round the garden. But in spite of her joy she was full of fear. At every noise, a cow lowing, a cock crowing, or a ploughman in the distance hulloaing to scare the rooks, she started, her ears pricked to catch the sound, her muzzle wrinkled up and her nose twitched, and she would then press herself against his legs. They walked round the garden and down to the pond where there were ornamental waterfowl, teal, widgeon and mandarin ducks, and seeing these again gave her great pleasure. They had always been her favourites, and now she was so overjoyed to see them that she behaved with very little of her usual self-restraint. First she stared at them, then bouncing up to her husband's knee sought to kindle an equal excitement in his mind. Whilst she rested her paws on his knee she turned her head again and again towards the ducks as though she

could not take her eyes off them, and then ran down before him to the water's edge.

But her appearance threw the ducks into the utmost degree of consternation. Those on shore or near the bank swam or flew to the centre of the pond, and there huddled in a bunch; and then, swimming round and round, they began such a quacking that Mr. Tebrick was nearly deafened. As I have before said, nothing in the ludicrous way that arose out of the metamorphosis of his wife (and such incidents were plentiful) ever stood a chance of being smiled at by him. So in this case, too, for realising that the silly ducks thought his wife a fox indeed and were alarmed on that account he found painful that spectacle which to others might have been amusing.

Not so his vixen, who appeared if anything more pleased than ever when she saw in what a commotion she had set them, and began cutting a thousand pretty capers. Though at first he called to her to come back and walk another way, Mr. Tebrick was overborne by her pleasure and sat down, while she frisked around him happier far than he had seen her ever since the change. First she ran up to him in a laughing way, all smiles, and then ran down again to the water's edge and began frisking and frolicking, chasing her own brush, dancing on her hind legs even, and rolling on the ground, then fell to running in circles, but all this without paying any heed to the ducks.

But they, with their necks craned out all pointing one way, swam to and fro in the middle of the pond, never stopping their quack, quack, quack, and keeping time too, for they all quacked in chorus. Presently she came further away from the pond, and he, thinking they had had enough of this sort of entertainment, laid hold of her and said to her:

"Come, Silvia, my dear, it is growing cold, and it is time we went indoors. I am sure taking the air has done you a world of good, but we must not linger any more."

She appeared then to agree with him, though she threw half a glance over her shoulder at the ducks, and they both walked soberly enough towards the house.

When they had gone about halfway she suddenly slipped round

and was off. He turned quickly and saw the ducks had been following them.

So she drove them before her back into the pond, the ducks running in terror from her with their wings spread, and she not pressing them, for he saw that had she been so minded she could have caught two or three of the nearest. Then, with her brush waving above her, she came gambolling back to him so playfully that he stroked her indulgently, though he was first vexed, and then rather puzzled that his wife should amuse herself with such pranks.

But when they got within doors he picked her up in his arms, kissed her and spoke to her.

"Silvia, what a light-hearted childish creature you are. Your courage under misfortune shall be a lesson to me, but I cannot, I cannot bear to see it."

Here the tears stood suddenly in his eyes, and he lay down upon the ottoman and wept, paying no heed to her until presently he was aroused by her licking his cheek and his ear.

After tea she led him to the drawing room and scratched at the door till he opened it, for this was part of the house which he had shut up, thinking three or four rooms enough for them now, and to save the dusting of it. Then it seemed she would have him play to her on the pianoforte: she led him to it, nay, what is more, she would herself pick out the music he was to play. First it was a fugue of Handel's, then one of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words, and then "The Diver," and then music from Gilbert and Sullivan; but each piece of music she picked out was gayer than the last one. Thus they sat happily engrossed for perhaps an hour in the candle light until the extreme cold in that unwarmed room stopped his playing and drove them downstairs to the fire. Thus did she admirably comfort her husband when he was dispirited.

Yet next morning when he woke he was distressed when he found that she was not in the bed with him but was lying curled up at the foot of it. During breakfast she hardly listened when he spoke, and then impatiently, but sat staring at the dove.

Mr. Tebrick sat silently looking out of window for some time, then he took out his pocketbook; in it there was a photograph of his

wife taken soon after their wedding. Now he gazed and gazed upon those familiar features, and now he lifted his head and looked at the animal before him. He laughed then bitterly, the first and last time for that matter that Mr. Tebrick ever laughed at his wife's transformation, for he was not very humorous. But this laugh was sour and painful to him. Then he tore up the photograph into little pieces, and scattered them out of the window, saying to himself: "Memories will not help me here," and turning to the vixen he saw that she was still staring at the caged bird, and as he looked he saw her lick her chops.

He took the bird into the next room, then acting suddenly upon the impulse, he opened the cage door and set it free, saying as he did so:

"Go, poor bird! Fly from this wretched house while you still remember your mistress who fed you from her coral lips. You are not a fit plaything for her now. Farewell, poor bird! Farewell! Unless," he added with a melancholy smile, "you return with good tidings like Noah's dove."

But, poor gentleman, his troubles were not over yet, and indeed one may say that he ran to meet them by his constant supposing that his lady should still be the same to a tittle in her behaviour now that she was changed into a fox.

Without making any unwarrantable suppositions as to her soul or what had now become of it (though we could find a good deal to the purpose on that point in the system of Paracelsus), let us consider only how much the change in her body must needs affect her ordinary conduct. So that before we judge too harshly of this unfortunate lady, we must reflect upon the physical necessities and infirmities and appetites of her new condition, and we must magnify the fortitude of her mind which enabled her to behave with decorum, cleanliness and decency in spite of her new situation.

Thus she might have been expected to befoul her room, yet never could anyone, whether man or beast, have shown more nicety in such matters. But at luncheon Mr. Tebrick helped her to a wing of chicken, and leaving the room for a minute to fetch some water which he had forgot, found her at his return on the table crunching the very bones.

He stood silent, dismayed and wounded to the heart at this sight. For we must observe that this unfortunate husband thought always of his vixen as that gentle and delicate woman she had lately been. So that whenever his vixen's conduct went beyond that which he expected in his wife he was, as it were, cut to the quick, and no kind of agony could be greater to him than to see her thus forget herself. On this account it may indeed be regretted that Mrs. Tebrick had been so exactly well-bred, and in particular that her table manners had always been scrupulous. Had she been in the habit, like a continental princess I have dined with, of taking her leg of chicken by the drumstick and gnawing the flesh, it had been far better for him now. But as her manners had been perfect, so the lapse of them was proportionately painful to him. Thus in this instance he stood as it were in silent agony till she had finished her hideous crunching of the chicken bones and had devoured every scrap. Then he spoke to her gently, taking her on to his knee, stroking her fur and fed her with a few grapes, saying to her:

"Silvia, Silvia, is it so hard for you? Try and remember the past, my darling, and by living with me we will quite forget that you are no longer a woman. Surely this affliction will pass soon, as suddenly as it came, and it will all seem to us like an evil dream."

Yet though she appeared perfectly sensible of his words and gave him sorrowful and penitent looks like her old self, that same afternoon, on taking her out, he had all the difficulty in the world to keep her from going near the ducks.

There came to him then a thought that was very disagreeable to him, namely, that he dare not trust his wife alone with any bird or she would kill it. And this was the more shocking to him to think of since it meant that he durst not trust her as much as a dog even. For we may trust dogs who are familiars, with all the household pets; nay more, we can put them upon trust with anything and know they will not touch it, not even if they be starving. But things were come to such a pass with his vixen that he dared not in his heart trust her at all. Yet she was still in many ways so much more woman than fox that he could talk to her on any subject and she would understand him, better far than the oriental women who are kept in subjection

can ever understand their masters unless they converse on the most trifling household topics.

Thus she understood excellently well the importance and duties of religion. She would listen with approval in the evening when he said the Lord's Prayer, and was rigid in her observance of the Sabbath. Indeed, the next day being Sunday he, thinking no harm, proposed their usual game of piquet, but no, she would not play. Mr. Tebrick, not understanding at first what she meant, though he was usually very quick with her, he proposed it to her again, which she again refused, and this time, to show her meaning, made the sign of the cross with her paw. This exceedingly rejoiced and comforted him in his distress. He begged her pardon, and fervently thanked God for having so good a wife, who, in spite of all, knew more of her duty to God than he did. But here I must warn the reader from inferring that she was a papist because she then made the sign of the cross. She made that sign to my thinking only on compulsion because she could not express herself except in that way. For she had been brought up as a true Protestant, and that she still was one is confirmed by her objection to cards, which would have been less than nothing to her had she been a papist. Yet that evening, taking her into the drawing room so that he might play her some sacred music, he found her after some time cowering away from him in the farthest corner of the room, her ears flattened back and an expression of the greatest anguish in her eyes. When he spoke to her she licked his hand, but remained shivering for a long time at his feet and showed the clearest symptoms of terror if he so much as moved towards the piano.

On seeing this and recollecting how ill the ears of a dog can bear with our music, and how this dislike might be expected to be even greater in a fox, all of whose senses are more acute from being a wild creature, recollecting this he closed the piano and taking her in his arms, locked up the room and never went into it again. He could not help marvelling though, since it was but two days after she had herself led him there, and even picked out for him to play and sing those pieces which were her favourites.

That night she would not sleep with him, neither in the bed nor on it, so that he was forced to let her curl herself up on the floor. But

neither would she sleep there, for several times she woke him by trotting around the room, and once when he had got sound asleep by springing on the bed and then off it, so that he woke with a violent start and cried out, but got no answer either, except hearing her trotting round and round the room. Presently he imagines to himself that she must want something, and so fetches her food and water, but she never so much as looks at it, but still goes on her rounds, every now and then scratching at the door.

Though he spoke to her, calling her by her name, she would pay no heed to him, or else only for the moment. At last he gave her up and said to her plainly: "The fit is on you now, Silvia, to be a fox, but I shall keep you close and in the morning you will recollect yourself and thank me for having kept you now."

So he lay down again, but not to sleep, only to listen to his wife running about the room and trying to get out of it. Thus he spent what was perhaps the most miserable night of his existence. In the morning she was still restless, and was reluctant to let him wash and brush her, and appeared to dislike being scented but as it were to bear with it for his sake. Ordinarily she had taken the greatest pleasure imaginable in her toilet, so that on this account, added to his sleepless night, Mr. Tebrick was utterly dejected, and it was then that he resolved to put a project into execution that would show him, so he thought, whether he had a wife or only a wild vixen in his house. But yet he was comforted that she bore at all with him, though so restlessly that he did not spare her, calling her a "bad wild fox." And then speaking to her in this manner: "Are you not ashamed, Silvia, to be such a madcap, such a wicked hoyden? You who were particular in dress. I see it was all vanity—now you have not your former advantages you think nothing of decency."

His words had some effect with her too, and with himself, so that by the time he had finished dressing her they were both in the lowest state of spirits imaginable and neither of them far from tears.

Breakfast she took soberly enough, and after that he went about getting his experiment ready, which was this. In the garden he gathered together a nosegay of snowdrops, those being all the flowers he could find, and then going into the village of Stokoe bought a

Dutch rabbit (that is a black and white one) from a man there who kept them.

When he got back he took his flowers and at the same time set down the basket with the rabbit in it, with the lid open. Then he called to her: "Silvia, I have brought some flowers for you. Look, the first snowdrops."

At this she ran up very prettily, and never giving as much as one glance at the rabbit which had hopped out of its basket, she began to thank him for the flowers. Indeed she seemed indefatigable in shewing her gratitude, smelt them, stood a little way off looking at them, then thanked him again. Mr. Tebrick (and this was all part of his plan) then took a vase and went to find some water for them, but left the flowers beside her. He stopped away five minutes, timing it by his watch and listening very intently, but never heard the rabbit squeak. Yet when he went in what a horrid shambles was spread before his eyes. Blood on the carpet, blood on the armchairs and antimacassars, even a little blood spurtled on to the wall, and what was worse, Mrs. Tebrick tearing and growling over a piece of the skin and the legs, for she had eaten up all the rest of it. The poor gentleman was so heartbroken over this that he was like to have done himself an injury, and at one moment thought of getting his gun, to have shot himself and his vixen too. Indeed the extremity of his grief was such that it served him a very good turn, for he was so entirely unmanned by it that for some time he could do nothing but weep, and fell into a chair with his head in his hands, and so kept weeping and groaning.

After he had been some little while employed in this dismal way, his vixen, who had by this time bolted down the rabbit, skin, head, ears and all, came to him and putting her paws on his knees, thrust her long muzzle into his face and began licking him. But he, looking at her now with different eyes, and seeing her jaws still sprinkled with fresh blood and her claws full of the rabbit's fleck, would have none of it.

But though he beat her off four or five times even to giving her blows and kicks, she still came back to him, crawling on her belly and imploring his forgiveness with wide-open sorrowful eyes. Before he

had made this rash experiment of the rabbit and the flowers, he had promised himself that if she failed in it he would have no more feeling or compassion for her than if she were in truth a wild vixen out of the woods. This resolution, though the reasons for it had seemed to him so very plain before, he now found more difficult to carry out than to decide on. At length after cursing her and beating her off for upwards of half-an-hour, he admitted to himself that he still did care for her, and even loved her dearly in spite of all, whatever pretense he affected towards her. When he had acknowledged this he looked up at her and met her eyes fixed upon him, and held out his arms to her and said:

"Oh Silvia, Silvia, would you had never done this! Would I had never tempted you in a fatal hour! Does not this butchery and eating of raw meat and rabbit's fur disgust you? Are you a monster in your soul as well as in your body? Have you forgotten what it is to be a woman?"

Meanwhile, with every word of his, she crawled a step nearer on her belly and at last climbed sorrowfully into his arms. His words then seemed to take effect on her and her eyes filled with tears and she wept most penitently in his arms, and her body shook with her sobs as if her heart were breaking. This sorrow of hers gave him the strangest mixture of pain and joy that he had ever known, for his love for her returning with a rush, he could not bear to witness her pain and yet must take pleasure in it as it fed his hopes of her one day returning to be a woman. So the more anguish of shame his vixen underwent, the greater his hopes rose, till his love and pity for her increasing equally, he was almost wishing her to be nothing more than a mere fox than to suffer so much by being half-human.

At last he looked about him somewhat dazed with so much weeping, then set his vixen down on the ottoman, and began to clean up the room with a heavy heart. He fetched a pail of water and washed out all the stains of blood, gathered up the two antimacassars and fetched clean ones from the other rooms. While he went about this work his vixen sat and watched him very contritely with her nose between her two front paws, and when he had done he brought in some luncheon for himself, though it was already late, but none for her, she having

lately so infamously feasted. But water he gave her and a bunch of grapes. Afterwards she led him to the small tortoiseshell cabinet and would have him open it. When he had done so she motioned to the portable stereoscope which lay inside. Mr. Tebrick instantly fell in with her wish and after a few trials adjusted it to her vision. Thus they spent the rest of the afternoon together very happily looking through the collection of views which he had purchased, of Italy, Spain and Scotland. This diversion gave her great apparent pleasure and afforded him considerable comfort. But that night he could not prevail upon her to sleep in bed with him, and finally allowed her to sleep on a mat beside the bed where he could stretch down and touch her. So they passed the night, with his hand upon her head.

The next morning he had more of a struggle than ever to wash and dress her. Indeed at one time nothing but holding her by the scruff prevented her from getting away from him, but at last he achieved his object and she was washed, brushed, scented and dressed, although to be sure this left him better pleased than her, for she regarded her silk jacket with disfavour.

Still at breakfast she was well mannered though a trifle hasty with her food. Then his difficulties with her began for she would go out, but as he had his housework to do, he could not allow it. He brought her picture books to divert her, but she would have none of them but stayed at the door scratching it with her claws industriously till she had worn away the paint.

At first he tried coaxing her and wheedling, gave her cards to play patience and so on, but finding nothing would distract her from going out, his temper began to rise, and he told her plainly that she must wait his pleasure and that he had as much natural obstinacy as she had. But to all that he said she paid no heed whatever but only scratched the harder.

Thus he let her continue until luncheon, when she would not sit up, or eat off a plate, but first was for getting on to the table, and when that was prevented, snatched her meat and ate it under the table. To all his rebukes she turned a deaf or sullen ear, and so they each finished their meal eating little, either of them, for till she would sit at table he would give her no more, and his vexation had taken

away his own appetite. In the afternoon he took her out for her airing in the garden.

She made no pretense now of enjoying the first snowdrops or the view from the terrace. No—there was only one thing for her now—the ducks, and she was off to them before he could stop her. Luckily they were all swimming when she got there (for a stream running into the pond on the far side it was not frozen there).

When he had got down to the pond, she ran out on to the ice, which would not bear his weight, and though he called her and begged her to come back she would not heed him but stayed frisking about, getting as near the ducks as she dared, but being circumspect in venturing on to the thin ice.

Presently she turned on herself and began tearing off her clothes, and at last by biting got off her little jacket and taking it in her mouth stuffed it into a hole in the ice where he could not get it. Then she ran hither and thither a stark naked vixen, and without giving a glance to her poor husband who stood silently now upon the bank, with despair and terror settled in his mind. She let him stay there most of the afternoon till he was chilled through and through and worn out with watching her. At last he reflected how she had just stripped herself and how in the morning she struggled against being dressed, and he thought perhaps he was too strict with her and if he let her have her own way they could manage to be happy somehow together even if she did eat off the floor. So he called out to her then:

"Silvia, come now, be good, you shan't wear any more clothes if you don't want to, and you needn't sit at table neither, I promise. You shall do as you like in that, but you must give up one thing, and that is you must stay with me and not go out alone, for that is dangerous. If any dog came on you he would kill you."

Directly he had finished speaking she came to him joyously, began fawning on him and prancing round him so that in spite of his vexation with her, and being cold, he could not help stroking her.

"Oh, Silvia, are you not wilful and cunning? I see you glory in being so, but I shall not reproach you but shall stick to my side of the bargain, and you must stick to yours."

He built a big fire when he came back to the house and took a

glass or two of spirits also, to warm himself up, for he was chilled to the very bone. Then, after they had dined, to cheer himself he took another glass, and then another, and so on till he was very merry, he thought. Then he would play with his vixen, she encouraging him with her pretty sportiveness. He got up to catch her then and finding himself unsteady on his legs, he went down on to all fours. The long and the short of it is that by drinking he drowned all his sorrow; and then would be a beast too like his wife, though she was one through no fault of her own, and could not help it. To what lengths he went then in that drunken humour I shall not offend my readers by relating, but shall only say that he was so drunk and sottish that he had a very imperfect recollection of what had passed when he woke the next morning. There is no exception to the rule that if a man drink heavily at night the next morning will show the other side to his nature. Thus with Mr. Tebrick, for as he had been beastly, merry and a very dare-devil the night before, so on his awakening was he ashamed, melancholic and a true penitent before his Creator. The first thing he did when he came to himself was to call out to God to forgive him for his sin, then he fell into earnest prayer and continued so for half-an-hour upon his knees. Then he got up and dressed but continued very melancholy for the whole of the morning. Being in this mood you may imagine it hurt him to see his wife running about naked, but he reflected it would be a bad reformation that began with breaking faith. He had made a bargain and he would stick to it, and so he let her be, though sorely against his will.

For the same reason, that is because he would stick to his side of the bargain, he did not require her to sit up at table, but gave her her breakfast on a dish in the corner, where to tell the truth she on her side ate it all up with great daintiness and propriety. Nor did she make any attempt to go out of doors that morning, but lay curled up in an armchair before the fire dozing. After lunch he took her out, and she never so much as offered to go near the ducks, but running before him led him on to take her a longer walk. This he consented to do very much to her joy and delight. He took her through the fields by the most unfrequented ways, being much alarmed lest they should be seen by anyone. But by good luck they walked above four miles

across country and saw nobody. All the way his wife kept running on ahead of him, and then back to him to lick his hand and so on, and appeared delighted at taking exercise. And though they started two or three rabbits and a hare in the course of their walk she never attempted to go after them, only giving them a look and then looking back to him, laughing at him as it were for his warning cry of "Puss! come in, no nonsense now!"

Just when they got home and were going into the porch they came face to face with an old woman. Mr. Tebrick stopped short in consternation and looked about for his vixen, but she had run forward without any shyness to greet her. Then he recognized the intruder, it was his wife's old nurse.

"What are you doing here, Mrs. Cork?" he asked her.

Mrs. Cork answered him in these words:

"Poor thing. Poor Miss Silvia! It is a shame to let her run about like a dog. It is a shame, and your own wife too. But whatever she looks like, you should trust her the same as ever. If you do she'll do her best to be a good wife to you, if you don't I shouldn't wonder if she did turn into a proper fox. I saw her, sir, before I left, and I've had no peace of mind. I couldn't sleep thinking of her. So I've come back to look after her, as I have done all her life, sir," and she stooped down and took Mrs. Tebrick by the paw.

Mr. Tebrick unlocked the door and they went in. When Mrs. Cork saw the house she exclaimed again and again: "The place was a pigsty. They couldn't live like that, a gentleman must have somebody to look after him. She would do it. He could trust her with the secret."

Had the old woman come the day before it is likely enough that Mr. Tebrick would have sent her packing. But the voice of conscience being woken in him by his drunkenness of the night before he was heartily ashamed of his own management of the business, moreover the old woman's words that "it was a shame to let her run about like a dog," moved him exceedingly. Being in this mood the truth is he welcomed her.

But we may conclude that Mrs. Tebrick was as sorry to see her old Nanny as her husband was glad. If we consider that she had been

brought up strictly by her when she was a child, and was now again in her power, and that her old nurse could never be satisfied with her now whatever she did, but would always think her wicked to be a fox at all, there seems good reason for her dislike. And it is possible, too, that there may have been another cause as well, and that is jealousy. We know her husband was always trying to bring her back to be a woman, or at any rate to get her to act like one, may she not have been hoping to get him to be like a beast himself or to act like one? May she not have thought it easier to change him thus than ever to change herself back into being a woman? If we think that she had had a success of this kind only the night before, when he got drunk, can we not conclude that this was indeed the case, and then we have another good reason why the poor lady should hate to see her old nurse?

It is certain that whatever hopes Mr. Tebrick had of Mrs. Cork affecting his wife for the better were disappointed. She grew steadily wilder and after a few days so intractable with her that Mr. Tebrick again took her under his complete control.

The first morning Mrs. Cork made her a new jacket, cutting down the sleeves of a blue silk one of Mrs. Tebrick's and trimming it with swan's down, and directly she had altered it, put it on her mistress, and fetching a mirror would have her admire the fit of it. All the time she waited on Mrs. Tebrick the old woman talked to her as though she were a baby, and treated her as such, never thinking perhaps that she was either the one thing or the other, that is either a lady to whom she owed respect and who had rational powers exceeding her own, or else a wild creature on whom words were wasted. But though at first she submitted passively, Mrs. Tebrick only waited for her Nanny's back to be turned to tear up her pretty piece of handiwork into shreds, and then ran gaily about waving her brush with only a few ribands still hanging from her neck.

So it was time after time (for the old woman was used to having her own way) until Mrs. Cork would, I think, have tried punishing her if she had not been afraid of Mrs. Tebrick's row of white teeth, which she often showed her, then laughing afterwards, as if to say it was only play.

Not content with tearing off the dresses that were fitted on her,

one day Silvia slipped upstairs to her wardrobe and tore down all her old dresses and made havoc with them, not sparing her wedding dress either, but tearing and ripping them all up so that there was hardly a shred or rag left big enough to dress a doll in. On this, Mr. Tebrick, who had let the old woman have most of her management to see what she could make of her, took her back under his own control.

He was sorry enough now that Mrs. Cork had disappointed him in the hopes he had had of her, to have the old woman, as it were, on his hands. True she could be useful enough in many ways to him, by doing the housework, the cooking and mending, but still he was anxious since his secret was in her keeping, and the more now that she had tried her hand with his wife and failed. For he saw that vanity had kept her mouth shut if she had won over her mistress to better ways, and her love for her would have grown by getting her own way with her. But now that she had failed she bore her mistress a grudge for not being won over, or at the best was become indifferent to the business, so that she might very readily blab.

For the moment all Mr. Tebrick could do was to keep her from going into Stokoe to the village, where she would meet all her old cronies and where there were certain to be any number of inquiries about what was going on at Rylands and so on. But as he saw that it was clearly beyond his power, however vigilant he might be, to watch over the old woman and his wife, and to prevent anyone from meeting with either of them, he began to consider what he could best do.

Since he had sent away his servants and the gardener, giving out a story of having received bad news and his wife going away to London where he would join her, their probably going out of England and so on, he knew well enough that there would be a great deal of talk in the neighbourhood.

And as he had now stayed on, contrary to what he had said, there would be further rumour. Indeed, had he known it, there was a story already going round the country that his wife had run away with Major Solmes, and that he was gone mad with grief, that he had shot his dogs and his horses and shut himself up alone in the house and would speak with no one. This story was made up by his neigh-

bours not because they were fanciful or wanted to deceive, but like most tittle-tattle to fill a gap, as few like to confess ignorance, and if people are asked about such or such a man they must have something to say, or they suffer in everybody's opinion, are set down as dull or "out of the swim." In this way I met not long ago with someone who, after talking some little while and not knowing me or who I was, told me that David Garnett was dead, and died of being bitten by a cat after he had tormented it. He had long grown a nuisance to his friends as an exorbitant sponge upon them, and the world was well rid of him.

Hearing this story of myself diverted me at the time, but I fully believe it has served me in good stead since. For it set me on my guard as perhaps nothing else would have done, against accepting for true all floating rumour and village gossip, so that now I am by second nature a true sceptic and scarcely believe anything unless the evidence for it is conclusive. Indeed I could never have got to the bottom of this history if I had believed one tenth part of what I was told, there was so much of it that was either manifestly false or absurd, or else contradictory to the ascertained facts. It is therefore only the bare bones of the story which you will find written here, for I have rejected all the flowery embroideries which would be entertaining reading enough, I daresay, for some, but if there be any doubt of the truth of a thing it is poor sort of entertainment to read about in my opinion.

To get back to our story: Mr. Tebrick having considered how much the appetite of his neighbours would be whetted to find out the mystery by his remaining in that part of the country, determined that the best thing he could do was to remove.

After some time turning the thing over in his mind, he decided that no place would be so good for his purpose as old Nanny's cottage. It was thirty miles away from Stokoe, which in the country means as far as Timbuctoo does to us in London. Then it was near Tangley, and his lady having known it from her childhood would feel at home there, and also it was utterly remote, there being no village near it or manor house other than Tangley Hall, which was now untenanted for the greater part of the year. Nor did it mean imparting his secret to others, for there was only Mrs. Cork's son, a widower, who being

out at work all day would be easily outwitted, the more so as he was stone deaf and of a slow and saturnine disposition. To be sure there was little Polly, Mrs. Cork's granddaughter, but either Mr. Tebrick forgot her altogether, or else reckoned her as a mere baby and not to be thought of as a danger.

He talked the thing over with Mrs. Cork, and they decided upon it out of hand. The truth is the old woman was beginning to regret that her love and her curiosity had ever brought her back to Rylands, since so far she had got much work and little credit by it.

When it was settled, Mr. Tebrick disposed of the remaining business he had at Rylands in the afternoon, and that was chiefly putting out his wife's riding horse into the keeping of a farmer near by, for he thought he would drive over with his own horse, and the other spare horse tandem in the dog-cart.

The next morning they locked up the house and they departed, having first secured Mrs. Tebrick in a large wicker hamper where she would be tolerably comfortable. This was for safety, for in the agitation of driving she might jump out, and on the other hand, if a dog scented her and she were loose, she might be in danger of her life. Mr. Tebrick drove with the hamper beside him on the front seat, and spoke to her gently very often.

She was overcome by the excitement of the journey and kept poking her nose first through one crevice, then through another, turning and twisting the whole time and peeping out to see what they were passing. It was a bitterly cold day, and when they had gone about fifteen miles they drew up by the roadside to rest the horses and have their own luncheon, for he dared not stop at an inn. He knew that any living creature in a hamper, even if it be only an old fowl, always draws attention; there would be several loafers most likely who would notice that he had a fox with him, and even if he left the hamper in the cart the dogs at the inn would be sure to sniff out her scent. So not to take any chances he drew up at the side of the road and rested there, though it was freezing hard and a north-east wind blowing.

He took down his precious hamper, unharnessed his two horses, covered them with rugs and gave them their corn. Then he opened the

basket and let his wife out. She was quite beside herself with joy, running hither and thither, bouncing up on him, looking about her and even rolling on the ground. Mr. Tebrick took this to mean that she was glad at making this journey and rejoiced equally with her. As for Mrs. Cork, she sat motionless on the back seat of the dogcart well wrapped up, eating her sandwiches, but would not speak a word. When they had stayed there half-an-hour Mr. Tebrick harnessed the horses again, though he was so cold he could scarcely buckle the straps, and put his vixen in her basket, but seeing that she wanted to look about her, he let her tear away the osiers with her teeth till she had made a hole big enough for her to put her head out of.

They drove on again and then the snow began to come down and that in earnest, so that he began to be afraid they would never cover the ground. But just after nightfall they got in, and he was content to leave unharnessing the horses and baiting them to Simon, Mrs. Cork's son. His vixen was tired by then, as well as he, and they slept together, he in the bed and she under it, very contentedly.

The next morning he looked about him at the place and found the thing there that he most wanted, and that was a little walled-in garden where his wife could run in freedom and yet be in safety.

After they had had breakfast she was wild to go out into the snow. So they went out together, and he had never seen such a mad creature in all his life as his wife was then. For she ran to and fro as if she were crazy, biting at the snow and rolling in it, and round and round in circles and rushed back at him fiercely as if she meant to bite him. He joined her in the frolic, and began snowballing her till she was so wild that it was all he could do to quiet her again and bring her indoors for luncheon. Indeed with her gambollings she tracked the whole garden over with her feet; he could see where she had rolled in the snow and where she had danced in it, and looking at those prints of her feet as they went in, made his heart ache, he knew not why.

They passed the first day at old Nanny's cottage happily enough, without their usual bickerings, and this because of the novelty of the snow which had diverted them. In the afternoon he first showed his wife to little Polly, who eyed her very curiously but hung back shyly

and seemed a good deal afraid of the fox. But Mr. Tebrick took up a book and let them get acquainted by themselves, and presently looking up saw that they had come together and Polly was stroking his wife, patting her and running her fingers through her fur. Presently she began talking to the fox, and then brought her doll in to show her so that very soon they were very good playmates together. Watching the two gave Mr. Tebrick great delight, and in particular when he noticed that there was something very motherly in his vixen. She was indeed far above the child in intelligence and restrained herself too from any hasty action. But while she seemed to wait on Polly's pleasure yet she managed to give a twist to the game, whatever it was, that never failed to delight the little girl. In short, in a very little while, Polly was so taken with her new playmate that she cried when she was parted from her and wanted her always with her. This disposition of Mrs. Tebrick's made Mrs. Cork more agreeable than she had been lately either to the husband or the wife.

Three days after they had come to the cottage the weather changed, and they woke up one morning to find the snow gone, and the wind in the south, and the sun shining, so that it was like the first beginning of spring.

Mr. Tebrick let his vixen out into the garden after breakfast, stayed with her awhile, and then went indoors to write some letters.

When he got out again he could see no sign of her anywhere, so that he ran about bewildered, calling to her. At last he spied a mound of fresh earth by the wall in one corner of the garden and running thither found that there was a hole freshly dug seeming to go under the wall. On this he ran out of the garden quickly till he came to the other side of the wall, but there was no hole there, so he concluded that she was not yet got through. So it proved to be, for reaching down into the hole he felt her brush with his hand, and could hear her distinctly working away with her claws. He called to her then, saying: "Silvia, Silvia, why do you do this? Are you trying to escape from me? I am your husband, and if I keep you confined it is to protect you, not to let you run into danger. Show me how I can make you happy and I will do it, but do not try to escape from me. I love you, Silvia; is it because of that that you want to fly from me to

go into the world where you will be in danger of your life always? There are dogs everywhere and they all would kill you if it were not for me. Come out, Silvia, come out."

But Silvia would not listen to him, so he waited there silent. Then he spoke to her in a different way, asking her had she forgot the bargain she made with him that she would not go out alone, but now when she had all the liberty of a garden to herself would she wantonly break her word? And he asked her, were they not married? And had she not always found him a good husband to her? But she heeded this neither until presently his temper getting somewhat out of hand he cursed her obstinacy and told her if she would be a damned fox she was welcome to it, for his part he could get his own way. She had not escaped yet. He would dig her out for he still had time, and if she struggled put her in a bag.

These words brought her forth instantly and she looked at him with as much astonishment as if she knew not what could have made him angry. Yes, she even fawned on him, but in a good-natured kind of way, as if she were a very good wife putting up wonderfully with her husband's temper.

These airs of hers made the poor gentleman (so simple was he) repent his outburst and feel most ashamed.

But for all that when she was out of the hole he filled it up with great stones and beat them in with a crowbar so she should find her work at that point harder than before if she was tempted to begin it again.

In the afternoon he let her go again into the garden but sent little Polly with her to keep her company. But presently on looking out he saw his vixen had climbed up into the limbs of an old pear tree and was looking over the wall, and was not so far from it but she might jump over it if she could get a little further.

Mr. Tebrick ran out into the garden as quick as he could, and when his wife saw him it seemed she was startled and made a false spring at the wall, so that she missed reaching it and fell back heavily to the ground and lay there insensible. When Mr. Tebrick got up to her he found her head was twisted under her by her fall and the neck seemed to be broken. The shock was so great to him that for

some time he could not do anything, but knelt beside her turning her limp body stupidly in his hands. At length he recognised that she was indeed dead, and beginning to consider what dreadful afflictions God had visited him with, he blasphemed horribly and called on God to strike him dead, or give his wife back to him.

"Is it not enough," he cried, adding a foul blasphemous oath, "that you should rob me of my dear wife, making her a fox, but now you must rob me of that fox too, that has been my only solace and comfort in this affliction?"

Then he burst into tears and began wringing his hands and continued there in such an extremity of grief for half-an-hour that he cared nothing, neither what he was doing, nor what would become of him in the future, but only knew that his life was ended now and he would not live any longer than he could help.

All this while the little girl Polly stood by, first staring, then asking him what had happened, and lastly crying with fear, but he never heeded her nor looked at her but only tore his hair, sometimes shouted at God, or shook his fist at Heaven. So in fright Polly opened the door and ran out of the garden.

At length worn out, and as it were all numb with his loss, Mr. Tebrick got up and went within doors, leaving his dear fox lying near where she had fallen.

He stayed indoors only two minutes and then came out again with a razor in his hand intending to cut his own throat, for he was out of his senses in this first paroxysm of grief.

But his vixen was gone, at which he looked about for a moment bewildered, and then enraged, thinking that somebody must have taken the body.

The door of the garden being open he ran straight through it. Now this door, which had been left ajar by Polly when she ran off, opened into a little courtyard where the fowls were shut in at night; the woodhouse and the privy also stood there. On the far side of it from the garden gate were two large wooden doors big enough when open to let a cart enter, and high enough to keep a man from looking over into the yard.

When Mr. Tebrick got into the yard he found his vixen leaping

up at these doors, and wild with terror, but as lively as ever he saw her in his life. He ran up to her but she shrank away from him, and would then have dodged him too, but he caught hold of her. She bared her teeth at him but he paid no heed to that, only picked her straight up into his arms and took her so indoors. Yet all the while he could scarce believe his eyes to see her living, and felt her all over very carefully to find if she had not some bones broken. But no, he could find none. Indeed it was some hours before this poor silly gentleman began to suspect the truth, which was that his vixen had practised a deception upon him, and all the time he was bemoaning his loss in such heartrending terms, she was only shamming death to run away directly she was able. If it had not been that the yard gates were shut, which was a mere chance, she had got her liberty by that trick. And that this was only a trick of hers to sham dead was plain when he had thought it over. Indeed it is an old and time-honoured trick of the fox. It is in Æsop and a hundred other writers have confirmed it since. But so thoroughly had he been deceived by her, that at first he was as much overcome with joy at his wife still being alive, as he had been with grief a little while before, thinking her dead.

He took her in his arms, hugging her to him and thanking God a dozen times for her preservation. But his kissing and fondling her had very little effect now, for she did not answer him by licking or soft looks, but stayed huddled up and sullen, with her hair bristling on her neck and her ears laid back every time he touched her. At first he thought this might be because he had touched some broken bone or tender place where she had been hurt, but at last the truth came to him.

Thus he was again to suffer, and though the pain of knowing her treachery to him was nothing to the grief of losing her, yet it was more insidious and lasting. At first, from a mere nothing, this pain grew gradually until it was a torture to him. If he had been one of your stock ordinary husbands, such a one who by experience has learnt never to enquire too closely into his wife's doings, her comings or goings, and never to ask her, "How she has spent the day?" for fear he should be made the more of a fool, had Mr. Tebrick been such a one he had been luckier, and his pain would have been almost

nothing. But you must consider that he had never been deceived once by his wife in the course of their married life. No, she had never told him as much as one white lie, but had always been frank, open and ingenuous as if she and her husband were not husband and wife, or indeed of opposite sexes. Yet we must rate him as very foolish, that living thus with a fox, which beast has the same reputation for deceitfulness, craft and cunning, in all countries, all ages, and amongst all races of mankind, he should expect this fox to be as candid and honest with him in all things as the country girl he had married.

His wife's sullenness and bad temper continued that day, for she cowered away from him and hid under the sofa, nor could he persuade her to come out from there. Even when it was her dinner time she stayed, refusing resolutely to be tempted out with food, and lying so quiet that he heard nothing from her for hours. At night he carried her up to the bedroom, but she was still sullen and refused to eat a morsel, though she drank a little water during the night, when she fancied he was asleep.

The next morning was the same, and by now Mr. Tebrick had been through all the agonies of wounded self-esteem, disillusionment and despair that a man can suffer. But though his emotions rose up in his heart and nearly stifled him he showed no sign of them to her, neither did he abate one jot his tenderness and consideration for his vixen. At breakfast he tempted her with a freshly killed young pullet. It hurt him to make this advance to her, for hitherto he had kept her strictly on cooked meats, but the pain of seeing her refuse it was harder still for him to bear. Added to this was now an anxiety lest she should starve herself to death rather than stay with him any longer.

All that morning he kept her close, but in the afternoon let her loose again in the garden after he had lopped the pear tree so that she could not repeat her performance of climbing.

But seeing how disgustedly she looked while he was by, never offering to run or to play as she was used, but only standing stock still with her tail between her legs, her ears flattened, and the hair bristling

on her shoulders, seeing this he left her to herself out of mere humanity.

When he came out after half-an-hour he found that she was gone, but there was a fair sized hole by the wall, and she just buried all but her brush, digging desperately to get under the wall and make her escape.

He ran up to the hole, and put his arm in after her and called to her to come out, but she would not. So at first he began pulling her out by the shoulder, then his hold slipping, by the hind legs. As soon as he had drawn her forth she whipped round and snapped at his hand and bit it through near the joint of the thumb, but let it go instantly.

They stayed there for a minute facing each other, he on his knees and she facing him the picture of unrepentant wickedness and fury. Being thus on his knees, Mr. Tebrick was down on her level very nearly, and her muzzle was thrust almost into his face. Her ears lay flat on her head, her gums were bared in a silent snarl, and all her beautiful teeth threatening him that she would bite him again. Her back too was half-arched, all her hair bristling and her brush held drooping. But it was her eyes that held his, with their slit pupils looking at him with savage desperation and rage.

The blood ran very freely from his hand but he never noticed that or the pain of it either, for all his thoughts were for his wife.

"What is this, Silvia?" he said very quietly, "what is this? Why are you so savage now? If I stand between you and your freedom it is because I love you. Is it such torment to be with me?" But Silvia never stirred a muscle.

"You would not do this if you were not in anguish, poor beast, you want your freedom. I cannot keep you, I cannot hold you to vows made when you were a worman. Why, you have forgotten who I am."

The tears then began running down his cheeks, he sobbed, and said to her:

"Go—I shall not keep you. Poor beast, poor beast, I love you, I love you. Go if you want to. But if you remember me come back. I shall never keep you against your will. Go—go. But kiss me now."

He leant forward then and put his lips to her snarling fangs, but though she kept snarling she did not bite him. Then he got up quickly and went to the door of the garden that opened into a little paddock against a wood.

When he opened it she went through it like an arrow, crossed the paddock like a puff of smoke and in a moment was gone from his sight. Then, suddenly finding himself alone, Mr. Tebrick came as it were to himself and ran after her, calling her by name and shouting to her, and so went plunging into the wood, and through it for about a mile, running almost blindly.

At last when he was worn out he sat down, seeing that she had gone beyond recovery and it was already night. Then, rising, he walked slowly homewards, wearied and spent in spirit. As he went he bound up his hand that was still running with blood. His coat was torn, his hat lost, and his face scratched right across with briars. Now in cold blood he began to reflect on what he had done and to repent bitterly having set his wife free. He had betrayed her so that now, from his act, she must lead the life of a wild fox for ever, and must undergo all the rigours and hardships of the climate, and all the hazards of a hunted creature. When Mr. Tebrick got back to the cottage he found Mrs. Cork was sitting up for him. It was already late.

"What have you done with Mrs. Tebrick, sir? I missed her, and I missed you, and I have not known what to do, expecting something dreadful had happened. I have been sitting up for you half the night. And where is she now, sir?"

She accosted him so vigorously that Mr. Tebrick stood silent. At length he said: "I have let her go. She has run away."

"Poor Miss Silvia!" cried the old woman. "Poor creature! You ought to be ashamed, sir! Let her go indeed! Poor lady, is that the way for her husband to talk! It is a disgrace. But I saw it coming from the first."

The old woman was white with fury, she did not mind what she said, but Mr. Tebrick was not listening to her. At last he looked at her and saw that she had just begun to cry, so he went out of the room and up to bed, and lay down as he was, in his clothes, utterly

exhausted, and fell into a dog's sleep, starting up every now and then with horror, and then falling back with fatigue. It was late when he woke up, but cold and raw, and he felt cramped in all his limbs. As he lay he heard again the noise which had woken him—the trotting of several horses, and the voices of men riding by the house. Mr. Tebrick jumped up and ran to the window and then looked out, and the first thing that he saw was a gentleman in a pink coat riding at a walk down the lane. At this sight Mr. Tebrick waited no longer, but pulling on his boots in mad haste, ran out instantly, meaning to say that they must not hunt, and how his wife was escaped and they might kill her.

But when he found himself outside the cottage words failed him and fury took possession of him, so that he could only cry out:

"How dare you, you damned blackguard?"

And so, with a stick in his hand, he threw himself on the gentleman in the pink coat and seized his horse's rein, and catching the gentleman by the leg was trying to throw him. But really it is impossible to say what Mr. Tebrick intended by his behaviour or what he would have done, for the gentleman, finding himself suddenly assaulted in so unexpected a fashion by so strange a touzled and dishevelled figure, clubbed his hunting crop and dealt him a blow on the temple so that he fell insensible.

Another gentleman rode up at this moment and they were civil enough to dismount and carry Mr. Tebrick into the cottage, where they were met by old Nanny who kept wringing her hands and told them Mr. Tebrick's wife had run away and she was a vixen, and that was the cause that Mr. Tebrick had run out and assaulted them.

The two gentlemen could not help laughing at this, and mounting their horses rode on without delay, after telling each other that Mr. Tebrick, whoever he was, was certainly a madman, and the old woman seemed as mad as her master.

This story, however, went the rounds of the gentry in those parts and perfectly confirmed everyone in their previous opinion, namely that Mr. Tebrick was mad and his wife had run away from him. The part about her being a vixen was laughed at by the few that heard it, but was soon left out as immaterial to the story, and incredible

in itself, though afterwards it came to be remembered and its significance to be understood.

When Mr. Tebrick came to himself it was past noon, and his head was aching so painfully that he could only call to mind in a confused way what had happened.

However, he sent off Mrs. Cork's son directly on one of his horses to enquire about the hunt.

At the same time he gave orders to old Nanny that she was to put out food and water for her mistress, on the chance that she might yet be in the neighbourhood.

By nightfall Simon was back with the news that the hunt had had a very long run but had lost one fox, then, drawing a covert, had chopped an old dog fox, and so ended the day's sport.

This put poor Mr. Tebrick in some hopes again, and he rose at once from his bed, and went out to the wood and began calling his wife, but was overcome with faintness, and lay down and so passed the night in the open, from mere weakness.

In the morning he got back again to the cottage but he had taken a chill, and so had to keep his bed for three or four days after.

All this time he had food put out for her every night, but though rats came to it and ate of it, there were never any prints of a fox.

At last his anxiety began working another way, that is he came to think it possible that his vixen would have gone back to Stokoe, so he had his horses harnessed in the dog cart and brought to the door and then drove over to Rylands, though he was still in a fever, and with a heavy cold upon him.

After that he lived always solitary, keeping away from his fellows and only seeing one man, called Askew, who had been brought up a jockey at Wantage, but was grown too big for his profession. He mounted this loafing fellow on one of his horses three days a week and had him follow the hunt and report to him whenever they killed, and if he could view the fox so much the better, and then he made him describe it minutely, so he should know if it were his Silvia. But he dared not trust himself to go himself, lest his passion should master him and he might commit a murder.

Every time there was a hunt in the neighbourhood he set the gates

wide open at Rylands and the house doors also, and taking his gun stood sentinel in the hope that his wife would run in if she were pressed by the hounds, and so he could save her. But only once a hunt came near, when two foxhounds that had lost the main pack strayed on to his land and he shot them instantly and buried them afterwards himself.

It was not long now to the end of the season, as it was the middle of March.

But living as he did at this time, Mr. Tebrick grew more and more to be a true misanthrope. He denied admittance to any that came to visit him, and rarely showed himself to his fellows, but went out chiefly in the early mornings before people were about, in the hope of seeing his beloved fox. Indeed it was only this hope that he would see her again that kept him alive, for he had become so careless of his own comfort in every way that he very seldom ate a proper meal, taking no more than a crust of bread with a morsel of cheese in the whole day, though sometimes he would drink half a bottle of whiskey to drown his sorrow and to get off to sleep, for sleep fled from him, and no sooner did he begin dozing but he awoke with a start thinking he had heard something. He let his beard grow too, and though he had always been very particular in his person before, he now was utterly careless of it, gave up washing himself for a week or two at a stretch, and if there was dirt under his finger nails let it stop there.

All this disorder fed a malignant pleasure to him. For by now he had come to hate his fellow men and was embittered against all human decencies and decorum. For strange to tell he never once in these months regretted his dear wife whom he had so much loved. No, all that he grieved for now was his departed vixen. He was haunted all this time not by the memory of a sweet and gentle woman, but by the recollection of an animal; a beast it is true that could sit at table and play piquet when it would, but for all that nothing really but a wild beast. His one hope now was the recovery of this beast, and of this he dreamed continually. Likewise both waking and sleeping he was visited by visions of her; her mask, her full white-tagged brush, white throat, and the thick fur in her ears all haunted him.

Every one of her foxey ways was now so absolutely precious to him that I believe that if he had known for certain she was dead, and had thoughts of marrying a second time, he would never have been happy with a woman. No, indeed, he would have been more tempted to get himself a tame fox, and would have counted that as good a marriage as he could make.

Yet this all proceeded one may say from a passion, and a true conjugal fidelity, that it would be hard to find matched in this world. And though we may think him a fool, almost a madman, we must, when we look closer, find much to respect in his extraordinary devotion. How different indeed was he from those who, if their wives go mad, shut them in madhouses and give themselves up to concubinage, and nay, what is more, there are many who extenuate such conduct too. But Mr. Tebrick was of a very different temper, and though his wife was now nothing but a hunted beast, cared for no one in the world but her.

But this devouring love ate into him like a consumption, so that by sleepless nights, and not caring for his person, in a few months he was worn to the shadow of himself. His cheeks were sunk in, his eyes hollow but excessively brilliant, and his whole body had lost flesh, so that looking at him the wonder was that he was still alive.

Now that the hunting season was over he had less anxiety for her, yet even so he was not positive that the hounds had not got her. For between the time of his setting her free, and the end of the hunting season (just after Easter), there were but three vixens killed near. Of those three one was a half-blind or wall-eyed, and one was a very grey dull-coloured beast. The third answered more to the description of his wife, but that it had not much black on the legs, whereas in her the blackness of the legs was very plain to be noticed. But yet his fear made him think that perhaps she had got mired in running and the legs being muddy were not remarked on as black.

One morning the first week in May, about four o'clock, when he was out waiting in the little copse, he sat down for a while on a tree stump, and when he looked up saw a fox coming towards him over the ploughed field. It was carrying a hare over its shoulder so that

it was nearly all hidden from him. At last, when it was not twenty yards from him, it crossed over, going into the copse, when Mr. Tebrick stood up and cried out, "Silvia, Silvia, is it you?"

The fox dropped the hare out of his mouth and stood looking at him, and then our gentleman saw at the first glance that this was not his wife. For whereas Mrs. Tebrick had been of a very bright red, this was a swarthier duller beast altogether, moreover it was a good deal larger and higher at the shoulder and had a great white tag to his brush. But the fox after the first instant did not stand for his portrait you may be sure, but picked up his hare and made off like an arrow.

Then Mr. Tebrick cried out to himself: "Indeed I am crazy now! My affliction has made me lose what little reason I ever had. Here am I taking every fox I see to be my wife. My neighbours call me a madman and now I see that they are right. Look at me now, oh God! How foul a creature I am. I hate my fellows. I am thin and wasted by this consuming passion, my reason is gone and I feed myself on dreams. Recall me to my duty, bring me back to decency, let me not become a beast likewise, but restore me and forgive me, Oh my Lord."

With that he burst into scalding tears and knelt down and prayed, a thing he had not done for many weeks.

When he rose up he walked back feeling giddy and exceedingly weak, but with a contrite heart, and then washed himself thoroughly and changed his clothes, but his weakness increasing he lay down for the rest of the day, but read in the Book of Job and was much comforted.

For several days after this he lived very soberly, for his weakness continued, but every day he read in the Bible, and prayed earnestly, so that his resolution was so much strengthened that he determined to overcome his folly, or his passion, if he could, and at any rate to live the rest of his life very religiously. So strong was this desire in him to amend his ways that he considered if he should not go to spread the Gospel abroad, for the Bible Society, and so spend the rest of his days.

Indeed he began a letter to his wife's uncle, the canon, and he was writing this when he was startled by hearing a fox bark.

Yet so great was this new turn he had taken that he did not rush out at once, as he would have done before, but stayed where he was and finished his letter.

Afterwards he said to himself that it was only a wild fox and sent by the devil to mock him, and that madness lay that way if he should listen. But on the other hand he could not deny to himself that it might have been his wife, and that he ought to welcome the prodigal. Thus he was torn between these two thoughts, neither of which did he completely believe. He stayed thus tormented with doubts and fears all night.

The next morning he woke suddenly with a start and on the instant heard a fox bark once more. At that he pulled on his clothes and ran out as fast as he could to the garden gate. The sun was not yet high, the dew thick everywhere, and for a minute or two everything was very silent. He looked about him eagerly but could see no fox, yet there was already joy in his heart.

Then while he looked up and down the road, he saw his vixen step out of the copse about thirty yards away. He called to her at once.

"My dearest wife! Oh, Silvia! You are come back!" and at the sound of his voice he saw her wag her tail, which set his last doubts at rest.

But then though he called her again, she stepped into the copse once more though she looked back at him over her shoulder as she went. At this he ran after her, but softly and not too fast lest he should frighten her away, and then looked about for her again and called to her when he saw her among the trees still keeping her distance from him. He followed her then, and as he approached so she retreated from him, yet always looking back at him several times.

He followed after her through the underwood up the side of the hill, when suddenly she disappeared from his sight, behind some bracken.

When he got there he could see her nowhere, but looking about him found a fox's earth, but so well hidden that he might have passed it by a thousand times and would never have found it unless he had made particular search at that spot.

But now, though he went on his hands and knees, he could see nothing of his vixen, so that he waited a little while wondering.

Presently he heard a noise of something moving in the earth, and so waited silently, then saw something which pushed itself into sight. It was a small sooty black beast, like a puppy. There came another behind it, then another and so on till there were five of them. Lastly there came his vixen pushing her litter before her, and while he looked at her silently, a prey to his confused and unhappy emotions, he saw that her eyes were shining with pride and happiness.

She picked up one of her youngsters then, in her mouth, and brought it to him and laid it in front of him, and then looked up at him very excited, or so it seemed.

Mr. Tebrick took the cub in his hands, stroked it and put it against his cheek. It was a little fellow with a smutty face and paws, with staring vacant eyes of a brilliant electric blue and a little tail like a carrot. When he was put down he took a step towards his mother and then sat down very comically.

Mr. Tebrick looked at his wife again and spoke to her, calling her a good creature. Already he was resigned and now, indeed, for the first time he thoroughly understood what had happened to her, and how far apart they were now. But looking first at one cub, then at another, and having them sprawling over his lap, he forgot himself, only watching the pretty scene, and taking pleasure in it. Now and then he would stroke his vixen and kiss her, liberties which she freely allowed him. He marvelled more than ever now at her beauty; for her gentleness with the cubs and the extreme delight she took in them seemed to him then to make her more lovely than before. Thus lying amongst them at the mouth of the earth he idled away the whole of the morning.

First he would play with one, then with another, rolling them over and tickling them, but they were too young yet to lend themselves to any other more active sport than this. Every now and then he would stroke his vixen, or look at her, and thus the time slipped away quite fast and he was surprised when she gathered her cubs together and pushed them before her into the earth, then coming back to him once or twice very humanly bid him "Good-bye and

that she hoped she would see him soon again, now he had found out the way."

So admirably did she express her meaning that it would have been superfluous for her to have spoken had she been able, and Mr. Tebrick, who was used to her, got up at once and went home.

But now that he was alone, all the feelings which he had not troubled himself with when he was with her, but had, as it were, put aside till after his innocent pleasures were over, all these came swarming back to assail him in a hundred tormenting ways.

Firstly he asked himself: Was not his wife unfaithful to him, had she not prostituted herself to a beast? Could he still love her after that? But this did not trouble him so much as it might have done. For now he was convinced inwardly that she could no longer in fairness be judged as a woman, but as a fox only. And as a fox she had done no more than other foxes, indeed in having cubs and tending them with love, she had done well.

Whether in this conclusion Mr. Tebrick was in the right or not, is not for us here to consider. But I would only say to those who would censure him for a too lenient view of the religious side of the matter, that we have not seen the thing as he did, and perhaps if it were displayed before our eyes we might be led to the same conclusions.

This was, however, not a tenth part of the trouble in which Mr. Tebrick found himself. For he asked himself also: "Was he not jealous?" And looking into his heart he found that he was indeed jealous, yes, and angry too, that now he must share his vixen with wild foxes. Then he questioned himself if it were not dishonourable to do so, and whether he should not utterly forget her and follow his original intention of retiring from the world, and see her no more.

Thus he tormented himself for the rest of that day, and by evening he had resolved never to see her again.

But in the middle of the night he woke up with his head very clear, and said to himself in wonder, "Am I not a madman? I torment myself foolishly with fantastic notions. Can a man have his honour sullied by a beast? I am a man, I am immeasurably superior to the animals. Can my dignity allow of my being jealous of a beast? A

thousand times no. Were I to lust after a vixen, I were a criminal indeed. I can be happy in seeing my vixen, for I love her, but she does right to be happy according to the laws of her being."

Lastly, he said to himself what was, he felt, the truth of this whole matter:

"When I am with her I am happy. But now I distort what is simple and drive myself crazy with false reasoning upon it."

Yet before he slept again he prayed, but though he had thought first to pray for guidance, in reality he prayed only that on the morrow he would see his vixen again and that God would preserve her, and her cubs too, from all dangers, and would allow him to see them often, so that he might come to love them for her sake as if he were their father, and that if this were a sin he might be forgiven, for he sinned in ignorance.

The next day or two he saw vixen and cubs again, though his visits were cut shorter, and these visits gave him such an innocent pleasure that very soon his notions of honour, duty and so on, were entirely forgotten, and his jealousy lulled asleep.

One day he tried taking with him the stereoscope and a pack of cards.

But though his Silvia was affectionate and amiable enough to let him put the stereoscope over her muzzle, yet she would not look through it, but kept turning her head to lick his hand, and it was plain to him that now she had quite forgotten the use of the instrument. It was the same too with the cards. For with them she was pleased enough, but only delighting to bite at them, and flip them about with her paws, and never considering for a moment whether they were diamonds or clubs, or hearts, or spades or whether the card was an ace or not. So it was evident that she had forgotten the nature of cards too.

Thereafter he only brought them things which she could better enjoy, that is sugar, grapes, raisins, and butcher's meat.

Bye-and-bye, as the summer wore on, the cubs came to know him, and he them, so that he was able to tell them easily apart, and then he christened them. For this purpose he brought a little bowl of water, sprinkled them as if in baptism and told them he was their godfather

and gave each of them a name, calling them Sorel, Kasper, Selwyn, Esther, and Angelica.

Sorel was a clumsy little beast of a cheery and indeed puppyish disposition; Kasper was fierce, the largest of the five, even in his play he would always bite, and gave his godfather many a sharp nip as time went on. Esther was of a dark complexion, a true brunette and very sturdy; Angelica the brightest red and the most exactly like her mother; while Selwyn was the smallest cub, of a very prying, inquisitive and cunning temper, but delicate and undersized.

Thus Mr. Tebrick had a whole family now to occupy him, and, indeed, came to love them with very much of a father's love and partiality.

His favourite was Angelica (who reminded him so much of her mother in her pretty ways) because of a gentleness which was lacking in the others, even in their play. After her in his affections came Selwyn, whom he soon saw was the most intelligent of the whole litter. Indeed he was so much more quick-witted than the rest that Mr. Tebrick was led into speculating as to whether he had not inherited something of the human from his dam. Thus very early he learnt to know his name and would come when he was called, and what was stranger still, he learnt the names of his brothers and sisters before they came to do so themselves.

Besides all this he was something of a young philosopher, for though his brother Kasper tyrannized over him he put up with it all with an unruffled temper. He was not, however, above playing tricks on the others, and one day when Mr. Tebrick was by, he made believe that there was a mouse in a hole some little way off. Very soon he was joined by Sorel, and presently by Kasper and Esther. When he had got them all digging, it was easy for him to slip away, and then he came to his godfather with a sly look, sat down before him, and smiled and then jerked his head over towards the others and smiled again and wrinkled his brows so that Mr. Tebrick knew as well as if he had spoken that the youngster was saying, "Have I not made fools of them all?"

He was the only one that was curious about Mr. Tebrick; he made him take out his watch, put his ear to it, considered it and

wrinkled up his brows in perplexity. On the next visit it was the same thing. He must see the watch again, and again think over it. But clever as he was, little Selwyn could never understand it, and if his mother remembered anything about watches it was a subject which she never attempted to explain to her children.

One day Mr. Tebrick left the earth as usual and ran down the slope to the road, when he was surprised to find a carriage waiting before his house and a coachman walking about near his gate. Mr. Tebrick went in and found that his visitor was waiting for him. It was his wife's uncle.

They shook hands, though the Rev. Canon Fox did not recognise him immediately, and Mr. Tebrick led him into the house.

The clergyman looked about him a good deal, at the dirty and disorderly rooms, and when Mr. Tebrick took him into the drawing room it was evident that it had been unused for several months, the dust lay so thickly on all the furniture.

After some conversation on indifferent topics Canon Fox said to him:

"I have called really to ask about my niece."

Mr. Tebrick was silent for some time and then said:

"She is quite happy now."

"Ah—indeed. I have heard she is not living with you any longer."

"No. She is not living with me. She is not far away. I see her every day now."

"Indeed. Where does she live?"

"In the woods with her children. I ought to tell you that she has changed her shape. She is a fox."

The Rev. Canon Fox got up; he was alarmed, and everything Mr. Tebrick said confirmed what he had been led to expect he would find at Rylands. When he was outside, however, he asked Mr. Tebrick:

"You don't have many visitors now, eh?"

"No—I never see anyone if I can avoid it. You are the first person I have spoken to for months."

"Quite right, too, my dear fellow. I quite understand—in the circumstances." Then the cleric shook him by the hand, got into his carriage and drove away.

"At any rate," he said to himself, "there will be no scandal." He was relieved also because Mr. Tebrick had said nothing about going abroad to disseminate the Gospel. Canon Fox had been alarmed by the letter, had not answered it, and thought that it was always better to let things be, and never to refer to anything unpleasant. He did not at all want to recommend Mr. Tebrick to the Bible Society if he were mad. His eccentricities would never be noticed at Stokoe. Besides that, Mr. Tebrick had said he was happy.

He was sorry for Mr. Tebrick too, and he said to himself that the queer girl, his niece, must have married him because he was the first man she had met. He reflected also that he was never likely to see her again and said aloud, when he had driven some little way:

"Not an affectionate disposition," then to his coachman: "No, that's all right. Drive on, Hopkins."

When Mr. Tebrick was alone he rejoiced exceedingly in his solitary life. He understood, or so he fancied, what it was to be happy, and that he had found complete happiness now, living from day to day, careless of the future, surrounded every morning by playful and affectionate little creatures whom he loved tenderly, and sitting beside their mother, whose simple happiness was the source of his own.

"True happiness," he said to himself, "is to be found in bestowing love; there is no such happiness as that of the mother for her babe, unless I have attained it in mine for my vixen and her children."

With these feelings he waited impatiently for the hour on the morrow when he might hasten to them once more.

When, however, he had toiled up the hillside, to the earth, taking infinite precaution not to tread down the bracken, or make a beaten path which might lead others to that secret spot, he found to his surprise that Silvia was not there and that there were no cubs to be seen either. He called to them, but it was in vain, and at last he laid himself on the mossy bank beside the earth and waited.

For a long while, as it seemed to him, he lay very still, with closed eyes, straining his ears to hear every rustle among the leaves, or any sound that might be the cubs stirring in the earth.

At last he must have dropped asleep, for he woke suddenly with all his senses alert, and opening his eyes found a full-grown fox within

six feet of him sitting on its haunches like a dog and watching his face with curiosity. Mr. Tebrick saw instantly that it was not Silvia. When he moved the fox got up and shifted his eyes, but still stood his ground, and Mr. Tebrick recognised him then for the dog-fox he had seen once before carrying a hare. It was the same dark beast with a large white tag to his brush. Now the secret was out and Mr. Tebrick could see his rival before him. Here was the real father of his godchildren, who could be certain of their taking after him, and leading over again his wild and rakish life. Mr. Tebrick stared for a long time at the handsome rogue, who glanced back at him with distrust and watchfulness patent in his face, but not without defiance too, and it seemed to Mr. Tebrick as if there was also a touch of cynical humour in his look, as if he said:

"By Gad! we two have been strangely brought together!"

And to the man, at any rate, it seemed strange that they were thus linked, and he wondered if the love his rival there bare to his vixen and his cubs were the same thing in kind as his own.

"We would both of us give our lives for theirs," he said to himself as he reasoned upon it, "we both of us are happy chiefly in their company. What pride this fellow must feel to have such a wife, and such children taking after him. And has he not reason for his pride? He lives in a world where he is beset with a thousand dangers. For half the year he is hunted, everywhere dogs pursue him, men lay traps for him or menace him. He owes nothing to another."

But he did not speak, knowing that his words would only alarm the fox; then in a few minutes he saw the dog-fox look over his shoulder, and then he trotted off as lightly as a gossamer veil blown in the wind, and, in a minute or two more, back he comes with his vixen and the cubs all around him. Seeing the dog-fox thus surrounded by vixen and cubs was too much for Mr. Tebrick; in spite of all his philosophy a pang of jealousy shot through him. He could see that Silvia had been hunting with her cubs, and also that she had forgotten that he would come that morning, for she started when she saw him, and though she carelessly licked his hand, he could see that her thoughts were not with him.

Very soon she led her cubs into the earth, the dog-fox had vanished

and Mr. Tebrick was again alone. He did not wait longer but went home.

Now was his peace of mind all gone, the happiness which he had flattered himself the night before he knew so well how to enjoy, seemed now but a fool's paradise in which he had been living. A hundred times this poor gentleman bit his lip, drew down his torvous brows, and stamped his foot, and cursed himself bitterly, or called his lady bitch. He could not forgive himself neither, that he had not thought of the damned dog-fox before, but all the while had let the cubs frisk round him, each one a proof that a dog-fox had been at work with his vixen. Yes, jealousy was now in the wind, and every circumstance which had been a reason for his felicity the night before was now turned into a monstrous feature of his nightmare. With all this Mr. Tebrick so worked upon himself that for the time being he had lost his reason. Black was white and white black, and he was resolved that on the morrow he would dig the vile brood of foxes out and shoot them, and so free himself at last from this hellish plague.

All that night he was in this mood, and in agony, as if he had broken in the crown of a tooth and bitten on the nerve. But as all things will have an ending so at last Mr. Tebrick, worn out and wearied by this loathed passion of jealousy, fell into an uneasy and tormented sleep.

After an hour or two the procession of confused and jumbled images which first assailed him passed away and subsided into one clear and powerful dream. His wife was with him in her own proper shape, walking as they had been on that fatal day before her transformation. Yet she was changed too, for in her face there were visible tokens of unhappiness, her face swollen with crying, pale and downcast, her hair hanging in disorder, her damp hands wringing a small handkerchief into a ball, her whole body shaken with sobs, and an air of long neglect about her person. Between her sobs she was confessing to him some crime which she had committed, but he did not catch her broken words, nor did he wish to hear them, for he was dulled by her sorrow. So they continued walking together in sadness as it were for ever, he with his arm about her waist, she turning her head to him and often casting her eyes down in distress.

At last they sat down, and he spoke, saying: "I know they are not my children, but I shall not use them barbarously because of that. You are still my wife. I swear to you they shall never be neglected. I will pay for their education."

Then he began turning over the names of schools in his mind. Eton would not do, nor Harrow, nor Winchester, nor Rugby. . . . But he could not tell why these schools would not do for these children of hers, he only knew that every school he thought of was impossible, but surely one could be found. So turning over the names of schools he sat for a long while holding his dear wife's hand, till at length, still weeping, she got up and went away and then slowly he awoke.

But even when he had opened his eyes and looked about him he was thinking of schools, saying to himself that he must send them to a private academy or even at the worst engage a tutor. "Why, yes," he said to himself, putting one foot out of bed, "that is what it must be, a tutor, though even then there will be a difficulty at first."

At those words he wondered what difficulty there would be and recollected that they were not ordinary children. No, they were foxes —mere foxes. When poor Mr. Tebrick had remembered this he was, as it were, dazed or stunned by the fact, and for a long time he could understand nothing, but at last burst into a flood of tears compassionating them and himself too. The awfulness of the fact itself, that his dear wife should have foxes instead of children, filled him with an agony of pity, and, at length, when he recollected the cause of their being foxes, that is that his wife was a fox also, his tears broke out anew, and he could bear it no longer but began calling out in his anguish, and beat his head once or twice against the wall, and then cast himself down on his bed again and wept and wept, sometimes tearing the sheets asunder with his teeth.

The whole of that day, for he was not to go to the earth till evening, he went about sorrowfully, torn by true pity for his poor vixen and her children.

At last when the time came he went again up to the earth, which he found deserted, but hearing his voice, out came Esther. But though he called the others by their names there was no answer, and something in the way the cub greeted him made him fancy she was indeed

alone. She was truly rejoiced to see him, and scrambled up into his arms, and thence to his shoulder, kissing him, which was unusual in her (though natural enough in her sister Angelica). He sat down a little way from the earth fondling her, and fed her with some fish he had brought for her mother, which she ate so ravenously that he concluded she must have been short of food that day and probably alone for some time.

At last while he was sitting there Esther pricked up her ears, started up, and presently Mr. Tebrick saw his vixen come towards them. She greeted him very affectionately but it was plain had not much time to spare, for she soon started back whence she had come with Esther at her side. When they had gone about a rod the cub hung back and kept stopping and looked back to the earth, and at last turned and ran back home. But her mother was not to be fobbed off so, for she quickly overtook her child and gripping her by the scruff began to drag her along with her.

Mr. Tebrick, seeing then how matters stood, spoke to her, telling her he would carry Esther if she would lead, so after a little while Silvia gave her over, and then they set out on their strange journey.

Silvia went running on a little before while Mr. Tebrick followed after with Esther in his arms whimpering and struggling now to be free, and indeed, once she gave him a nip with her teeth. This was not so strange a thing to him now, and he knew the remedy for it, which is much the same as with others whose tempers run too high, that is a taste of it themselves. Mr. Tebrick shook her and gave her a smart little cuff, after which, though she sulked, she stopped her biting.

They went thus above a mile, circling his house and crossing the highway until they gained a small covert that lay with some waste fields adjacent to it. And by this time it was so dark that it was all Mr. Tebrick could do to pick his way, for it was not always easy for him to follow where his vixen found a big enough road for herself.

But at length they came to another earth, and by the starlight Mr. Tebrick could just make out the other cubs skylarking in the shadows.

Now he was tired, but he was happy and laughed softly for joy,

and presently his vixen, coming to him, put her feet upon his shoulders as he sat on the ground, and licked him, and he kissed her back on the muzzle and gathered her in his arms and rolled her in his jacket and then laughed and wept by turns in the excess of his joy.

All his jealousies of the night before were forgotten now. All his desperate sorrow of the morning and the horror of his dream were gone. What if they were foxes? Mr. Tebrick found that he could be happy with them. As the weather was hot he lay out there all the night, first playing hide and seek with them in the dark till, missing his vixen and the cubs proving obstreperous, he lay down and was soon asleep.

He was woken up soon after dawn by one of the cubs tugging at his shoelaces in play. When he sat up he saw two of the cubs standing near him on their hind legs, wrestling with each other, the other two were playing hide and seek round a tree trunk, and now Angelica let go his laces and came romping into his arms to kiss him and say "Good morning" to him, then worrying the points of his waistcoat a little shyly after the warmth of his embrace.

That moment of awakening was very sweet to him. The freshness of the morning, the scent of everything at the day's rebirth, the first beams of the sun upon a tree-top near, and a pigeon rising into the air suddenly, all delighted him. Even the rough scent of the body of the cub in his arms seemed to him delicious.

At that moment all human customs and institutions seemed to him nothing but folly; for said he, "I would exchange all my life as a man for my happiness now, and even now I retain almost all of the ridiculous conceptions of a man. The beasts are happier and I will deserve that happiness as best I can."

After he had looked at the cubs playing merrily, how, with soft stealth, one would creep behind another to bounce out and startle him, a thought came into Mr. Tebrick's head, and that was that these cubs were innocent, they were as stainless snow, they could not sin, for God had created them to be thus and they could break none of His commandments. And he fancied also that men sin because they cannot be as the animals.

Presently he got up full of happiness, and began making his way

home when suddenly he came to a full stop and asked himself: "What is going to happen to them?"

This question rooted him stockishly in a cold and deadly fear as if he had seen a snake before him. At last he shook his head and hurried on his path. Aye, indeed, what would become of his vixen and her children?

This thought put him into such a fever of apprehension that he did his best not to think of it any more, but yet it stayed with him all that day and for weeks after, at the back of his mind, so that he was not careless in his happiness as before, but as it were trying continually to escape his own thoughts.

This made him also anxious to pass all the time he could with his dear Silvia, and, therefore, he began going out to them for more of the daytime, and then he would sleep the night in the woods also as he had done that night; and so he passed several weeks, only returning to his house occasionally to get himself a fresh provision of food. But after a week or ten days at the new earth both his vixen and the cubs, too, got a new habit of roaming. For a long while back, as he knew, his vixen had been lying out alone most of the day, and now the cubs were all for doing the same thing. The earth, in short, had served its purpose and was now distasteful to them, and they would not enter it unless pressed with fear.

This new manner of their lives was an added grief to Mr. Tebrick, for sometimes he missed them for hours together, or for the whole day even, and not knowing where they might be was lonely and anxious. Yet his Silvia was thoughtful for him too and would often send Angelica or another of the cubs to fetch him to their new lair, or come herself if she could spare the time. For now they were all perfectly accustomed to his presence, and had come to look on him as their natural companion, and although he was in many ways irksome to them by scaring rabbits, yet they always rejoiced to see him when they had been parted from him. This friendliness of theirs was, you may be sure, the source of most of Mr. Tebrick's happiness at this time. Indeed he lived now for nothing but his foxes, his love for his vixen had extended itself insensibly to include her cubs, and these were now his daily playmates so that he knew them as well as if they

had been his own children. With Selwyn and Angelica indeed he was always happy; and they never so much as when they were with him. He was not stiff in his behaviour either, but had learnt by this time as much from his foxes as they had from him. Indeed never was there a more curious alliance than this or one with stranger effects upon both of the parties.

Mr. Tebrick now could follow after them anywhere and keep up with them too, and could go through a wood as silently as a deer. He learnt to conceal himself if ever a labourer passed by so that he was rarely seen, and never but once in their company. But what was most strange of all, he had got a way of going doubled up, often almost on all fours with his hands touching the ground every now and then, particularly when he went uphill.

He hunted with them too sometimes, chiefly by coming up and scaring rabbits towards where the cubs lay ambushed, so that the bunnies ran straight into their jaws.

He was useful to them in other ways, climbing up and robbing pigeon's nests for the eggs which they relished exceedingly, or by occasionally dispatching a hedgehog for them so they did not get the prickles in their mouths. But while on his part he thus altered his conduct, they on their side were not behindhand, but learnt a dozen human tricks from him that are ordinarily wanting in Reynard's education.

One evening he went to a cottager who had a row of skeps, and bought one of them, just as it was after the man had smothered the bees. This he carried to the foxes that they might taste the honey, for he had seen them dig out wild bees' nests often enough. The skep full was indeed a wonderful feast for them, they bit greedily into the heavy scented comb, their jaws were drowned in the sticky flood of sweetness, and they gorged themselves on it without restraint. When they had crunched up the last morsel they tore the skep in pieces, and for hours afterwards they were happily employed in licking themselves clean.

That night he slept near their lair, but they left him and went hunting. In the morning when he woke he was quite numb with cold,

and faint with hunger. A white mist hung over everything and the wood smelt of autumn.

He got up and stretched his cramped limbs and then walked homewards. The summer was over and Mr. Tebrick noticed this now for the first time and was astonished. He reflected that the cubs were fast growing up, they were foxes at all points, and yet when he thought of the time when they had been sooty and had blue eyes it seemed to him only yesterday. From that he passed to thinking of the future, asking himself as he had done once before what would become of his vixen and her children. Before the winter he must tempt them into the security of his garden, and fortify it against all the dangers that threatened them.

But though he tried to allay his fear with such resolutions he remained uneasy all that day. When he went out to them that afternoon he found only his wife Silvia there and it was plain to him that she too was alarmed, but alas, poor creature, she could tell him nothing, only lick his hands and face, and turn about pricking her ears at every sound.

"Where are your children, Silvia?" he asked her several times, but she was impatient of his questions, but at last sprang into his arms, flattened herself upon his breast and kissed him gently, so that when he departed his heart was lighter because he knew that she still loved him.

That night he slept indoors, but in the morning early he was awoken by the sound of trotting horses, and running to the window saw a farmer riding by very sprucely dressed. Could they be hunting so soon, he wondered, but presently reassured himself that it could not be a hunt already.

He heard no other sound till eleven o'clock in the morning when suddenly there was the clamour of hounds giving tongue and not so far off neither. At this Mr. Tebrick ran out of his house distracted and set open the gates of his garden, but with iron bars and wire at the top so the huntsmen could not follow. There was silence again; it seems the fox must have turned away, for there was no other sound of the hunt. Mr. Tebrick was now like one helpless with fear, he dared not go out, yet could not stay still at home. There was nothing

that he could do, yet he would not admit this, so he busied himself in making holes in the hedges, so that Silvia (or her cubs) could enter from whatever side she came.

At last he forced himself to go indoors and sit down and drink some tea. While he was there he fancied he heard the hounds again; it was but a faint ghostly echo of their music, yet when he ran out of the house it was already close at hand in the copse above.

Now it was that poor Mr. Tebrick made his great mistake, for hearing the hounds almost outside the gate he ran to meet them, whereas rightly he should have run back to the house. As soon as he reached the gate he saw his wife Silvia coming towards him but very tired with running and just upon her the hounds. The horror of that sight pierced him, for ever afterwards he was haunted by those hounds—their eagerness, their desperate efforts to gain on her, and their blind lust for her came at odd moments to frighten him all his life. Now he should have run back, though it was already late, but instead he cried out to her, and she ran straight through the open gate to him. What followed was all over in a flash, but it was seen by many witnesses.

The side of Mr. Tebrick's garden there is bounded by a wall, about six feet high and curving round, so that the huntsmen could see over this wall inside. One of them indeed put his horse at it very boldly, which was risking his neck, and although he got over safe was too late to be of much assistance.

His vixen had at once sprung into Mr. Tebrick's arms, and before he could turn back the hounds were upon them and had pulled them down. Then at that moment there was a scream of despair heard by all the field that had come up, which they declared afterwards was more like a woman's voice than a man's. But yet there was no clear proof whether it was Mr. Tebrick or his wife who had suddenly regained her voice. When the huntsman who had leapt the wall got to them and had whipped off the hounds Mr. Tebrick had been terribly mauled and was bleeding from twenty wounds. As for his vixen she was dead, though he was still clasping her dead body in his arms.

Mr. Tebrick was carried into the house at once and assistance sent

for, but there was no doubt now about his neighbours being in the right when they called him mad.

For a long while his life was despaired of, but at last he rallied, and in the end he recovered his reason and lived to be a great age, for that matter he is still alive.

CHARLEY LAMBERT

J. M. Synge

THERE WAS A MAN OF THE NAME OF CHARLEY LAMBERT, AND EVERY horse he would ride in a race he would come in the first.

The people in the country were angry with him at last, and this law was made, that he should ride no more at races, and if he rode, any one who saw him would have the right to shoot him. After that there was a gentleman from that part of the country over in England, and he was talking one day with the people there, and he said that the horses of Ireland were the best horses. The English said it was the English horses were the best, and at last they said there should be a race, and the English horses would come over and race against the horses of Ireland, and the gentleman put all his money on that race.

Well, when he came back to Ireland he went to Charley Lambert, and asked him to ride on his horse. Charley said he would not ride, and told the gentleman the danger he'd be in. Then the gentleman told him the way he had put all his property on the horse, and at last Charley asked where the races were to be, and the hour and the day. The gentleman told him.

'Let you put a horse with a bridle and saddle on it every seven miles along the road from here to the racecourse on that day,' said Lambert, 'and I'll be in it.'

When the gentleman was gone, Charley stripped off his clothes and got into his bed. Then he sent for the doctor, and when he heard him coming he began throwing about his arms the way the doctor would think his pulse was up with the fever.

The doctor felt his pulse and told him to stay quiet till the next day, when he would see him again.

The next day it was the same thing, and so on till the day of the

races. That morning Charley had his pulse beating so hard the doctor thought bad of him.

'I'm going to the races now, Charley,' said he, 'but I'll come in and see you again when I'll be coming back in the evening, and let you be very careful and quiet till you see me.'

As soon as he had gone Charley leapt up out of bed and got on his horse, and rode seven miles to where the first horse was waiting for him. Then he rode that horse seven miles, and another horse seven miles more, till he came to the racecourse.

He rode on the gentleman's horse and he won the race.

There were great crowds looking on, and when they saw him coming in they said it was Charley Lambert, or the devil was in it, for there was no one else could bring in a horse the way he did, for the leg was after being knocked off of the horse and he came in all the same.

When the race was over, he got up on the horse was waiting for him, and away with him for seven miles. Then he rode the other horse seven miles, and his own horse seven miles, and when he got home he threw off his clothes and lay down on his bed.

After a while the doctor came back and said it was a great race they were after having.

The next day the people were saying it was Charley Lambert was the man who rode the horse. An inquiry was held, and the doctor swore that Charley was ill in his bed, and he had seen him before the race and after it, so the gentleman saved his fortune.

THE BOLD DRAGOON; OR, THE ADVENTURE OF MY GRANDFATHER

Washington Irving

MY GRANDFATHER WAS A BOLD DRAGOON, FOR IT'S A PROFESSION, d'ye see, that has run in the family. All my forefathers have been dragoons, and died on the field of honour, except myself, and I hope my posterity may be able to say the same; however, I don't mean to be vainglorious. Well, my grandfather, as I said, was a bold dragoon, and had served in the Low Countries. In fact, he was one of that very army, which, according to my uncle Toby, swore so terribly in Flanders. He could swear a good stick himself; and moreover was the very man that introduced the doctrine Corporal Trim mentions of radical heat and radical moisture; or, in other words, the mode of keeping out the damps of ditch-water by burnt brandy. Be that as it may, it's nothing to the purport of my story. I only tell it to show you that my grandfather was a man not easily to be humbugged. He had seen service, or, according to his own phrase, he had seen the devil—and that's saying every thing.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was on his way to England, for which he intended to embark from Ostend—bad luck to the place! for one where I was kept by storms and headwinds for three long days, and the devil of a jolly companion or pretty face to comfort me. Well, as I was saying, my grandfather was on his way to England, or rather to Ostend—no matter which, it's all the same. So one evening, towards nightfall, he rode jollily into Bruges.—Very like you all know Bruges, gentlemen; a queer old-fashioned Flemish town, once, they say, a great place for trade and moneymaking in old times, when the

Mynheers were in their glory; but almost as large and as empty as an Irishman's pocket at the present day.—Well, gentlemen, it was at the time of the annual fair. All Bruges was crowded; and the canals swarmed with Dutch boats, and the streets swarmed with Dutch merchants; and there was hardly any getting along for goods, wares, and merchandises, and peasants in big breeches, and women in half a score of petticoats.

My grandfather rode jollily along, in his easy slashing way, for he was a saucy, sunshiny fellow—staring about him at the motley crowd, and the old houses with gable ends to the street, and storks' nests in the chimneys; winking at the yafrows who showed their faces at the windows, and joking the women right and left in the street; all of whom laughed, and took it in amazing good part; for though he did not know a word of the language, yet he had always a knack of making himself understood among the women.

Well, gentlemen, it being the time of the annual fair, all the town was crowded, every inn and tavern full, and my grandfather applied in vain from one to the other for admittance. At length he rode up to an old rickety inn that looked ready to fall to pieces, and which all the rats would have run away from, if they could have found room in any other house to put their heads. It was just such a queer building as you see in Dutch pictures, with a tall roof that reached up into the clouds, and as many garrets, one over the other, as the seven heavens of Mahomet. Nothing had saved it from tumbling down but a stork's nest on the chimney, which always brings good luck to a house in the Low Countries; and at the very time of my grandfather's arrival, there were two of these long-legged birds of grace standing like ghosts on the chimney-top. Faith, but they've kept the house on its legs to this very day, for you may see it any time you pass through Bruges, as it stands there yet, only it is turned into a brewery of strong Flemish beer,—at least it was so when I came that way after the battle of Waterloo.

My grandfather eyed the house curiously as he approached. It might not have altogether struck his fancy, had he not seen in large letters over the door, "HEER VERKOOPT MAN GOEDEN DRANK." My grandfather had learnt enough of the language to know that the sign

promised good liquor. "This is the house for me," said he, stopping short before the door.

The sudden appearance of a dashing dragoon was an event in an old inn, frequented only by the peaceful sons of traffic. A rich burgher of Antwerp, a stately ample man in a broad Flemish hat, and who was the great man and great patron of the establishment, sat smoking a clean long pipe on one side of the door; a fat little distiller of Geneva, from Schiedam, sat smoking on the other; and the bottle-nosed host stood in the door, and the comely hostess, in crimped cap, beside him: and the hostess's daughter, a plump Flanders lass, with long gold pendants in her ears, was at a side window.

"Humph!" said the rich burgher of Antwerp, with a sulky glance at the stranger.

"De duyvel!" said the fat little distiller of Schiedam.

The landlord saw, with the quick glance of a publican, that the new guest was not at all to the taste of the old ones; and, to tell the truth, he did not like my grandfather's saucy eye. He shook his head. "Not a garret in the house but was full."

"Not a garret!" echoed the landlady.

"Not a garret!" echoed the daughter.

The burgher of Antwerp, and the little distiller of Schiedam, continued to smoke their pipes sullenly, eyeing the enemy askance from under their broad hats, but said nothing.

My grandfather was not a man to be browbeaten. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, cocked his head on one side, stuck one arm akimbo,—"Faith and troth!" said he, "but I'll sleep in this house this very night."—As he said this he gave a slap on his thigh, by way of emphasis—the slap went to the landlady's heart.

He followed up the vow by jumping off his horse, and making his way past the staring Mynheers into the public room.—May be you've been in the bar-room of an old Flemish inn—faith, but a handsome chamber it was as you'd wish to see; with a brick floor, and a great fireplace, with the whole Bible history in glazed tiles; and then the mantel-piece, pitching itself head foremost out of the wall, with a whole regiment of cracked teapots and earthen jugs paraded on it; not to mention half a dozen great Delft platters, hung about the room

by way of pictures; and the little bar in one corner, and the bouncing bar-maid inside of it, with a red calico cap and yellow ear-drops.

My grandfather snapped his fingers over his head, as he cast an eye round the room—"Faith, this is the very house I've been looking after," said he.

There was some further show of resistance on the part of the garrison: but my grandfather was an old soldier, and an Irishman to boot, and not easily repulsed, especially after he had got into the fortress. So he blarneyed the landlord, kissed the landlord's wife, tickled the landlord's daughter, chucked the bar-maid under the chin; and it was agreed on all hands that it would be a thousand pities, and a burning shame into the bargain, to turn such a bold dragoon into the streets. So they laid their heads together, that is to say, my grandfather and the landlady, and it was at length agreed to accommodate him with an old chamber that had been for some time shut up.

"Some say it's haunted," whispered the landlord's daughter; "but you are a bold dragoon, and I dare say don't fear ghosts."

"The devil a bit!" said my grandfather, pinching her plump cheek. "But if I should be troubled by ghosts, I've been to the Red Sea in my time, and have a pleasant way of laying them, my darling."

And then he whispered something to the girl which made her laugh, and give him a good-humoured box on the ear. In short, there was nobody knew better how to make his way among the petticoats than my grandfather.

In a little while, as was his usual way, he took complete possession of the house, swaggering all over it; into the stable to look after his horse, into the kitchen to look after his supper. He had something to say or do with every one; smoked with the Dutchmen, drank with the Germans, slapped the landlord on the shoulder, romped with his daughter and the bar-maid:—never, since the days of Alley Croaker, had such a rattling blade been seen. The landlord stared at him with astonishment; the landlord's daughter hung her head and giggled whenever he came near; and as he swaggered along the corridor, with his sword trailing by his side, the maids looked after him, and whispered to one another, "What a proper man!"

At supper, my grandfather took command of the table-d'hôte

as though he had been at home; helped every body, not forgetting himself; talked with every one, whether he understood their language or not; and made his way into the intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any one during his life. In fact, he revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse that the very house reeled with it. He outsat every one at table excepting the little fat distiller of Schiedam, who sat soaking a long time before he broke forth; but when he did, he was a very devil incarnate. He took a violent affection for my grandfather; so they sat drinking and smoking, and telling stories, and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hickuping, and trolling the burden of a Low Dutch love-song.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was shown to his quarters up a large staircase, composed of loads of hewn timber; and through long rigmarole passages, hung with blackened paintings of fish, and fruit, and game, and country frolics, and huge kitchens, and portly burgomasters, such as you see about old-fashioned Flemish inns, till at length he arrived at his room.

An old-times chamber it was, sure enough, and crowded with all kinds of trumpery. It looked like an infirmary for decayed and superannuated furniture, where everything diseased or disabled was sent to nurse or to be forgotten. Or rather it might be taken for a general congress of old legitimate movables, where every kind and country had a representative. No two chairs were alike. Such high backs and low backs, and leather bottoms and worsted bottoms, and straw bottoms, and no bottoms; and cracked marble tables with curiously carved legs, holding balls in their claws, as though they were going to play at nine-pins.

My grandfather made a bow to the motley assemblage as he entered, and, having undressed himself, placed his light in the fireplace, asking pardon of the tongs, which seemed to be making love to the shovel in the chimney-corner, and whispering soft nonsense in its ear.

The rest of the guests were by this time sound asleep, for your Mynheers are huge sleepers. The housemaids, one by one, crept up

yawning to their attics; and not a female head in the inn was laid on a pillow that night without dreaming of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him. So, sure enough, in a little time it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in a fever heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers; who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bull-frogs in a swamp. The quieter the house became, the more unquiet became my grandfather. He waxed warmer and warmer, until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

"May be the maid had warmed it too much?" said the curious gentleman, inquiringly.

"I rather think the contrary," replied the Irishman. "But, be that as it may, it grew too hot for my grandfather."

"Faith, there's no standing this any longer," says he. So he jumped out of bed and went strolling about the house.

"What for?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Why to cool himself, to be sure—or perhaps to find a more comfortable bed—or perhaps—But no matter what he went for—he never mentioned—and there's no use in taking up our time in conjecturing."

Well, my grandfather had been for some time absent from his room, and was returning, perfectly cool, when just as he reached the door he heard a strange noise within. He paused and listened. It seemed as if some one were trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma. He recollected the report of the room being haunted; but he was no believer in ghosts, so he pushed the door gently open and peeped in.

Egad, gentlemen, there was a gambol carrying on within enough to have astonished St. Anthony himself. By the light of the fire he saw a pale weazen-faced fellow, in a long flannel gown and a

tall white night-cap with a tassel to it, who sat by the fire with a bellows under his arm by way of bagpipe, from which he forced the asthmatical music that had bothered my grandfather. As he played, too, he kept twitching about with a thousand queer contortions, nodding his head, and bobbing about his tasselled night-cap.

My grandfather thought this very odd and mighty presumptuous, and was about to demand what business he had to play his wind instrument in another gentleman's quarters, when a new cause of astonishment met his eye. From the opposite side of the room a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a coxcombical fashion with little brass nails, got suddenly into motion, thrust out first a claw-foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slided gracefully up to an easy chair of tarnished brocade, with a hole in its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minute about the floor.

The musician now played fiercer and fiercer, and bobbed his head and his night-cap about like mad. By degrees the dancing mania seemed to seize upon all the other pieces of furniture. The antique, long-bodied chairs paired off in couples and led down a country dance; a three-legged stool danced a hornpipe, though horribly puzzled by its supernumerary limb; while the amorous tongs seized the shovel round the waist, and whirled it about the room in a German waltz. In short, all the movables got in motion: pirouetting hands across, right and left, like so many devils; all except a great clothes-press, which kept courtesying and courtesying in a corner, like a dowager, in exquisite time to the music; being rather too corpulent to dance, or perhaps at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, called to the musician to strike up Paddy O'Rafferty, capered up to the clothes-press, and seized upon the two handles to lead her out:——when—whirr! the whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs, and shovel, slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened, and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle

of the floor with the clothes-press sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off, and in his hands.

"Then, after all, this was a mere dream!" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"The divil a bit of a dream!" replied the Irishman. "There never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream."

Well, gentlemen, as the clothes-press was a mighty heavy body, and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose that two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would make a bit of a noise. Faith, the old mansion shook as though it had mistaken it for an earthquake. The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause, but with all his haste his daughter had arrived at the scene of uproar before him. The landlord was followed by the landlady, who was followed by the bouncing bar-maid, who was followed by the simpering chamber-maids, all holding together, as well as they could, such garments as they had first laid hands on; but all in a terrible hurry to see what the deuce was to pay in the chamber of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather related the marvellous scene he had witnessed, and the broken handles of the prostrate clothes-press bore testimony to the fact. There was no contesting such evidence; particularly with a lad of my grandfather's complexion, who seemed able to make good every word either with sword or shillelah. So the landlord scratched his head and looked silly, as he was apt to do when puzzled. The landlady scratched—no, she did not scratch her head, but she knit her brow, and did not seem half pleased with the explanation. But the landlady's daughter corroborated it by recollecting that the last person who had dwelt in that chamber was a famous juggler who had died of St. Vitus's dance, and had no doubt infected all the furniture.

This set all things to rights, particularly when the chamber-maids declared that they had all witnessed strange carryings on in that room; and as they declared this "upon their honours," there could not remain a doubt upon the subject.

"And did your grandfather go to bed again in that room?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"That's more than I can tell. Where he passed the rest of the night was a secret he never disclosed. In fact, though he had seen much service, he was but indifferently acquainted with geography, and apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night, which it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning."

"Was he ever apt to walk in his sleep?" said the knowing old gentleman.

"Never that I heard of."

THE VIXEN

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

THE VIXEN MADE FOR DEADMAN'S FLOW
Where not a mare but mine could go;
And three hounds only splashed across
The quaking hags of mile-wide moss—
Only three of the dead-beat pack
Scrambled out by lone Maid's Slack:
Bolter, Tough, and Ne'er-Die-Nell;
But as they broke across the fell
The tongue they gave was good to hear,
Lively music clean and clear
Such as only light-coats make,
Hot-trod through the girth-deep brake.

The vixen, draggled and nigh-spent,
Twisted through the rimy bent
Towards the Christhope Crags. I thought—
Every earth stopped, winded, caught—
She's a mask and brush! When white
A squall of snow swept all from sight,
And hoodman-blind Lightfoot and I
Battled with the roaring sky.

When southerly the snow had swept,
Light broke as the vixen crept
Slinking up the stony brae.
On a jutting scar she lay,
Panting, lathered, while she eyed

The hounds that took the stiff brae-side
With yelping music, mad to kill.

Then vixen, hounds, and craggy hill
Were smothered in a blinding swirl;
And when it passed there stood a girl
Where the vixen late had lain,
Smiling down as I drew rein
Baffled, and the hounds dead-beat,
Fawning at the young girl's feet,
Whimpered, cowed, where her red hair,
Streaming to her ankles bare,
Turned as white among the heather
As the vixen's brush's feather.

Flinching on my flinching mare,
I watched her gaping and astare
As she smiled with red lips wide—
White fangs curving either side
Of her lolling tongue . . . My thrapple
Felt fear's fang: I strove, agrapple,
Reeling . . . and again blind snow
Closed like night. . . .

No man may know
How Lightfoot won through Deadman's Flow,
And naught I knew till in the glow
Of home's wide door my wife's kind face
Smiled welcome, and for me the chase—
The last chase ended. Though the pack
Through the blizzard struggled back,
Gone were Bolter, Tough, and Nell,
Where, the vixen's self can tell!
Long we sought them high and low
By Christhope Crag and Deadman's Flow,
By slack and syke and hag, and found
Never bone nor hair of hound.

A BLAZING STARRE SEENE IN THE WEST

A Blazing Starre seene/Jn The/West/At *Totneis* in *Devonshire*, on the foureteenth/of this instant *November*, 1642./Wherin is manifested how Master/*Ralph Ashley*, a deboyst Cavalier, attem-/ted to ravish a young Virgin, the/Daughter of Mr. *Adam Fisher*, in-/habiting neare the said Towne./Also how at that instant, a fearefull Comet/appeared, to the terrour and amazment of/all the Country thereabouts./Likewise declaring how he persisting/in his damnable attemt, was struck with/a flaming Sword, which issued from the/Comet, so that he dyed a fearefull ex-/ample to al his fellow Cavaliers./London,/Printed for *Jonas Wright*, and *I. H.* 1642./

A Blazing Starre in the West, or fearefull Comet seene in the Aire at *Totneis* in *Devonshire*, on the foureteenth of this instant *November*, 1642.

SO IT HAPPENED ON MUNDAY THE 14.TH OF THIS INSTANT *November*, that a young Virgine, Daughter to Master *Adam Fisher*, inhabitant in *Devonshire*, within a mile of *Totneyes*, upon some particular occasions happened to go to the said Towne, where being busied, partly about her occasions, and partly in visiting some Friends and Kinsfolkes, she was belated, so that her Friends were importunate to have her stay all night, but she replyed, that her Father would be discontented if she should be absent without his leave, the times being so dangerous, and so many Cavaliers abroad, wherefore she was resolved hap what might hap, to goe home that night.

Notwithstanding all these reasons which she alledged, her Friend grew importunate to have her stay, telling her that there were many deboyst Cavaliers abroad, so that they could not passe securely in

the day time, much lesse in the night, for all this she would not be perswaded, but replied, that God was above the Devill, and that she feared not, but that that God which shee trusted in, could, and would defend her from all her Enemies.

With this resolution she set forward, but before she could get the halfe of the way to her fathers house it grew very darke, so that she could scarce discerne her hand, thus she went on, sometime listening whether she could heare any Body, upon the way, on a sudden she heard the noyse of a Horse galloping towards her, at which she beganne to be affraid.

But at last she plucked up a good heart and went forward, till shee met with this Gentleman Mr. *Ralph Ashley*, a Gentleman which knew her well, and she knew him, meeting with this Gentleman, he asked her whether she was going so late, she told him home to her fathers, he demanded who that was, she told him Master *Adam Fisher*, with that he called to mind her beauty, and the Devill strait furnished him with a device to obtaine his wicked purpose, sweet heart quoth he I know thy father well, and for his sake J will see the safe at thy fathers House, for the times are dangerous, and but a little before there are souldiers which J have cause to suspect, will doe the some outrage, the maid hearing him say so, was wonne to condiscend to him, partly by her knowledge of his supposed friendship to her father, and partly by her desire to get home without any further danger, to be short, the maid being wonne by his specious pretences of love and friendship, applied her selfe to get up, he having her behind him rode cleane out of the Road, (pretending that he did so to avoid the souldiers) till he was got out of the hearing of any inhabitant.

Where being arrived, he fained an excuse to light, with that she slipt off the horse backe, and he alighted, then presently he layed His hands on her, and began to woe her to grant his desire, but she denying him with unlimited resolution, he went about to ravish her, taking a grievous oath that no power in heaven or earth could save her from his lust, with that the poore virgin, with pittious shrikes and cries spake these words *O Lord God of Hosts, tis in thy power to deliver me, help Lord or J perish*, in the meane time he continued cursing

and swearing that her prayers were in vaine, for there was no power could redeeme her, the words were no sooner vttered, but immediatly a fearefull Commet burst out in the ayre, so that it was as light as at high noone, this sudden apparition struck him and all the inhabitants into a great feare, and the poore virgin was intranced, the wretch casting his eye about and seeing her lye upon the ground as if he had meant to dare damnation tooke a great oath swearing *God-Damme-him*, alive or dead he would jnjoy her.

And as he was going about to lay hands of her intranced Body, A streame of fire strucke from the Comet, in the perfect shape, and exact resemblance of a flaming Sword, so that he fell downe staggering, severall poore shepheards which were in the field, foulding their flockes, these being amazed, seeing the flame of the Comet strike at the Earth, as they conceived, made to the place as neere as they could, where they heard a man blaspheming, and belching forth many damnable imprecations, and comming to the place, demanding how he came so wounded, he voluntarily related his intention, and what had happened to him by the perversenesse of that Roundheaded-whore, so he died raving and blaspheming to the terrour and amazement of the beholders.

The men presently took up the Maid, supposing she had been dead, and carried her home to her fathers House, where they were entertained, though with great sorrow for their daughters supposed death, the maid having continued intranced thus almost all that night, at length she began to draw her breath, and when she came to her selfe, the very first words that she spake were these, *Lord thou art Iust in thy Judgments and mercifull in the midest of thy justice, wherefore J beseech the let not this sinne be imputed to his Charge in the day of Judgment.*

Reader heare is a president for all those that are customary blas phemers, and live after the lusts of their flesh, especially all thos Cavaliers which esteem murder and rapine the chiefe Principalls o their religion, for doubtlesse this is but a begining of Gods vengan for not onely he, but they, and we, and all of us, except we repent we shall all likewise perish.

THE LAST LAUGH

D. H. Lawrence

THERE WAS A LITTLE SNOW ON THE GROUND, AND THE CHURCH clock had just struck midnight. Hampstead in the night of winter for once was looking pretty, with clean white earth and lamps for moon, and dark sky above the lamps.

A confused little sound of voices, a gleam of hidden yellow light. And then the garden door of a tall, dark Georgian house suddenly opened, and three people confusedly emerged. A girl in a dark blue coat and fur turban, very erect: a fellow with a little dispatch-case, slouching: a thin man with a red beard, bareheaded, peering out of the gateway down the hill that swung in a curve downwards towards London.

"Look at it! A new world!" cried the man in the beard, ironically, as he stood on the step and peered out.

"No, Lorenzo! It's only whitewash!" cried the young man in the overcoat. His voice was handsome, resonant, plangent, with a weary sardonic touch. As he turned back his face was dark in shadow.

The girl with the erect, alert head, like a bird, turned back to the two men.

"What was that?" she asked, in her quick, quiet voice.

"Lorenzo says it's a new world. I say it's only whitewash," cried the man in the street.

She stood still and lifted her woolly, gloved finger. She was deaf and was taking it in.

Yes, she had got it. She gave a quick, chuckling laugh, glanced very quickly at the man in the bowler hat, then back at the man in the stucco gateway, who was grinning like a satyr and waving good-bye.

"Good-bye, Lorenzo!" came the resonant, weary cry of the man in the bowler hat.

"Good-bye!" came the sharp, night-bird call of the girl.

The green gate slammed, then the inner door. The two were alone in the street, save for the policeman at the corner. The road curved steeply downhill.

"You'd better mind how you *step!*" shouted the man in the bowler hat, leaning near the erect, sharp girl, and slouching in his walk. She paused a moment, to make sure what he had said.

"Don't mind me, I'm quite all right. Mind yourself!" she said quickly. At that very moment he gave a wild lurch on the slippery snow, but managed to save himself from falling. She watched him, on tiptoes of alertness. His bowler hat bounced away in the thin snow. They were under a lamp near the curve. As he ducked for his hat he showed a bald spot, just like a tonsure, among his dark, thin, rather curly hair. And when he looked up at her, with his thick black brows sardonically arched, and his rather hooked nose self-derisive, jamming his hat on again, he seemed like a satanic young priest. His face had beautiful lines, like a faun, and a doubtful martyred expression. A sort of faun on the Cross, with all the malice of the complication.

"Did you hurt yourself?" she asked, in her quick, cool, unemotional way.

"No!" he shouted derisively.

"Give me the machine, won't you?" she said, holding out her woolly hand. "I believe I'm safer."

"Do you *want* it?" he shouted.

"Yes, I'm sure I'm safer."

He handed her the little brown dispatch-case, which was really a Marconi listening machine for her deafness. She marched erect as ever. He shoved his hands deep in his overcoat pockets and slouched along beside her, as if he wouldn't make his legs firm. The road curved down in front of them, clean and pale with snow under the lamps. A motor-car came churning up. A few dark figures slipped away into the dark recesses of the houses, like fishes among rocks above a sea-bed of white sand. On the left was a tuft of trees sloping upwards into the dark.

He kept looking around, pushing out his finely shaped chin and his hooked nose as if he were listening for something. He could still hear the motor-car climbing on to the Heath. Below was the yellow, foul-smelling glare of the Hampstead Tube station. On the right the trees.

The girl, with her alert pink-and-white face looked at him sharply, inquisitively. She had an odd nymph-like inquisitiveness, sometimes like a bird, sometimes a squirrel, sometimes a rabbit: never quite like a woman. At last he stood still, as if he would go no farther. There was a curious, baffled grin on his smooth, cream-coloured face.

"James," he said loudly to her, leaning towards her ear. "Do you hear somebody *laughing?*"

"Laughing?" she retorted quickly. "Who's laughing?"

"I don't know. *Somebody!*" he shouted, showing his teeth at her in a very odd way.

"No, I hear nobody," she announced.

"But it's most *extraordinary!*" he cried, his voice slurring up and down. "Put on your machine."

"Put it on?" she retorted. "What for?"

"To see if you can *hear* it," he cried.

"Hear what?"

"The *laughing*. Somebody laughing. It's most *extraordinary*."

She gave her odd little chuckle and handed him her machine. He held it while she opened the lid and attached the wires, putting the band over her head and the receivers at her ears, like a wireless operator. Crumbs of snow fell down the cold darkness. She switched on: little yellow lights in glass tubes shone in the machine. She was connected, she was listening. He stood with his head ducked, his hands shoved down in his overcoat pockets.

Suddenly he lifted his face and gave the weirdest, slightly neighing laugh, uncovering his strong, spaced teeth and arching his black brows, and watching her with queer, gleaming, goat-like eyes.

She seemed a little dismayed.

"There!" he said. "Didn't you hear it?"

"I heard *you!*" she said, in a tone which conveyed that *that* was enough.

"But didn't you hear *it?*" he cried, unfurling his lips oddly again.

"No!" she said.

He looked at her vindictively, and stood again with ducked head. She remained erect, her fur hat in her hand, her fine bobbed hair banded with the machine-band and catching crumbs of snow, her odd, bright-eyed, deaf nymph's face lifted with blank listening.

"There!" he cried, suddenly jerking up his gleaming face. "You mean to tell me you can't—" He was looking at her almost diabolically. But something else was too strong for him. His face wreathed with a startling, peculiar smile, seeming to gleam, and suddenly the most extraordinary laugh came bursting out of him, like an animal laughing. It was a strange, neighing sound, amazing in her ears. She was startled, and switched her machine quieter.

A large form loomed up: a tall, clean-shaven young policeman.

"A radio?" he asked laconically.

"No, it's my machine. I'm deaf!" said Miss James quickly and distinctly. She was not the daughter of a peer for nothing.

The man in the bowler hat lifted his face and glared at the fresh-faced young policeman with a peculiar white glare in his eyes.

"Look here!" he said distinctly. "Did you hear someone laughing?"

"Laughing? I heard you, sir."

"No, *not* me." He gave an impatient jerk of his arm, and lifted his face again. His smooth, creamy face seemed to gleam, there were subtle curves of derisive triumph in all its lines. He was careful not to look directly at the young policeman. "The morst extraordinary laughter I ever heard," he added, and the same touch of derisive exultation sounded in his tones.

The policeman looked down on him cogitatingly.

"It's perfectly all right," said Miss James coolly. "He's not drunk. He just hears something that we don't hear."

"Drunk!" echoed the man in the bowler hat, in profoundly amused derision. "If I were merely drunk—" And off he went again in the wild, neighing, animal laughter, while his averted face seemed to flash.

At the sound of the laughter something roused in the blood of the girl and of the policeman. They stood nearer to one another, so that

their sleeves touched and they looked wonderingly across at the man in the bowler hat. He lifted his black brows at them.

"Do you mean to say you heard nothing?" he asked.

"Only you," said Miss James.

"Only you, sir!" echoed the policeman.

"What was it like?" asked Miss James.

"Ask me to *describe* it!" retorted the young man, in extreme contempt. "It's the most marvellous sound in the world."

And truly he seemed wrapped up in a new mystery.

"Where does it come from?" asked Miss James, very practical.

"*Apparently,*" he answered in contempt, "from over there." And he pointed to the trees and bushes inside the railings over the road.

"Well, let's go and see!" she said. "I can carry my machine and go on listening."

The man seemed relieved to get rid of the burden. He shoved his hands in his pockets again and sloped off across the road. The policeman, a queer look flickering on his fresh young face, put his hand round the girl's arm carefully and subtly, to help her. She did not lean at all on the support of the big hand, but she was interested, so she did not resent it. Having held herself all her life intensely aloof from physical contact, and never having let any man touch her, she now, with a certain nymph-like voluptuousness, allowed the large hand of the young policeman to support her as they followed the quick wolf-like figure of the other man across the road uphill. And she could feel the presence of the young policeman, through all the thickness of his dark-blue uniform, as something young and alert and bright.

When they came up to the man in the bowler hat, he was standing with his head ducked, his ears pricked, listening beside the iron rail inside which grew big black holly-trees tufted with snow, and old, ribbed, silent English elms.

The policeman and the girl stood waiting. She was peering into the bushes with the sharp eyes of a deaf nymph, deaf to the world's noises. The man in the bowler hat listened intensely. A lorry rolled downhill, making the earth tremble.

"There!" cried the girl, as the lorry rumbled darkly past. And she glanced round with flashing eyes at her policeman, her fresh soft

face gleaming with startled life. She glanced straight into the puzzled, amused eyes of the young policeman. He was just enjoying himself.

"Don't you see?" she said, rather imperiously.

"What is it, Miss?" answered the policeman.

"I mustn't point," she said. "Look where I look."

And she looked away with brilliant eyes, into the dark holly bushes. She must see something, for she smiled faintly, with subtle satisfaction, and she tossed her erect head in all the pride of vindication. The policeman looked at her instead of into the bushes. There was a certain brilliance of triumph and vindication in all the poise of her slim body.

"I always knew I should see him," she said triumphantly to herself.

"Whom do you see?" shouted the man in the bowler hat.

"Don't you see him too?" she asked, turning round her soft, arch, nymph-like face anxiously. She was anxious for the little man to see.

"No, I see nothing. What do you see, James?" cried the man in the bowler hat, insisting.

"A man."

"Where?"

"There. Among the holly bushes."

"Is he there now?"

"No! He's gone."

"What sort of a man?"

"I don't know."

"What did he look like?"

"I can't tell you."

But at that instant the man in the bowler hat turned suddenly, and the arch, triumphant look flew to his face.

"Why he must be *there!*" he cried, pointing up the grove. "Don't you hear him laughing? He must be behind those trees."

And his voice, with curious delight, broke into a laugh again, as he stood and stamped his feet on the snow, and danced to his own laughter, ducking his head. Then he turned away and ran swiftly up the avenue lined with old trees.

He slowed down as a door at the end of a garden path, white with untouched snow, suddenly opened, and a woman in a long-fringed black shawl stood in the light. She peered out into the night. Then

she came down to the low garden gate. Crumbs of snow still fell. She had dark hair and a tall dark comb.

"Did you knock at my door?" she asked of the man in the bowler hat.

"I? No!"

"Somebody knocked at my door."

"Did they? Are you sure? They can't have done. There are no rootmarks in the snow."

"Nor are there!" she said. "But somebody knocked and called something."

"That's very curious," said the man. "Were you expecting someone?"

"No. Not exactly expecting anyone. Except that one is always expecting Somebody, you know." In the dimness of the snow-lit night he could see her making big, dark eyes at him.

"Was it someone laughing?" he said.

"No. It was no one laughing, exactly. Some one knocked, and I ran to open, hoping as one always hopes, you know——"

"What?"

"Oh—that something wonderful is going to happen."

He was standing close to the low gate. She stood on the opposite side. Her hair was dark, her face seemed dusky, as she looked up at him with her dark, meaningful eyes.

"Did you wish someone would come?" he asked.

"Very much," she replied, in her plangent Jewish voice. She must be a Jewess.

"No matter who?" he said, laughing.

"So long as it was a man I could like," she said in a low, meaningful, falsely shy voice.

"Really!" he said. "Perhaps after all it was I who knocked—without knowing."

"I think it was," she said. "It must have been."

"Shall I come in?" he asked, putting his hand on the little gate.

"Don't you think you'd better?" she replied.

He bent down, unlatching the gate. As he did so the woman in the black shawl turned, and, glancing over her shoulder, hurried

back to the house, walking unevenly in the snow, on her high-heeled shoes. The man hurried after her, hastening like a hound to catch up.

Meanwhile the girl and the policeman had come up. The girl stood still when she saw the man in the bowler hat going up the garden walk after the woman in the black shawl with the fringe.

"Is he going in?" she asked quickly.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said the policeman.

"Does he know that woman?"

"I can't say. I should say he soon will," replied the policeman.

"But who is she?"

"I couldn't say who she is."

The two dark, confused figures entered the lighted doorway, then the door closed on them.

"He's gone," said the girl outside on the snow. She hastily began to pull off the band of her telephone-receiver, and switched off her machine. The tubes of secret light disappeared, she packed up the little leather case. Then, pulling on her soft fur cap, she stood once more ready.

The slightly martial look which her long, dark-blue, military-seeming coat gave her was intensified, while the slightly anxious, bewildered look of her face had gone. She seemed to stretch herself, to stretch her limbs free. And the inert look had left her full soft cheeks. Her cheeks were alive with the glimmer of pride and a new dangerous surety.

She looked quickly at the tall young policeman. He was clean-shaven, fresh-faced, smiling oddly under his helmet, waiting in subtle patience a few yards away. She saw that he was a decent young man, one of the waiting sort.

The second of ancient fear was followed at once in her by a blithe, unaccustomed sense of power.

"Well!" she said. "I should say it's no use waiting." She spoke decisively.

"You don't have to wait for him, do you?" asked the policeman.

"Not at all. He's much better where he is." She laughed an odd, brief laugh. Then, glancing over her shoulder, she set off down the hill, carrying her little case. Her feet felt light, her legs felt long and

strong. She glanced over her shoulder again. The young policeman was following her, and she laughed to herself. Her limbs felt so lithe and so strong, if she wished she could easily run faster than he. If she wished she could easily kill him, even with her hands.

So it seemed to her. But why kill him? He was a decent young fellow. She had in front of her eyes the dark face among the holly bushes, with the brilliant, mocking eyes. Her breast felt full of power, and her legs felt long and strong and wild. She was surprised herself at the strong, bright, throbbing sensation beneath her breasts, a sensation of triumph and of rosy anger. Her hands felt keen on her wrists. She who had always declared she had not a muscle in her body! Even now, it was not muscle, it was a sort of flame.

Suddenly it began to snow heavily, with fierce frozen puffs of wind. The snow was small, in frozen grains, and hit sharp on her face. It seemed to whirl round her as if she herself were whirling in a cloud. But she did not mind. There was a flame in her, her limbs felt flamey and strong, amid the whirl.

And the whirling, snowy air seemed full of presences, full of strange unheard voices. She was used to the sensation of noises taking place which she could not hear. This sensation became very strong. She felt something was happening in the wild air.

The London air was no longer heavy and clammy, saturated with ghosts of the unwilling dead. A new, clean tempest swept down from the Pole, and there were noises.

Voices were calling. In spite of her deafness she could hear someone, several voices, calling and whistling, as if many people were hallooing through the air:

"He's come back! Aha! He's come back!"

There was a wild, whistling, jubilant sound of voices in the storm of snow. Then obscured lightning winked through the snow in the air.

"Is that thunder and lightning?" she asked of the young policeman, as she stood still, waiting for his form to emerge through the veil of whirling snow.

"Seems like it to me," he said.

And at that very moment the lightning blinked again, and the dark, laughing face was near her face, it almost touched her cheek.

She started back, but a flame of delight went over her.

"There!" she said. "Did you see that?"

"It lightened," said the policeman.

She was looking at him almost angrily. But then the clean, fresh animal look of his skin and the tame-animal look in his frightened eyes amused her, she laughed her low, triumphant laugh. He was obviously afraid, like a frightened dog that sees something uncanny.

The storm suddenly whistled louder, more violently, and, with a strange noise like castanets, she seemed to hear voices clapping and crying:

"He is here! He's come back!"

She nodded her head gravely.

The policeman and she moved on side by side. She lived alone in a little stucco house in a side street down the hill. There was a church and a grove of trees and then the little old row of houses. The wind blew fiercely, thick with snow. Now and again a taxi went by, with its lights showing weirdly. But the world seemed empty, uninhabited save by snow and voices.

As the girl and the policeman turned past the grove of trees near the church, a great whirl of wind and snow made them stand still, and in the wild confusion they heard a whirling of sharp, delighted voices, something like seagulls, crying:

"He's here! He's here!"

"Well, I'm jolly glad he's back," said the girl calmly.

"What's that?" said the nervous policeman, hovering near the girl.

The wind let them move forward. As they passed along the railings it seemed to them the doors of the church were open, and the windows were out, and the snow and the voices were blowing in a wild career all through the church.

"How extraordinary that they left the church open!" said the girl.

The policeman stood still. He could not reply.

And as they stood they listened to the wind and the church full of whirling voices all calling confusedly.

"*Now* I hear the laughing," she said suddenly.

It came from the church: a sound of low, subtle, endless laughter, a strange, naked sound.

"Now I hear it!" she said.

But the policeman did not speak. He stood cowed, with his tail between his legs, listening to the strange noises in the church.

The wind must have blown out one of the windows, for they could see the snow whirling in volleys through the black gap, and whirling inside the church like a dim light. There came a sudden crash, followed by a burst of chuckling, naked laughter. The snow seemed to make a queer light inside the building, like ghosts moving, big and tall.

There was more laughter, and a tearing sound. On the wind, pieces of paper, leaves of books, came whirling among the snow through the dark window. Then a white thing, soaring like a crazy bird, rose up on the wind as if it had wings, and lodged on a black tree outside, struggling. It was the altar-cloth.

There came a bit of gay, trilling music. The wind was running over the organ-pipes like pan-pipes, quickly up and down. Snatches of wild, gay, trilling music, and bursts of the naked low laughter.

"Really!" said the girl. "This is most extraordinary. Do you hear the music and the people laughing?"

"Yes, I hear somebody on the organ!" said the policeman.

"And do you get the puff of warm wind? Smelling of spring. Almond blossom, that's what it is! A most marvellous scent of almond blossom. *Isn't* it an extraordinary thing!"

She went on triumphantly past the church, and came to the row of little old houses. She entered her own gate in the little railed entrance.

"Here I am!" she said finally. "I'm home now. Thank you very much for coming with me."

She looked at the young policeman. His whole body was white as a wall with snow, and in the vague light of the arc-lamp from the street his face was humble and frightened.

"Can I come in and warm myself a bit?" he asked humbly. She knew it was fear rather than cold that froze him. He was in mortal fear.

"Well!" she said. "Stay down in the sitting-room if you like. But don't come upstairs, because I am alone in the house. You can make

up the fire in the sitting-room, and you can go when you are warm."

She left him on the big, low couch before the fire, his face bluish and blank with fear. He rolled his blue eyes after her as she left the room. But she went up to her bedroom, and fastened her door.

In the morning she was in her studio upstairs in her little house, looking at her own paintings and laughing to herself. Her canaries were talking and shrilly whistling in the sunshine that followed the storm. The cold snow outside was still clean, and the white glare in the air gave the effect of much stronger sunshine than actually existed.

She was looking at her own paintings, and chuckling to herself over their comicalness. Suddenly they struck her as absolutely absurd. She quite enjoyed looking at them, they seemed to her so grotesque. Especially her self-portrait, with its nice brown hair and its slightly opened rabbit-mouth and its baffled, uncertain rabbit eyes. She looked at the painted face and laughed in a long, rippling laugh, till the yellow canaries like faded daffodils almost went mad in an effort to sing louder. The girl's long, rippling laugh sounded through the house uncannily.

The housekeeper, a rather sad-faced young woman of a superior sort—nearly all people in England are of the superior sort, superiority being an English ailment—came in with an inquiring and rather disapproving look.

"Did you call, Miss James?" she asked loudly.

"No. No, I didn't call. Don't shout, I can hear quite well," replied the girl.

The housekeeper looked at her again.

"You knew there was a young man in the sitting-room?" she said.

"No. Really!" cried the girl. "What, the young policeman? I'd forgotten all about him. He came in in the storm to warm himself. Hasn't he gone?"

"No, Miss James."

"How extraordinary of him! What time is it? Quarter to nine? Why didn't he go when he was warm? I must go and see him, I suppose."

"He says he's lame," said the housekeeper censoriously and loudly.

"Lame! That's extraordinary. He certainly wasn't last night. But don't shout. I can hear quite well."

"Is Mr. Marchbanks coming in to breakfast, Miss James?" said the housekeeper, more and more censorious.

"I couldn't say. But I'll come down as soon as mine is ready. I'll be down in a minute, anyhow, to see the policeman. Extraordinary that he is still here."

She sat down before her window, in the sun, to think a while. She could see the snow outside, the bare, purplish trees. The air all seemed rare and different. Suddenly the world had become quite different: as if some skin or integument had broken, as if the old, mouldering London sky had crackled and rolled back, like an old skin, shrivelled, leaving an absolutely new blue heaven.

"It really is extraordinary!" she said to herself. "I certainly saw that man's face. What a wonderful face it was! I shall never forget it. Such laughter! He laughs longest who laughs last. He certainly will have the last laugh. I like him for that: he will laugh last. Must be someone really extraordinary! How very nice to be the one to laugh last. He certainly will. What a wonderful being! I suppose I must call him a being. He's not a person exactly.

"But how wonderful of him to come back and alter all the world immediately! *Isn't* that extraordinary. I wonder if he'll have altered Marchbanks. Of course Marchbanks never *saw* him. But he heard him. Wouldn't that do as well, I wonder!—I *wonder!*"

She went off into a muse about Marchbanks. She and he were *such* friends. They had been friends like that for almost two years. Never lovers. Never that at all. But *friends*.

And after all, she had been in love with him: in her head. This seemed now so funny to her: that she had been, in her head, so much in love with him. After all, life was too absurd.

Because now she saw herself and him as such a funny pair. He so funnily taking life terribly seriously, especially his own life. And she so ridiculously *determined* to save him from himself. Oh, how absurd! *Determined* to save him from himself, and wildly in love with him in the effort. The determination to save him from himself.

Absurd! Absurd! Absurd! Since she had seen the man laughing

among the holly-bushes—*such* extraordinary, wonderful laughter—she had seen her own ridiculousness. Really, what fantastic silliness, saving a man from himself! Save anybody. What fantastic silliness! How much more amusing and lively to let a man go to perdition in his own way. Perdition was more amusing than salvation anyhow, and a much better place for most men to go to.

She had never been in love with any man, and only spuriously in love with Marchbanks. She saw it quite plainly now. After all, what nonsense it all was, this being-in-love business. Thank goodness she had never made the humiliating mistake.

No, the man among the holly-bushes had made her see it all so plainly: the ridiculousness of being in love, the *infra dig*. business of chasing a man or being chased by a man.

"Is love *really* so absurd and *infra dig*.? she said aloud to herself.

"Why, of course!" came a deep, laughing voice.

She started round, but nobody was to be seen.

"I expect it's that man again!" she said to herself. "It really *is* remarkable, you know. I consider it's a remarkable thing that I never really wanted a man, *any* man. And there I am over thirty. It *is* curious. Whether it's something wrong with me, or right with me, I can't say. I don't know till I've proved it. But I believe, if that man kept on laughing something would happen to me."

She smelt the curious smell of almond blossom in the room, and heard the distant laugh again.

"I do wonder why Marchbanks went with that woman last night —that Jewish-looking woman. Whatever could he want of her?—or she him? So strange, as if they both had made up their minds to something! How extraordinarily puzzling life is! So messy, it all seems.

"Why does nobody ever laugh in life like that man. He *did* seem so wonderful. So scornful! And so proud! And so real! With those laughing, scornful, amazing eyes, just laughing and disappearing again. I can't imagine him chasing a Jewish-looking woman. Or chasing any woman, thank goodness. It's all *so* messy. My policeman would be messy if one would let him: like a dog. I do dislike dogs, really I do. And men do seem so doggy!——"

But even while she mused, she began to laugh again to herself with a long, low chuckle. How wonderful of that man to come and laugh like that and make the sky crack and shrivel like an old skin! Wasn't he wonderful! Wouldn't it be wonderful if he just touched her. Even touched her. She felt, if he touched her, she herself would emerge new and tender out of an old, hard skin. She was gazing abstractedly out of the window.

"There he comes, just now," she said abruptly. But she meant Marchbanks, not the laughing man.

There he came, his hands still shoved down in his overcoat pockets, his head still rather furtively ducked, in the bowler hat, and his legs still rather shambling. He came hurrying across the road, not looking up, deep in thought, no doubt. Thinking profoundly, with agonies of agitation, no doubt about his last night's experience. It made her laugh.

She, watching from the window above, burst into a long laugh, and the canaries went off their heads again.

He was in the hall below. His resonant voice was calling, rather imperiously:

"James! Are you coming down?"

"No," she called. "You come up."

He came up two at a time, as if his feet were a bit savage with the stairs for obstructing him.

In the doorway he stood staring at her with a vacant, sardonic look, his grey eyes moving with a queer light. And she looked back at him with a curious, rather haughty carelessness.

"Don't you want your breakfast?" she asked. It was his custom to come and take breakfast with her each morning.

"No," he answered loudly. "I went to a tea-shop."

"Don't shout," she said. "I can hear you quite well."

He looked at her with mockery and a touch of malice.

"I believe you always could," he said, still loudly.

"Well, anyway, I can now, so you needn't shout," she replied.

And again his grey eyes, with the queer, greyish phosphorescent gleam in them, lingered malignantly on her face.

"Don't look at me," she said calmly. "I know all about everything."

He burst into a pouf of malicious laughter.

"Who taught you—the policeman?" he cried.

"Oh, by the way, he must be downstairs! No, he was only incidental. So, I suppose, was the woman in the shawl. Did you stay all night?"

"Not entirely. I came away before dawn. What did you do?"

"Don't shout. I came home long before dawn." And she seemed to hear the long, low laughter.

"Why, what's the matter!" he said curiously. "What have you been doing?"

"I don't quite know. Why?—are you going to call me to account?"

"Did you hear that laughing?"

"Oh, yes. And many more things. And saw things too."

"Have you seen the paper?"

"No. Don't shout, I can hear."

"There's been a great storm, blew out the windows and doors of the church outside here, and pretty well wrecked the place."

"I saw it. A leaf of the church Bible blew right in my face: from the Book of Job—" she gave a low laugh.

"But what else did you see?" he cried loudly.

"I saw *him*."

"Who?"

"Ah, that I can't say."

"But what was he like?"

"That I can't tell you. I don't really know."

"But you must know. Did your policeman see him too?"

"No, I don't suppose he did. My policeman!" And she went off into a long ripple of laughter. "He is by no means mine. But I *must* go downstairs and see him."

"It's certainly made you very strange," Marchbanks said. "You've got no *soul,* you know."

"Oh, thank goodness for that!" she cried. "My policeman has one, I'm sure. *My policeman!*" And she went off again into a long peal of laughter, the canaries pealing shrill accompaniment.

"What's the matter with you?" he said.

"Having no soul. I never had one really. It was always fobbed off on me. Soul was the only thing there was between you and me. Thank goodness it's gone. Haven't you lost yours? The one that seemed to worry you, like a decayed tooth?"

"But what are you *talking* about?" he cried.

"I don't know," she said. "It's all so extraordinary. But look here, I *must* go down and see my policeman. He's downstairs in the sitting-room. You'd better come with me."

They went down together. The policeman, in his waistcoat and shirt-sleeves, was lying on the sofa, with a very long face.

"Look here!" said Miss James to him. "Is it true you're lame?"

"It is true. That's why I'm here. I can't walk," said the fair-haired young man as tears came to his eyes.

"But how did it happen? You weren't lame last night," she said.

"I don't know how it happened—but when I woke up and tried to stand up, I couldn't do it." The tears ran down his distressed face.

"How very extraordinary!" she said. "What can we do about it?"

"Which foot is it?" asked Marchbanks. "Let us have a look at it."

"I don't like to," said the poor devil.

"You'd better," said Miss James.

He slowly pulled off his stocking, and showed his white left foot curiously clubbed, like the weird paw of some animal. When he looked at it himself, he sobbed.

And as he sobbed, the girl heard again the low, exulting laughter. But she paid no heed to it, gazing curiously at the weeping young policeman.

"Does it hurt?" she asked.

"It does if I try to walk on it," wept the young man.

"I'll tell you what," she said. "We'll telephone for a doctor, and he can take you home in a taxi."

The young fellow shamefacedly wiped his eyes.

"But have you no idea how it happened?" asked Marchbanks anxiously.

"I haven't myself," said the young fellow.

At that moment the girl heard the low, eternal laugh right in her ear. She started, but could see nothing.

She started round again as Marchbanks gave a strange, yelping cry, like a shot animal. His white face was drawn, distorted in a curious grin, that was chiefly agony but partly wild recognition. He was staring with fixed eyes at something. And in the rolling agony of his eyes was the horrible grin of a man who realises he has made a final, and this time fatal, fool of himself.

"Why," he yelped in a high voice, "I knew it was he!" And with a queer shuddering laugh he pitched forward on the carpet and lay writhing for a moment on the floor. Then he lay still, in a weird, distorted position, like a man struck by lightning.

Miss James stared with round, staring brown eyes.

"Is he dead?" she asked quickly.

The young policeman was trembling so that he could hardly speak. She could hear his teeth chattering.

"Seems like it," he stammered.

There was a faint smell of almond blossom in the air.

DIONYSUS AND THE PARD

Geoffrey Household

HIS THUMB WAS VERY OBVIOUSLY MISSING. YOU CAN KNOW A MAN for weeks—if you are interested in his face—without spotting the absence of a finger, but you must miss the thumb of his right hand, especially when he is raising a glass at reasonably frequent intervals. A hand without a thumb is strangely animal; one looks for the missing talon on the underside of the wrist.

If you saw the back view of Dionysus Angelopoulos in any eastern Mediterranean port, you would at once put him down as an archæologist or something cast up upon the beach by the Hellenic Travelers' Club. Judging by the tall, spare figure, slightly stooping, dressed in shaggy and loose-fitting Harris tweed, you expected a mild, pleasing, and peering countenance with perhaps a moustache or a little Chelseaish beard; but when he turned round he showed an olive face with thin jowls hanging, like those of an underfed bloodhound, on either side of a blue chin, and melancholy brown eyes of the type that men call empty and women liquid when they are hiding nothing but boredom.

It was for the sake of professional prestige that Mr. Angelopoulos modeled himself upon what he considered an Englishman ought to look like. He was the Near Eastern agent for a famous English firm whose name is familiar to few women but to all civilized men. He was responsible for shining palaces above and below ground from Alexandria to Ankara. Wherever there were Greek priests and Turkish coffee one was faced sooner or later by his trade-mark (a little below that of his Staffordshire principals):—

THE ALPH
DIONYSUS ANGELOPOULOS
Sanitary Engineer

He was a man of poetic imagination and had read his *Kubla Khan*. He was also a historian.

"Between myself and the fall of the Roman Empire," he said when presenting me with his card, "there was nothing but indiscipline."

We had met on board a tiny Greek passenger ship bound from the Piraeus to Beyrouth. The cramped quarters and the Odyssean good cheer had swiftly ripened friendship. That is to say, he accepted me as a listener and, when he permitted me to speak, took note of any colloquialisms I might use and added them forthwith to his astonishing vocabulary.

"It is obvious," said Mr. Angelopoulos, "that the ancients tighted themselves with more enthusiasm than we. Frenzy, no? Wine and poetry were the businesses of Dionysus, no? For Plato it was natural to see godliness in a tighted man. To-day we see no godliness. We have changed. It is the fault of the religious. Dear me, what bastards!"

Considering he had just consumed two bottles of admirable claret made by the Jesuits on the slopes of Lebanon, he was unjust to Christianity. But Angelopoulos was a Wesleyan Methodist. It was a really original point of Anglicism, like the Harris tweeds. He had adapted his sect as well as his appearance to the respectable selling of sanitary earthenware.

"Godliness!" shouted Angelopoulos, raising the bottle with his right hand and placing an imaginary crown upon his head with his left. "Do I tell you how my thumb goes to pot?"

"Not yet. I was going to ask you."

"All right. You are my friend. At this table with you I am sitting a living example of Hubris and Nemesis. I am proud I lose my thumb. Do you know La Brebis Egarée?"

"I've heard of her."

There were few travelers on the Syrian shore who had not heard of the Lost Sheep—a pale, rolling Frenchwoman whose habit it was, when she felt specially obscene, to declare in the unctuous voice of a priest:—

"Monsieur, je suis une brebis égarée!"

Since, anyway, she looked like a gross white ewe, the nickname

stuck. She was not the type to run mythical cargoes to Buenos Aires. She merely knew everybody. Whether you fell in love with a Kurdish princess in Smyrna or a German Jewess in Jerusalem, she could tell you what your chances were and whom you should approach.

"I tell you, old chappie," said Angelopoulos, "I thought she was no more of this world. I did not know till that evening where she now abided—hung out, I should say, no?

"The Agent Socrates found for her a house in Athens, in the new suburb below Lycabettos. It is the last house in a little street that ends slap up against the cliff. The goings-on cannot be overlooked unless one should hang by his toes from the rocks. Only once was she taken at a loss. A Daphnis and Chloë were in the laurel bushes making love—how do you say that?"

I told him. He thanked me and, pulling from his pocket an expensive notebook bound in limp leather, made a formal entry in Greek and English.

"They were so happy they went right through the laurels and slid down the rocks into her back garden. A very proper place to find themselves, no?

"The Losted Sheep has a little restaurant upon the roof where the Agent Socrates invited me to lunch. He does not pay there, I think. A meal ticket, no? He is a very useful chap. I will give you his card."

Mr. Angelopoulos searched through a portfolio full of badly printed cards, each of which set forth not only the name and address of its owner but his profession and any title to distinction he might have. He handed me:—

SOCRATES PANCRATIADES
Agent d'Affaires
Hypothèques, Locations, Immeubles
Vins en gros
Publiciste

whereupon I understood that if I bought wines, a building lot, or a

political libel from Socrates Pancratiades I should be quoted a reasonable price and Mr. Angelopoulos would get one of the infinitesimal commissions by which the Near East lives and is made glad.

"We were two upon the roof," went on Mr. Angelopoulos, "the Agent Socrates and I. The view was okay—the Acropolis, the Theseum, and to the south Hymettus. Rather! God's truth! We were content. And the Losted Sheep did us proud. The eats were top-notch. And we were served by two little Armenians—big-busted angulars you find seeing them dead upon the walls of an Egyptian tomb. Tartlets or Turtledoves! O estimable dead!

"Attend to me, old chappie. It was Athens in the spring, and the Losted Sheep's brandy was special reserve from the Achaea vineyard. You have seen the Achaea? Well, it is on the hills behind Patras. And there is the Gulf of Corinth at your feet with blue mountains beyond and the triremes skidding into the water at Naupactus. Splosh! No? And Aphrodite casts a veil about the swift ship. At that distance you cannot see oars and foam, but mist you see."

"Triremes?" I asked, being a full bottle behind Mr. Angelopoulos.

"In the eye of the spirit, old chappie. I will give you a card. Then maybe they will let you buy the special reserve and you shall see triremes, remembering where the grapes grow.

"The Agent Socrates was soon tighted. I myself was tighted—but like an English gentleman. Or no. For an English gentleman always wants something. Barbarians! But I love you, my dear."

"Hellas," I said, realizing that this startling declaration was merely an apology, "is the mother of all nations."

"Incontestably all right!" agreed Mr. Angelopoulos. "I was content; so you see I was not like an English gentleman. I wanted nothing. I was a god looking down upon Athens from the Losted Sheep's roof.

"She asked me if I would drink more brandy. I did not want more brandy. Then she asked me if I would make a visit to Fifi. I did not want to see Fifi. But the Agent Socrates was asleep and the Armenians were asleep, and the Losted Sheep chattered. She did not understand that it was Athens and sunset and I, Dionysus, have a poet's entrails. I did not want Fifi, but if Fifi were young and would stay naked

and quiet upon my knees, she would be better than the talk of the Losted Sheep, no?

"So I said: 'If your Fifi is beautiful, I will make her a visit. But if she is not beautiful, I will smell your fat, Brebis, while my priests eat you.' I was a god, you see.

"The Losted Sheep promised me that Fifi was more beautiful than any tailpiece I ever saw. So I went with her down from the roof and through the rendezvous house into the garden. In the side of Lycabettos was a cave with iron bars across the mouth.

" 'There is Fifi,' she said.

"I look. I see damn-all. A hole in the yellow rock and the shadows of the bushes where the Daphnis and Chloë entertained themselves. I do not know what to think. The Losted Sheep was a naughty one. She was maybe keeping a little savage behind the bars or a dame off her head with the bats. And then Fifi stretched herself and came to see who we were. She was a big leopard. Very beautiful, I bet you! The Losted Sheep had chattered but she had watched me. She knew I did not want human things to worship me.

"Herself she would not approach Fifi. The bars were wide, and Fifi could get her paws through and most of her head. But I, Dionysus, had no fear. I spoke to Fifi. I sat on the sill of the cage and tickled her behind the ears. She liked that. She rubbed herself on the bars and purred. Then she was gone. I could only see her eyes in the darkness at the back of the cave.

"I called to her and she came at me through the air. So long and slender as if a love should fly down from heaven into my embraces. The Losted Sheep shrieked like a losted soul. But I was not afraid. I never thought to be afraid. I was a jolly god. Fifi knew that I would not hurt her. I knew that she would not hurt me. It was mutual confidence, as in the sanitary or other business.

"She landed with all four feet together. I pulled her whiskers. She tapped my face with her paw to tell me she would play. So soft. So strong. I have felt nothing like it in my life. I shall never feel anything like it. They were created cats, you will remember, that man might give himself the pleasure of imagining that he caresses the tiger. To caress the tiger herself, that is for a god.

"I stroked her stomach. She purred. I stabbed into the fur my nails up and down her backbone." Mr. Angelopoulos held out his thumbless claw, crooking and contracting the fingers. "She was in ecstasy. There was a communism between me and Fifi. All she felt, I felt. It tickled me delicately from the point of my fingers to my kidneys. I knew when she had had enough, when her pleasure could not more be endured. It was the same for me. If she had touched me again with her paw, I should have bitten her.

"And so we parted. I wept. I knew I should never feel such godly pleasure again. And there was the Losted Sheep shrieking and moaning. I put out my hands to her to stroke her as I had stroked Fifi. She ran. And so I woke the Agent Socrates and we went away."

Mr. Angelopoulos was silent, brooding over the splendor of his past divinity.

"But your thumb?" I asked.

"My thumb—yes, my dear, I had forgotten. Hubris and Nemesis, of which is sitting with you the sad example. A week later I was in Constantinople. I had businesses near the port and I was coming home at night from Galata to Pera. There are streets with steps, no? Little stairs with stinks. There was a street with cats on all the steps. I stopped to talk to them—I, Dionysus, the catman who is chums with leopards. But I forgot that I was sober. I was a man and no more a god. I was a danger to all beasts. There was a pail of ordures and a grey kitten eating fish heads from it. I stroked him and he bit me in the thumb. How should he know I did not want the fish heads? If I had been tighted and a god, he would have known I needed no fish heads.

"And so you see, old chappie, my thumb was tinctured red and then blue, and then it was green and white like marble. Thus I hospitalized myself, and they cut it off. Nemesis, old chappie, or the godly tit for tat, as we say in English."

STORY OF PYGMALION

Ovid

FOR A LONG TIME PYGMALION LIVED A BACHELOR'S LIFE, WITH NO wife, no partner for his bed. Meanwhile he sculptured snowy ivory, happily, with wonderful art, and made a statue, more beautiful than any mortal woman; and he fell in love with his work. The statue looked like a girl, really; you would think her alive, and, if respect did not interfere, willing to be moved: to such an extent does art conceal art. Pygmalion wonders, and his ardor grows: often he puts tentative hands on his work, to see whether it is ivory or flesh; and he does not admit that it is ivory. He gives the statue kisses, and thinks they are returned, speaks to it, and holds it in his arms, puts his fingers on the limbs, and fears he may bruise them. Sometimes he offers it flattering words, sometimes he brings it gifts pleasing to girls, shells and smooth pebbles, little birds, and flowers of a thousand colors, lilies, and painted balls, and amber dripping from the trees, the tears of the daughters of the Sun. He adorns the limbs with clothing, puts rings on the fingers, rings in the ears, long necklaces and garlands for the breast. All the adornments are becoming, but she is no less beautiful unadorned and naked. He places her on a couch, spread with crimson coverlets, calls her the partner of his bed, supports her head with a soft pillow, as if it were something she could feel.

The festal day of Venus, most celebrated in all Cyprus, arrived. The snowy heifers, their horns tipped with gold, were sacrificed at the altar, and the incense smoked to the sky. Pygmalion, his solemn duty paid, stood by the altar, and timidly prayed: "If, O goddess, you can give all things, let me have as my wife" (he did not dare to say *My ivory girl*) "some one like my ivory girl." Venus heard, and

as she was there, golden at her own festival, she knew what the prayer really meant. Thrice the flame leaped up, omen of a friendly presence, thrice the flame leaped in the air. Pygmalion, returning, sought the image of his girl, and leaning over the couch, again gave her kisses. She seemed to be warm; he kissed her again, and touched her breasts with his hands. The ivory was softer; it yielded to his fingers as if he were working in wax. While he is amazed, rejoicing but doubtful, afraid he may be wrong, he loves still more, and, loving, tests the prayer again. It was a body! the veins stood out beneath his thumb. And then Pygmalion, with a great flow of words, poured out his thanks to Venus, kissed the real mouth with his own. The girl felt the kisses, and blushed, raised her shy eyes to his, and saw, at one time, her lover and the sky. The goddess attended the marriage she had made; and when the moon had nine times rounded to the full, a son was born, named Paphos, and that island was named for him.

THE CHASER

John Collier

ALAN AUSTEN, AS NERVOUS AS A KITTEN, WENT UP CERTAIN DARK and creaky stairs in the neighborhood of Pell Street, and peered about for a long time on the dim landing before he found the name he wanted written obscurely on one of the doors.

He pushed open this door, as he had been told to do, and found himself in a tiny room, which contained no furniture but a plain kitchen table, a rocking-chair, and an ordinary chair. On one of the dirty buff-colored walls were a couple of shelves, containing in all perhaps a dozen bottles and jars.

An old man sat in the rocking-chair, reading a newspaper. Alan, without a word, handed him the card he had been given. "Sit down, Mr. Austen," said the old man very politely. "I am glad to make your acquaintance."

"Is it true," asked Alan, "that you have a certain mixture that has—er—quite extraordinary effects?"

"My dear sir," replied the old man, "my stock in trade is not very large—I don't deal in laxatives and teething mixtures—but such as it is, it is varied. I think nothing I sell has effects which could be precisely described as ordinary."

"Well, the fact is—" began Alan.

"Here, for example," interrupted the old man, reaching for a bottle from the shelf. "Here is a liquid as colorless as water, almost tasteless, quite imperceptible in coffee, milk, wine, or any other beverage. It is also quite imperceptible to any known method of autopsy."

"Do you mean it is a poison?" cried Alan, very much horrified.

"Call it a glove-cleaner if you like," said the old man indiffer-

ently. "Maybe it will clean gloves. I have never tried. One might call it a life-cleaner. Lives need cleaning sometimes."

"I want nothing of that sort," said Alan.

"Probably it is just as well," said the old man. "Do you know the price of this? For one teaspoonful, which is sufficient, I ask five thousand dollars. Never less. Not a penny less."

"I hope all your mixtures are not as expensive," said Alan apprehensively.

"Oh dear, no," said the old man. "It would be no good charging that sort of price for a love potion, for example. Young people who need a love potion very seldom have five thousand dollars. Otherwise they would not need a love potion."

"I am glad to hear that," said Alan.

"I look at it like this," said the old man. "Please a customer with one article, and he will come back when he needs another. Even if it *is* more costly. He will save up for it, if necessary."

"So," said Alan, "you really do sell love potions?"

"If I did not sell love potions," said the old man, reaching for another bottle, "I should not have mentioned the other matter to you. It is only when one is in a position to oblige that one can afford to be so confidential."

"And these potions," said Alan. "They are not just—just—er——"

"Oh, no," said the old man. "Their effects are permanent, and extend far beyond the mere casual impulse. But they include it. Oh, yes, they include it. Bountifully, insistently. Everlastingly."

"Dear me!" said Alan, attempting a look of scientific detachment. "How very interesting!"

"But consider the spiritual side," said the old man.

"I do, indeed," said Alan.

"For indifference," said the old man, "they substitute devotion. For scorn, adoration. Give one tiny measure of this to the young lady—its flavor is imperceptible in orange juice, soup, or cocktails—and however gay and giddy she is, she will change altogether. She will want nothing but solitude, and you."

"I can hardly believe it," said Alan. "She is so fond of parties."

"She will not like them any more," said the old man. "She will be afraid of the pretty girls you may meet."

"She will actually be jealous?" cried Alan in a rapture. "Of me?"

"Yes, she will want to be everything to you."

"She is already. Only she doesn't care about it."

"She will, when she has taken this. She will care intensely. You will be her sole interest in life."

"Wonderful!" cried Alan.

"She will want to know all you do," said the old man. All that has happened to you during the day. Every word of it. She will want to know what you are thinking about, why you smile suddenly, why you are looking sad."

"That is love!" cried Alan.

"Yes," said the old man. "How carefully she will look after you! She will never allow you to be tired, to sit in a draught, to neglect your food. If you are an hour late, she will be terrified. She will think you are killed, or that some siren has caught you."

"I can hardly imagine Diana like that!" cried Alan, overwhelmed with joy.

"You will not have to use your imagination," said the old man. "And, by the way, since there are always sirens, if by any chance you *should,* later on, slip a little, you need not worry. She will forgive you, in the end. She will be terribly hurt, of course, but she will forgive you—in the end."

"That will not happen," said Alan fervently.

"Of course not," said the old man. "But, if it did, you need not worry. She would never divorce you. Oh, no! And, of course, she herself will never give you the least, the very least, grounds for—uneasiness."

"And how much," said Alan, "is this wonderful mixture?"

"It is not as dear," said the old man, "as the glove-cleaner, or life-cleaner, as I sometimes call it. No. That is five thousand dollars, never a penny less. One has to be older than you are, to indulge in that sort of thing. One has to save up for it."

"But the love potion?" said Alan.

"Oh, that," said the old man, opening the drawer in the kitchen

table, and taking out a tiny, rather dirty-looking phial. "That is just a dollar."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am," said Alan, watching him fill it.

"I like to oblige," said the old man. "Then customers come back, later in life, when they are rather better off, and want more expensive things. Here you are. You will find it very effective."

"Thank you again," said Alan. "Good-bye."

"*Au revoir,*" said the old man.

KING CHEOPS' DAUGHTER

Herodotus

CHEOPS MOREOVER, THEY SAID, BECAME SO WICKED THAT, BEING in want of money he sent his own daughter to a brothel, and ordered her to obtain from those who came a certain amount of money (how much it was they did not tell me); and she not only obtained the sum set by her father, but also she formed a scheme for herself privately to leave a memorial, and she requested each man who came in to her to leave her one stone for building: and of these stones, they told me, was built the pyramid which stands in front of the great pyramid, the middle one of the three, each side being one hundred and fifty feet long.

NELLY TRIM

Sylvia Townsend Warner

'LIKE MEN RIDING,
The mist from the sea
Drives down the valley
And baffles me.'
'Enter, traveller,
Whoever you be.'

By lamplight confronted
He staggered and peered;
Like a wet bramble
Was his beard.
'Sit down, stranger,
You look a-feared.'

Shudders rent him
To the bone,
The wet ran off him
And speckled the stone.
'Dost bide here alone, maid?'
'Yes, alone.'

As he sat down
In the chimney-nook
Over his shoulder
He cast a look,
As if the night
Were pursuing; she took

A handful of brash
To mend the fire,
He eyed her close
As the flame shot higher;
He spoke—and the cattle
Moved in the byre.

'Though you should heap
Your fire with wood,
'Twouldn't warm me,
Nor do no good,
Unless you first warm me
As a maiden should.'

With looks unwavering,
With breath unstirred,
She took off her clothes
Without a word;
And stood up naked
And white as a curd.

He breathed her to him
With famished sighs,
Against her bosom
He sheltered his eyes,
And warmed his hands
Between her thighs.

*

Strangely assembled
In the quiet room,
Alone alight
Amidst leagues of gloom,
So brave a bride,
So sad a groom;

And strange love-traffic
Between these two;
Nor mean, nor shamefaced—
As though they'd do
Something more solemn
Than they knew:

As though by this greeting
Which chance had willed
'Twixt him so silent
And her so stilled,
Some pledge or compact
Were fulfilled,

Made for all time
In times unknown,
'Twixt man and woman
Standing alone
In mirk night
By a tall stone.

His wayfaring terrors
All cast aside,
Brave now the bridegroom
Quitted the bride;
As he came, departing—
Undenied.

But once from darkness
Turned back his sight
To where in the doorway
She held a light:
'Goodbye to you, maiden.'
'Stranger, good night.'

Long time has this woman
Been bedded alone.
The house where she dwelt
Lies stone on stone:
She'd not know her ash-tree,
So warped has it grown.

But yet this story
Is told of her
As a memorial;
And some aver
She'd comfort thus any
Poor traveller.

A wanton, you say—
Yet where's the spouse,
However true
To her marriage-vows,
To whom the lot
Of the earth-born allows

More than this?—
To comfort the care
Of a stranger, bound
She knows not where,
And afraid of the dark,
As his fathers were.

THE STORY OF THE SIREN

E. M. Forster

FEW THINGS HAVE BEEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN MY NOTEBOOK ON the Deist Controversy as it fell downward through the waters of the Mediterranean. It dived, like a piece of black slate, but opened soon, disclosing leaves of pale green, which quivered into blue. Now it had vanished, now it was a piece of magical india-rubber stretching out to infinity, now it was a book again, but bigger than the book of all knowledge. It grew more fantastic as it reached the bottom, where a puff of sand welcomed it and obscured it from view. But it reappeared, quite sane though a little tremulous, lying decently open on its back, while unseen fingers fidgeted among its leaves.

"It is such a pity," said my aunt, "that you will not finish your work in the hotel. Then you would be free to enjoy yourself and this would never have happened."

"Nothing of it but will change into something rich and strange," warbled the chaplain, while his sister said, "Why, it's gone in the water!" As for the boatmen, one of them laughed, while the other, without a word of warning, stood up and began to take his clothes off.

"Holy Moses," cried the Colonel. "Is the fellow mad?"

"Yes, thank him, dear," said my aunt: "that is to say, tell him he is very kind, but perhaps another time."

"All the same I do want my book back," I complained. "It's for my Fellowship Dissertation. There won't be much left of it by another time."

"I have an idea," said some woman or other through her parasol. "Let us leave this child of nature to dive for the book while we go on to the other grotto. We can land him either on this rock or on the ledge inside, and he will be ready when we return."

The idea seemed good; and I improved it by saying I would be left behind too, to lighten the boat. So the two of us were deposited outside the little grotto on a great sunlit rock that guarded the harmonies within. Let us call them blue, though they suggest rather the spirit of what is clean—cleanliness passed from the domestic to the sublime, the cleanliness of all the sea gathered together and radiating light. The Blue Grotto at Capri contains only more blue water, not bluer water. That colour and that spirit are the heritage of every cave in the Mediterranean into which the sun can shine and the sea flow.

As soon as the boat left I realized how imprudent I had been to trust myself on a sloping rock with an unknown Sicilian. With a jerk he became alive, seizing my arm and saying, "Go to the end of the grotto, and I will show you something beautiful."

He made me jump off the rock on to the ledge over a dazzling crack of sea; he drew me away from the light till I was standing on the tiny beach of sand which emerged like powdered turquoise at the farther end. There he left me with his clothes, and returned swiftly to the summit of the entrance rock. For a moment he stood naked in the brilliant sun, looking down at the spot where the book lay. Then he crossed himself, raised his hands above his head, and dived.

If the book was wonderful, the man is past all description. His effect was that of a silver statue, alive beneath the sea, through whom life throbbed in blue and green. Something infinitely happy, infinitely wise—but it was impossible that it should emerge from the depths sunburned and dripping, holding the notebook on the Deist Controversy between its teeth.

A gratuity is generally expected by those who bathe. Whatever I offered, he was sure to want more, and I was disinclined for an argument in a place so beautiful and also so solitary. It was a relief that he should say in conversational tones, "In a place like this one might see the Siren."

I was delighted with him for thus falling into the key of his surroundings. We had been left together in a magic world, apart from all the commonplaces that are called reality, a world of blue whose floor was the sea and whose walls and roof of rock trembled

with the sea's reflections. Here only the fantastic would be tolerable, and it was in that spirit I echoed his words, "One might easily see the Siren."

He watched me curiously while he dressed. I was parting the sticky leaves of the notebook as I sat on the sand.

"Ah," he said at last. "You may have read the little book that was printed last year. Who would have thought that our Siren would have given the foreigners pleasure!"

(I read it afterwards. Its account is, not unnaturally, incomplete, in spite of there being a woodcut of the young person, and the words of her song.)

"She comes out of this blue water, doesn't she," I suggested, "and sits on the rock at the entrance, combing her hair."

I wanted to draw him out, for I was interested in his sudden gravity, and there was a suggestion of irony in his last remark that puzzled me.

"Have you ever seen her?" he asked.

"Often and often."

"I, never."

"But you have heard her sing?"

He put on his coat and said impatiently, "How can she sing under the water? Who could? She sometimes tries, but nothing comes from her but great bubbles."

"She should climb on to the rock."

"How can she?" he cried again, quite angry. "The priests have blessed the air, so she cannot breathe it, and blessed the rocks, so that she cannot sit on them. But the sea no man can bless, because it is too big, and always changing. So she lives in the sea."

I was silent.

At this his face took a gentler expression. He looked at me as though something was on his mind, and going out to the entrance rock gazed at the external blue. Then returning into our twilight he said, "As a rule only good people see the Siren."

I made no comment. There was a pause, and he continued. "That is a very strange thing, and the priests do not know how to account for it; for she of course is wicked. Not only those who fast and go to

Mass are in danger, but even those who are merely good in daily life. No one in the village had seen her for two generations. I am not surprised. We all cross ourselves before we enter the water, but it is unnecessary. Giuseppe, we thought, was safer than most. We loved him, and many of us he loved: but that is a different thing from being good."

I asked who Giuseppe was.

"That day—I was seventeen and my brother was twenty and a great deal stronger than I was, and it was the year when the visitors, who have brought such prosperity and so many alterations into the village, first began to come. One English lady in particular, of very high birth, came, and has written a book about the place, and it was through her that the Improvement Syndicate was formed, which is about to connect the hotels with the station by a funicular railway."

"Don't tell me about that lady in here," I observed.

"That day we took her and her friends to see the grottoes. As we rowed close under the cliffs I put out my hand, as one does, and caught a little crab, and having pulled off its claws offered it as a curiosity. The ladies groaned, but a gentleman was pleased, and held out money. Being inexperienced, I refused it, saying that his pleasure was sufficient reward! Giuseppe, who was rowing behind, was very angry with me and reached out with his hand and hit me on the side of the mouth, so that a tooth cut my lip, and I bled. I tried to hit him back, but he always was too quick for me, and as I stretched round he kicked me under the armpit, so that for a moment I could not even row. There was a great noise among the ladies, and I heard afterward that they were planning to take me away from my brother and train me as a waiter. That, at all events, never came to pass.

"When we reached the grotto—not here, but a larger one—the gentleman was very anxious that one of us should dive for money, and the ladies consented, as they sometimes do. Giuseppe, who had discovered how much pleasure it gives foreigners to see us in the water, refused to dive for anything but silver, and the gentleman threw in a two-lira piece.

"Just before my brother sprang off he caught sight of me holding my bruise, and crying, for I could not help it. He laughed and said,

'This time, at all events, I shall not see the Siren!' and went into the water without crossing himself. But he saw her."

He broke off and accepted a cigarette. I watched the golden entrance rock and the quivering walls and the magic water through which great bubbles constantly rose.

At last he dropped his hot ash into the ripples and turned his head away, and said, "He came up without the coin. We pulled him into the boat, and he was so large that he seemed to fill it, and so wet that we could not dress him. I have never seen a man so wet. I and the gentleman rowed back, and we covered Giuseppe with sacking and propped him up in the stern."

"He was drowned, then?" I murmured, supposing that to be the point.

"He was not," he cried angrily. "He saw the Siren. I told you."

I was silenced again.

"We put him to bed, though he was not ill. The doctor came, and took money, and the priest came and spattered him with holy water. But it was no good. He was too big—like a piece of the sea. He kissed the thumb-bones of San Biagio and they never dried till evening."

"What did he look like?" I ventured.

"Like any one who has seen the Siren. If you have seen her 'often and often' how is it you do not know? Unhappy, unhappy because he knew everything. Every living thing made him unhappy because he knew it would die. And all he cared to do was sleep."

I bent over my notebook.

"He did no work, he forgot to eat, he forgot whether he had his clothes on. All the work fell on me, and my sister had to go out to service. We tried to make him into a beggar, but he was too robust to inspire pity, and as for an idiot, he had not the right look in his eyes. He would stand in the street looking at people, and the more he he looked at them the more unhappy he became. When a child was born he would cover his face with his hands. If any one was married—he was terrible then, and would frighten them as they came out of church. Who would have believed he would marry himself! I caused that, I. I was reading out of the paper how a girl at Ragusa had

'gone mad through bathing in the sea' Giuseppe got up, and in a week he and that girl came in.

"He never told me anything, but it seems that he went straight to her house, broke into her room, and carried her off. She was the daughter of a rich mineowner, so you may imagine our peril. Her father came down, with a clever lawyer, but they could do no more than I. They argued and they threatened, but at last they had to go back and we lost nothing—that is to say, no money. We took Giuseppe and Maria to the church and had them married. Ugh! that wedding! The priest made no jokes afterward, and coming out the children threw stones. . . . I think I would have died to make her happy; but as always happens, one could do nothing."

"Were they unhappy together then?"

"They loved each other, but love is not happiness. We can all get love. Love is nothing. I had two people to work for now, for she was like him in everything—one never knew which of them was speaking. I had to sell our own boat and work under the bad old man you have today. Worst of all, people began to hate us. The children first—everything begins with them—and then the women and last of all the men. For the cause of every misfortune was— You will not betray me?"

I promised good faith, and immediately he burst into the frantic blasphemy of one who has escaped from supervision, cursing the priests, who had ruined his life, he said. "Thus are we tricked!" was his cry, and he stood up and kicked at the azure ripples with his feet, till he had obscured them with a cloud of sand.

I too was moved. The story of Giuseppe, for all its absurdity and superstition, came nearer to reality than anything I had known before. I don't know why, but it filled me with desire to help others—the greatest of all our desires, I suppose, and the most fruitless. The desire soon passed.

"She was about to have a child. That was the end of everything. People said to me, 'When will your charming nephew be born? What a cheerful, attractive child he will be, with such a father and mother!' I kept my face steady and replied, 'I think he may be. Out of sadness shall come gladness'—it is one of our proverbs. And my

answer frightened them very much, and they told the priests, who were frightened too. Then the whisper started that the child would be Antichrist. You need not be afraid: he was never born.

"An old witch began to prophesy, and no one stopped her. Giuseppe and the girl, she said, had silent devils, who could do little harm. But the child would always be speaking and laughing and perverting, and last of all he would go into the sea and fetch up the Siren into the air and all the world would see her and hear her sing. As soon as she sang, the Seven Vials would be opened and the Pope would die and Mongibello flame, and the veil of Santa Agata would be burned. Then the boy and the Siren would marry, and together they would rule the world, for ever and ever.

"The whole village was in tumult, and the hotel-keepers became alarmed, for the tourist season was just beginning. They met together and decided that Giuseppe and the girl must be sent inland until the child was born, and they subscribed the money. The night before they were to start there was a full moon and wind from the east, and all along the coast the sea shot up over the cliffs in silver clouds. It is a wonderful sight, and Maria said she must see it once more.

" 'Do not go,' I said. 'I saw the priest go by, and some one with him. And the hotel-keepers do not like you to be seen, and if we displease them also we shall starve.'

" 'I want to go,' she replied. 'The sea is stormy, and I may never feel it again.'

" 'No, he is right,' said Giuseppe. 'Do not go—or let one of us go with you.'

" 'I want to go alone,' she said; and she went alone.

"I tied up their luggage in a piece of cloth, and then I was so unhappy at thinking I should lose them that I went and sat down by my brother and put my arm round his neck, and he put his arm round me, which he had not done for more than a year, and we remained thus I don't remember how long.

"Suddenly the door flew open and moonlight and wind came in together, and a child's voice said laughing, 'They have pushed her over the cliffs into the sea.'

"I stepped to the drawer where I keep my knives.

"'Sit down again,' said Giuseppe—Giuseppe of all people! 'If she is dead, why should others die too?'

"'I guess who it is,' I cried, 'and I will kill him.'

"I was almost out of the door, and he tripped me up and, kneeling upon me, took hold of both my hands and sprained my wrists; first my right one, then my left. No one but Giuseppe would have thought of such a thing. It hurt more than you would suppose, and I fainted. When I woke up, he was gone, and I never saw him again."

But Giuseppe disgusted me.

"I told you he was wicked," he said. "No one would have expected him to see the Siren."

"How do you know he did see her?"

"Because he did not see her 'often and often,' but once."

"Why do you love him if he is wicked?"

He laughed for the first time. That was his only reply.

"Is that the end?" I asked.

"I never killed her murderer, for by the time my wrists were well he was in America; and one cannot kill a priest. As for Giuseppe, he went all over the world too, looking for some one else who had seen the Siren—either a man, or, better still, a woman, for then the child might still have been born. At last he came to Liverpool—is the district probable?—and there he began to cough, and spat blood until he died.

"I do not suppose there is any one living now who has seen her. There has seldom been more than one in a generation, and never in my life will there be both a man and a woman from whom that child can be born, who will fetch up the Siren from the sea, and destroy silence, and save the world!"

"Save the world?" I cried. "Did the prophecy end like that?"

He leaned back against the rock, breathing deep. Through all the blue-green reflections I saw him colour. I heard him say: "Silence and loneliness cannot last for ever. It may be a hundred or a thousand years, but the sea lasts longer, and she shall come out of it and sing." I would have asked him more, but at that moment the whole cave darkened, and there rode in through its narrow entrance the returning boat.

THE UNICORN IN THE GARDEN

James Thurber

ONCE UPON A SUNNY MORNING A MAN WHO SAT IN A BREAKFAST nook looked up from his scrambled eggs to see a white unicorn with a golden horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden. The man went up to the bedroom where his wife was still asleep and woke her. "There's a unicorn in the garden," he said. "Eating roses." She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him. "The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said, and turned her back on him. The man walked slowly downstairs and out into the garden. The unicorn was still there; he was now browsing among the tulips. "Here, unicorn," said the man, and he pulled up a lily and gave it to him. The unicorn ate it gravely. With a high heart, because there was a unicorn in his garden, the man went upstairs and roused his wife again. "The unicorn," he said, "ate a lily." His wife sat up in bed and looked at him, coldly. "You are a booby," she said, "and I am going to have you put in the booby-hatch." The man, who had never liked the words "booby" and "booby-hatch," and who liked them even less on a shining morning when there was a unicorn in the garden, thought for a moment. "We'll see about that," he said. He walked over to the door. "He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead," he told her. Then he went back to the garden to watch the unicorn; but the unicorn had gone away. The man sat down among the roses and went to sleep.

As soon as the husband had gone out of the house, the wife got up and dressed as fast as she could. She was very excited and there was a gloat in her eye. She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist; she told them to hurry to her house and bring a strait-jacket. When the police and the psychiatrist arrived they sat down in

chairs and looked at her, with great interest. "My husband," she said, "saw a unicorn this morning." The police looked at the psychiatrist and the psychiatrist looked at the police. "He told me it ate a lily," she said. The psychiatrist looked at the police and the police looked at the psychiatrist. "He told me it had a golden horn in the middle of its forehead," she said. At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist, the police leaped from their chairs and seized the wife. They had a hard time subduing her, for she put up a terrific struggle, but they finally subdued her. Just as they got her into the strait-jacket, the husband came back into the house.

"Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," said the husband. "The unicorn is a mythical beast." "That's all I wanted to know," said the psychiatrist. "Take her away. I'm sorry, sir, but your wife is as crazy as a jay bird." So they took her away, cursing and screaming, and shut her up in an institution. The husband lived happily ever after.

Moral: Don't count your boobies until they are hatched.

HOW MOUNT SHASTA WAS MADE AND HOW GRIZZLY BEARS CAME TO BE

C. E. S. Wood

Mattie, the squaw of Natches, the son of Winnemucca, she who could ride farther than any of us, she who had a sad face and bright teeth, she who died at the end of the Bannack war in 1878, told me this tale.

MAYBE THIS STORY IS NOT TRUE; THIS IS THE WAY IT IS TOLD BY the Shastas. The Sky Man got tired living in the sky; it was too cold up there. To make himself a lodge on the earth, he kicked a hole in the sky and pushed snow through it till it was a great mountain of snow, almost up to the sky itself; this is Mt. Shasta. Then he moved out of the sky, with his squaw and his little daughter; she was like his very heart, he loved her so. They went into the lodge and built a fire; then you could see the smoke curling up out of the top of the mountain. Sometimes, when he threw on a big log, sparks would fly up and the earth would tremble. By and by he got lonesome; so he blew some leaves off the trees and they became birds: he threw some sticks into the river, and the big pieces became otter and beaver, and the little pieces became fish. After a time he became tired again; so he took a great piece of clay and made something like a man. He covered it with moss, and put fire into it and made it alive, and it became a grizzly bear; but not as they are now, for they walked always erect like men, and carried clubs in their hands and could talk. Then the Sky Spirit went back into the mountain. By and by the Wind Spirit came to plague the Sky Spirit, and blew so hard against his great lodge that it rocked in the wind. All the smoke

was blown back into the wigwam, and it hurt their eyes. So the Sky Spirit told his daughter to go up and close the trap at the top of the lodge, while he would put out the fire. But, said he, you must be very careful not to go out where the Wind Spirit can get you. The little girl was not strong enough to close the trap against the Wind Spirit; and while she was struggling, he caught her and whirled her away. He dropped her in the heart of the great forest, and there she was found by the Grizzly Bear. He took her home to his squaw, and she gave her milk from her breast; and they dug roots for her and gathered nuts. Thus she grew to be a woman. Then the son of the Grizzly married her and they had children, which were not quite so hairy as the Grizzlies; part Grizzly and part Gods. The Wind Spirit, when this had come to pass, went up the mountain and told the Sky Spirit where his daughter was. He at once jumped to his feet and ran down the mountain side, leaving bare rock and a path through the timber where he went, as you may see to this day. Very soon he came to the home of the Grizzlies and asked if it was true his daughter was there. Yes, said the Grizzly, it is true; and he led the Sky Spirit to his lodge, thinking to please him. The Sky Spirit expected to see his daughter a little child, as he had lost her; and when he saw that she was the wife of a Grizzly and nursing those queer animals at her breast, he was very angry. He cursed all the Grizzlies: You shall never speak again; you shall walk on all fours forever. And he cursed them so, that all the Grizzlies ran away afraid. Then the Sky Spirit took his daughter by the hand and led her home. He put out his fire forever; and, leading his daughter, they stepped from cloud to cloud up into the sky. But the children of the daughter grew to be men and women; and that is how people came on the earth. And when now a child is born it cries, remembering how it has been deserted.

THE WISDOM OF THE KING

W. B. Yeats

THE HIGH-QUEEN OF IRELAND HAD DIED IN CHILDBIRTH, AND HER child was put to nurse with a woman who lived in a little house, within the border of the wood. One night the woman sat rocking the cradle, and meditating upon the beauty of the child, and praying that the gods might grant him wisdom equal to his beauty. There came a knock at the door, and she got up wondering, for the nearest neighbours were in the High-King's house a mile away and the night was now late. "Who is knocking?" she cried, and a thin voice answered, "Open! for I am a crone of the grey hawk, and I come from the darkness of the great wood." In terror she drew back the bolt, and a grey-clad woman, of a great age, and of a height more than human, came in and stood by the head of the cradle. The nurse shrank back against the wall, unable to take her eyes from the woman, for she saw by the gleaming of the firelight that the feathers of the grey hawk were upon her head instead of hair. "Open!" cried another voice, "for I am a crone of the grey hawk, and I watch over his nest in the darkness of the great wood." The nurse opened the door again, though her fingers could scarce hold the bolts for trembling, and another grey woman, not less old than the other, and with like feathers instead of hair, came in and stood by the first. In a little, came a third grey woman, and after her a fourth, and then another and another and another, until the hut was full of their immense bodies. They stood silent for a long time, but at last one muttered in a low thin voice: "Sisters, I knew him far away by the redness of his heart under his silver skin"; and then another spoke: "Sisters, I knew him because his heart fluttered like a bird under a net of silver cords"; and then another took up the word: "Sisters, I knew him because his

heart sang like a bird that is happy in a silver cage." And after that they sang together, those who were nearest rocking the cradle with long wrinkled fingers; and their voices were now tender and caressing, now like the wind blowing in the great wood, and this was their song:

Out of sight is out of mind:
Long have man and woman-kind,
Heavy of will and light of mood,
Taken away our wheaten food,

Taken away our Altar stone;
Hail and rain and thunder alone,
And red hearts we turn to grey,
Are true till Time gutter away.

When the song had died out, the crone who had first spoken said: "We have nothing more to do but to mix a drop of our blood into his blood." And she scratched her arm with the sharp point of a spindle, which she had made the nurse bring to her, and let a drop of blood, grey as the mist, fall upon the lips of the child; and passed out into the darkness.

When the crones were gone, the nurse came to her courage again, and hurried to the High-King's house, and cried out in the midst of the assembly hall that the Sidhe had bent over the child that night; and the king and his poets and men of law went with her to the hut and gathered about the cradle, and were as noisy as magpies, and the child sat up and looked at them.

Two years passed over, and the king died; and the poets and the men of law ruled in the name of the child, but looked to see him become the master himself before long, for no one had seen so wise a child, and everything had been well but for a miracle that began to trouble all men; and all women, who, indeed, talked of it without ceasing. The feathers of the grey hawk had begun to grow in the child's hair, and though his nurse cut them continually, in but a little while they would be more numerous than ever. This had not been a matter of great importance, for miracles were a little thing in those days, but for an ancient law of Ireland that none who had any blemish of body could sit upon the throne; and as a grey hawk is a brute

thing of the air, it was not possible to think of one in whose hair its feathers grew as other than marred and blasted; nor could the people separate from their admiration of the wisdom that grew in him a horror as at one of unhuman blood. Yet all were resolved that he should reign, for they had suffered much from foolish kings and their own disorders; and no one had any other fear but that his great wisdom might bid him obey the law, and call some other to reign in his stead.

When the child was seven years old the poets and the men of law were called together by the chief poet, and all these matters weighed and considered. The child had already seen that those about him had hair only, and, though they had told him that they too had had feathers but had lost them because of a sin committed by their forefathers, they knew that he would learn the truth when he began to wander into the country round about. After much consideration they made a new law commanding every one upon pain of death to mingle artificially the feathers of the grey hawk into his hair; and they sent men with nets and slings and bows into the countries round about to gather a sufficiency of feathers. They decreed also that any who told the truth to the child should be put to death.

The years passed, and the child grew from childhood into boyhood and from boyhood into manhood, and became busy with strange and subtle thought, distinctions between things long held the same, resemblance of things long held different. Multitudes came from other lands to see him and to question him, but there were guards set at the frontiers, who compelled all to wear the feathers of the grey hawk in their hair. While they listened to him his words seemed to make all darkness light and filled their hearts like music; but when they returned to their own lands his words seemed far off, and what they could remember too strange and subtle to help them in their lives. A number indeed did live differently afterwards, but their new life was less excellent than the old: some among them had long served a good cause, but when they heard him praise it, they returned to their own lands to find what they had loved less lovable, for he had taught them how little divides the false and true; others, again, who had served no cause, but had sought in peace the welfare

of their own households, found their bones softer and less ready for toil, for he had shown them greater purposes; and numbers of the young, when they had heard him upon all these things, remembered certain strange words that made ordinary joys nothing, and sought impossible joys and grew unhappy.

Among those who came to look at him and to listen to him was the daughter of a little king who lived a great way off; and when he saw her he loved, for she was beautiful, with a beauty unlike that of other women; but her heart was like that of other women, and when she thought of the mystery of the hawk feathers she was afraid. Overwhelmed with his greatness, she half accepted, and yet half refused his love, and day by day the king gave her gifts the merchants had carried from India or maybe from China itself; and still she was ever between a smile and a frown; between yielding and withholding. He laid all his wisdom at her feet, and told a multitude of things that even the Sidhe have forgotten, and he thought she understood because her beauty was like wisdom.

There was a tall young man in the house who had yellow hair, and was skilled in wrestling; and one day the king heard his voice among the salley bushes. "My dear," it said, "I hate them for making you weave these dingy feathers into your beautiful hair, and all that the bird of prey upon the throne may sleep easy o' nights"; and then the low, musical voice he loved answered: "My hair is not beautiful like yours; and now that I have plucked the feathers out of your hair I will put my hands through it, thus, and thus, and thus; for it does not make me afraid." Then the king remembered many things that he had forgotten without understanding them, chance words of his poets and his men of law, doubts that he had reasoned away; and he called to the lovers in a trembling voice. They came from among the salley bushes and threw themselves at his feet and prayed for pardon. He stooped down and plucked the feathers out of the hair of the woman and turned away without a word. He went to the hall of assembly, and having gathered his poets and his men of law about him, stood upon the daïs and spoke in a loud, clear voice: "Men of law, why did you make me sin against the laws? Men of verse, why did you make me sin against the secrecy of wisdom? for

law was made by man for the welfare of man, but wisdom the gods have made, and no man shall live by its light, for it and the hail and the rain and the thunder follow a way that is deadly to mortal things. Men of law and men of verse, live according to your kind, and call Eocha of the Hasty Mind to reign over you, for I set out to find my kindred." He then came down among them, and drew out of the hair of first one and then another the feathers of the grew hawk, and, having scattered them over the rushes upon the floor, passed out, and none dared to follow him, for his eyes gleamed like the eyes of the birds of prey; and no man saw him again or heard his voice.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Virgil

ORPHEUS WITH THE HOLLOW SHELL OF HIS LYRE TRIED TO COMfort himself for his sick love, singing his sweet wife by himself on the lonely shore, sang of her at coming and at parting day. He went even to the jaws of Hell, the high halls of Dis, the grove misty with dark dread, and approached the shades and their awful king, and the hearts that did not know how to become gentle at human prayers. But moved by the song, from the lowest depths of Hell came the frail ghosts, the phantoms of those deprived of the light, by the thousands, as birds flock to the leaves when evening or a wintry rain drives them down from the mountains. Matrons were there, and men, and great-hearted heroes, whose life was over, boys and unwedded girls, the young placed on funeral pyres in the sight of their parents, all those around whom the black mud and shapeless sedge of Cocytus stood, the hateful marsh and the slow-moving water, the ninefold barrier of the river Styx. The homes of Hell paused in wonder, the innermost depths of Death and the Furies twining their locks with the blue snakes, Cerberus yawned open-mouthed, and the wheel of Ixion stopped for the wind of the song. So he took Eurydice with him and had almost overcome the very last danger, and Eurydice, following behind him (for so Proserpine had ordered) had nearly reached the upper world again, when a sudden madness seized the careless lover, a foolishness, pardonable if the Shades knew how to pardon. He stopped, and ah!, forgetful and thoughtless, looked back at his Eurydice on the very threshold of light. So all the work was wasted, the pact with the harsh tyrant broken, and thrice a crash was heard in the marshes of Avernus. Eurydice said, "Who has destroyed us, Orpheus? What madness has been great enough to destroy us?

The cruel fates are calling me back again, and sleep weighs down my swimming eyes. Farewell: I am taken, surrounded and carried away by monstrous night, and no longer yours, I reach out to you with unavailing hands." She spoke and suddenly vanished from his eyes, as thin smoke is lost in air, and never saw him again as he tried in vain to grasp the shadows, and wanted to say many things. In vain: for the ferryman would not allow him to cross again the marsh that lay between.

A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE TRYALS AND CONFESSIONS OF SEVERAL WITCHES, IN NEW-ENGLAND, &c.

Cotton Mather

In a *Letter* to a Friend.

Sir,

Since in Scripture, and divers Histories, we find that by the Delusion and Temptation of the Devil, silly Creatures are drawn aside to comply with a Diabolick Power, out of Revenge, to mischief their Fellow-Creatures; and other sinister Designs; it may not prove ungrateful to the Age, among other Matters of this kind, to give an Impartial Account of divers Persons who have been lately Try'd, Convicted and Executed in *New-England*, for their Bewitching, Torturing and Destroying People and Cattle; with many strange and amazing Circumstances that attended the Effecting of their hellish Performances. And, First,

At a Sessions of *Oyer* and *Terminer*, *Bridget Bishop* was Try'd, for Bewitching and Hurting divers Persons, and Destroying their Cattle. Against whom, upon Evidence, it appear'd in Court, That she, or something in her shape, often came and pinched and bit several Persons, grievously tormenting and affrighting them, urging them to write their Names in a Book which was then produc'd; and one refusing it, was carry'd by force from her Wheel, and threatned to be drown'd in a River, if she did not Sign it; but she overcame the Temptation: And that *Bishop* boasted she had been the death of

divers People. And those she had bewitch'd, when at any time she look'd upon them, were extremely tortur'd; and when they were in a Swoon, if she touch'd them, they would immediately revive, and many the like Gestures, work'd strange Effects. Once she tempted one *Deliverance Hobbs* to Sign the Book she brought; and because she refused, a Spectre, in the Shape of *Bishop,* whip'd her with Iron Rods; and that she knew this Woman to be at a General Meeting of Witches, in a Field near a Village call'd *Salem;* and that there she took Bread and Wine in a Diabolical way, as a Sacrament. *John* Cook said, upon Oath, That he was assaulted by her Shape in his Chamber; which hit him a blow on the Head, and made an Apply fly out of his Hand into his Mother's Lap, at a great distance.

Her shape was often seen in a great Light, which appear'd with her, so that she might easily be discern'd. *John Blys's* Wife Testified, That having bought a Sow of *Bishop's* Husband, and the Money being pay'd to another Person, the Sow was soon after taken with strange Fits, Leaping and Jumping, and beating her Head against the places where she came, refusing her meat, *&c.*

She was held to bewitch a Child of one *Samuel Shattock's*, and when she payed the said *Shattock* money, it was unaccountably conveyed away, though Locked never so safely up, she oppressed one *John Louder* in the night, and had like to have destroy'd him; and after that, he being at home, and the doors shut, a black Pig, or rather the Devil in such a shape, appear'd to him, which he going to kick, it vanished, as he thought, out of the Window: then a black thing Jumped in again, with a Body like a Monkey, the Face something like a Man, and the feet like a Cocks, which in the midst of his affrighment, told him, That understanding he was in trouble, he come as a Messenger to tell him, that if he would be ruled by him, he should want nothing in the World, whereupon endeavouring to seize it, he could feel no substance it seeming to Jump out of the Window again, and then coming to the Porch, said, You had better take my Counsel. He then struck at it with a Stick, but the Stick broke, and it Vanishing, his Arm was disabled, and afterward throwing dirt upon his Breast, it struck him Dumb for three Days.

Many other things of the like nature were testifyed against her.

As that she appeared several times with a strange Light, and upon her with-drawing, it was Dark. That one *Stacy* being threatned by her, was one dark Night thrown against a Stone-Wall, and down a Bank, *&c.* His Horse-traces breaking in pieces, and he not being able to lift up two Bushels of Corn, though otherwise a Strong Man. It was suspected she killed this Party's Daughter by Witchcraft, and it was proved that in taking down an old Cellar-Wall of hers, Poppets made of Clouts and Hogs-Hair, were found stuck with headless-pins. To these Accusations and Proofs against her, she made little Defence.

Susanna Martin was Tryed upon the same account, and the People that were to appear against her, found themselves upon their looking at her, in a strange disorder, falling down when they came to approach her, and being asked the reason, she gave a very slight Answer.

Against her it was proved, that one *John Allen,* refusing to carry her some Staves, by reason of the weakness of his Oxen that drove his Wain, she told him he had better he had; and soon after one of his Oxen tired: but this was not all, putting his Oxen to pasture among others, they first took a River, and then being recovered, they ran into the Sea, where they were all drowned but one, which for a time run Mad.

John Atkinson, having bought a Cow of this Woman's Son, and she being displeased at the Bargain, though this Cow was Ham-string'd and halter'd, she grew so Mad, that she broke all the Ropes, and though tyed to a Tree, she got away. *Bernard Peche,* testified, That she came in at his Window one Night, and lay upon him for two hours, when recovering himself, he got hold of her Hand, and bit her by the Finger, so that she going down Stairs, drops of Blood were found, and the prints of her feet in the Snow at the threshold, but no farther. Once she and another assaulted him in his Barn, where he knocked them down with a Quarter-Staff, but they rose up and got away, and having threatned one time, to send a she-Devil to fetch him away, a Cat soon after came in at the Window, and took hold on his Throat, when calling upon the Name of God, it flew out of the Window. Also falling out with one *Kembal,* for his refusing to buy a Puppy of her, she said he should have Puppies enough, and one day coming home, he was by an invisible Power, driven out of the Road

upon stumps of Trees, and immediately a Puppy shot too and fro between his Legs, and sometimes over his Shoulder, which he could not hit, though often with his Ax he struck, at it: soon after another, bigger appeared, and flew at him with great fierceness, when calling upon the Name of Christ, it vanished; and though *Kembal* told it to no body, yet *Martin*, the Prisoner, declared how he had been served.

One *Pressy*, gave Evidence against this Woman, that coming home one Night, he saw a little out of his way a great Light, to which going and striking at it, he found it a solid Body, and giving it many blows, he had not gone far from it, but *Martin* appeared, and the next day he heard she was Ill of blows and hurts received. One *Ring* Testified that she came to him one Night, and bit him by the fingers, the mark of which was produced in Court.

Elizabeth How, was likewise Tryed at the same Court for a Witch, and it appeared against her that her evil looks cast People into swooning fits, and many great disorders. That she bewitched one *Stafford*'s Wife, and Child bewitched her Brother's Cattle to Death and the Cattle of divers other People Miscarried by her Curses, and bad Wishes, and if any displeased, her one mischief or other befel them, and one *Sherwin*'s Wife dying, charged her to have a hand in her Death by Witchcraft.

She bewitched and killed a Mare of one *Cumings*, and a Daughter of *Tymothy Pearly*'s, the Girl affirming to her Death, that this Woman had bewitched her, and would be in a strange taking, when even she was named, saying at the last, Though she could torment her Body, she could not hurt her Soul. Divers recanting Witches came in against her, and declared, that she had been Baptized with them by the Devil, whereupon they kneeled down and Worshipped him.

Martha Carrier, was another who was Tryed at this Court upon the like account, and against her it was proved by several Persons, whom she had bewitched, that they had been by her, or something in her shape, bit, pinched, and almost choaked, and even upon her Examination and Tryal, her looks and gestures struck them into strange Consternations and Disorders their Necks turning wildly about, at which she scoffingly declared, it were no matter if their Necks were twisted off. Her own Children had declared that she had brought them

up to the same mischievous ends, declaring how and where they had been upon these wicked designs, and what mischief they had done.

She falling out with one *Abbot*, about measuring of Ground, he after her threatning of him, had a swelling in his Foot, then a pain in his Side, and many other grievous sores fell upon him, which brought him almost to his Grave, till such times as this Woman was apprehended, and then he recovered. His Cattle many of them were taken away, by strange and unusual Deaths. One *Toothmaker* likewise lost many Cattle upon falling out with her, and having a Wound, she told him it should never be Cured, which indeed could not be effected, till the time of her being seized, and then it immediately grew well. Likewise the Cattle of *John Rogers* were bewitched upon his falling out with her, and divers other People suffered the like: She taking one *Phœbe Chandler* by the Shoulder, soon after she heard a Voice over her Head, saying, In a few Days she should be poyson'd; and thereupon her Hand swelled, and she was in many great pains and torments. Divers Women that had been of her Conversation, accus'd her being at Witch-Meetings, and of Eating and Drinking with the Devil; and, that she drew some of them into the Snare.

One thing strangely happen'd, during her Tryal, *viz*. One *Susanna Sheldon* had her Hands tied together with a Whale-Bone by an Invisible Hand, that it could not be undone without cutting; and for this Service of *Carrier*, the Devil promis'd to make her *Queen of Hell*.

Among these Women, a Man was Try'd, as a Dealer in the Black-Art, and Witchcraft. It appear'd against him, That he had intic'd a great many to sign the Devil's Book with Blood, or some Necromantick Matter. He was suspected to make away Two Wives by Witchcraft; whose Ghosts appear'd, and declar'd as much to divers People, charging them to reveal it; and tho' he was but a weak Man to appearance, yet he would lift more than the strongest Man could do. So that it was conjectur'd, that the Devil must of necessity assist him by a secret power. It appear'd against him, that he had intic'd many into Witchery; and One refusing to sign his Book, was afflicted with cruel Pains for a long time. Some he bit, and the print of his Teeth remained in their Flesh. And it further appear'd, that he was the chief Summoner to the Witch-Meetings, and persuaded People to communicate with

the Devil; and many other horrible things, as destroying of Cattle, and the like.

So that upon full Evidence against them all, they were Convicted, and receiv'd Sentence of Death, and were accordingly executed: But several Children, and others, that had been seduc'd by them to these hellish Practices, met with lighter Punishments, and have Time allowed them to repent.

SIR,

I am

Your True Friend,

C. M.

SALEM,
8th. Month,
1692.

THE WITCH OF COOS

Circa 1922

Robert Frost

I STAID THE NIGHT FOR SHELTER AT A FARM
Behind the mountain, with a mother and son,
Two old-believers. They did all the talking.

Mother. Folks think a witch who has familiar spirits
She could call up to pass a winter evening,
But won't, should be burned at the stake or something.
Summoning spirits isn't "Button, button,
Who's got the button," I would have them know.

Son. Mother can make a common table rear
And kick with two legs like an army mule.

Mother. And when I've done it, what good have I done?
Rather than tip a table for you, let me
Tell you what Ralle the Sioux control once told me.
He said the dead had souls, but when I asked him
How could that be—I thought the dead were souls,
He broke my trance. Don't that make you suspicious
That there's something the dead are keeping back?
Yes, there's something the dead are keeping back.

Son. You wouldn't want to tell him what we have
Up attic, mother?

Mother. Bones—a skeleton.

Son. But the headboard of mother's bed is pushed
Against the attic door: the door is nailed.
It's harmless. Mother hears it in the night
Halting perplexed behind the barrier
Of door and headboard. Where it wants to get
Is back into the cellar where it came from.

Mother. We'll never let them, will we, son? We'll never!

Son. It left the cellar forty years ago
And carried itself like a pile of dishes
Up one flight from the cellar to the kitchen,
Another from the kitchen to the bedroom,
Another from the bedroom to the attic,
Right past both father and mother, and neither stopped it.
Father had gone upstairs; mother was downstairs.
I was a baby: I don't know where I was.

Mother. The only fault my husband found with me—
I went to sleep before I went to bed,
Especially in winter when the bed
Might just as well be ice and the clothes snow.
The night the bones came up the cellar-stairs
Toffile had gone to bed alone and left me,
But left an open door to cool the room off
So as to sort of turn me out of it.
I was just coming to myself enough
To wonder where the cold was coming from,
When I heard Toffile upstairs in the bedroom
And thought I heard him downstairs in the cellar.
The board we had laid down to walk dry-shod on
When there was water in the cellar in spring
Struck the hard cellar-bottom. And then someone
Began the stairs, two footsteps for each step,
The way a man with one leg and a crutch,
Or a little child, comes up. It wasn't Toffile:

It wasn't any one who could be there.
The bulkhead double-doors were double-locked
And swollen tight and buried under snow.
The cellar windows were banked up with sawdust
And swollen tight and buried under snow.
It was the bones. I knew them—and good reason.
My first impulse was to get to the knob
And hold the door. But the bones didn't try
The door; they halted helpless on the landing,
Waiting for things to happen in their favor.
The faintest restless rustling ran all through them.
I never could have done the thing I did
If the wish hadn't been too strong in me
To see how they were mounted for this walk.
I had a vision of them put together
Not like a man, but like a chandelier.
So suddenly I flung the door wide on him.
A moment he stood balancing with emotion,
And all but lost himself. (A tongue of fire
Flashed out and licked along his upper teeth.
Smoke rolled inside the sockets of his eyes.)
Then he came at me with one hand outstretched
The way he did in life once; but this time
I struck the hand off brittle on the floor,
And fell back from him on the floor myself.
The finger-pieces slid in all directions.
(Where did I see one of those pieces lately?
Hand me my button-box—it must be there.)
I sat up on the floor and shouted, "Toffile,
It's coming up to you." It had its choice
Of the door to the cellar or the hall.
It took the hall door for the novelty,
And set off briskly for so slow a thing,
Still going every which way in the joints, though,
So that it looked like lightning or a scribble,
From the slap I had just now given its hand.

I listened till it almost climbed the stairs
From the hall to the only finished bedroom,
Before I got up to do anything;
Then ran and shouted, "Shut the bedroom door,
Toffile, for my sake!" "Company," he said,
"Don't make me get up; I'm too warm in bed."
So lying forward weakly on the handrail
I pushed myself upstairs, and in the light
(The kitchen had been dark) I had to own
I could see nothing. "Toffile, I don't see it.
It's with us in the room though. It's the bones."
"What bones?" "The cellar bones—out of the grave."
That made him throw his bare legs out of bed
And sit up by me and take hold of me.
I wanted to put out the light and see
If I could see it, or else mow the room,
With our arms at the level of our knees,
And bring the chalk-pile down. "I'll tell you what—
It's looking for another door to try.
The uncommonly deep snow has made him think
Of his old song, *The Wild Colonial Boy*,
He always used to sing along the tote-road.
He's after an open door to get out-doors.
Let's trap him with an open door up attic."
Toffile agreed to that, and sure enough,
Almost the moment he was given an opening,
The steps began to climb the attic stairs.
I heard them. Toffile didn't seem to hear them.
"Quick!" I slammed to the door and held the knob.
"Toffile, get nails." I made him nail the door shut,
And push the headboard of the bed against it.
Then we asked was there anything
Up attic that we'd ever want again.
The attic was less to us than the cellar.
If the bones liked the attic, let them have it,
Let them stay in the attic. When they sometimes

Come down the stairs at night and stand perplexed
Behind the door and headboard of the bed,
Brushing their chalky skull with chalky fingers,
With sounds like the dry rattling of a shutter,
That's what I sit up in the dark to say—
To no one any more since Toffile died.
Let them stay in the attic since they went there.
I promised Toffile to be cruel to them
For helping them be cruel once to him.

Son. We think they had a grave down in the cellar.

Mother. We know they had a grave down in the cellar.

Son. We never could find out whose bones they were.

Mother. Yes, we could too, son. Tell the truth for once.
They were a man's his father killed for me.
I mean a man he killed instead of me.
The least I could do was to help dig their grave.
We were about it one night in the cellar.
Son knows the story: but 'twas not for him
To tell the truth, suppose the time had come.
Son looks surprised to see me end a lie
We'd kept all these years between ourselves
So as to have it ready for outsiders.
But tonight I don't care enough to lie—
I don't remember why I ever cared.
Toffile, if he were here, I don't believe
Could tell you why he ever cared himself.

She hadn't found the finger-bone she wanted
Among the buttons poured out in her lap.
I verified the name next morning: Toffile.
The rural letter-box said Toffile Lajway.

EXTRACT FROM CAPTAIN STORMFIELD'S VISIT TO HEAVEN

Mark Twain

WELL, WHEN I HAD BEEN DEAD ABOUT THIRTY YEARS, I BEGUN TO GET a little anxious. Mind you, I had been whizzing through space all that time, like a comet. *Like* a comet! Why, Peters, I laid over the lot of them! Of course there warn't any of them going my way, as a steady thing, you know, because they travel in a long circle like the loop of a lasso, whereas I was pointed as straight as a dart for the Hereafter; but I happened on one every now and then that was going my way for an hour or so, and then we had a bit of a brush together. But it was generally pretty one-sided, because I sailed by them the same as if they were standing still. An ordinary comet don't make more than about 200,000 miles a minute. Of course when I came across one of that sort—like Encke's and Halley's comets, for instance —it warn't anything but just a flash and a vanish, you see. You couldn't rightly call it a race. It was as if the comet was a gravel-train and I was a telegraph despatch. But after I got outside of our astronomical system, I used to flush a comet occasionally that was some-thing *like*. *We* haven't got any such comets—ours don't begin. One night I was swinging along at a good round gait, everything taut and trim, and the wind in my favor—I judged I was going about a million miles a minute—it might have been more, it couldn't have been less—when I flushed a most uncommonly big one about three points off my starboard bow. By his stern lights I judged he was bearing about northeast-and-by-north-half-east. Well, it was so near my course that

I wouldn't throw away the chance; so I fell off a point, steadied my helm, and went for him. You should have heard me whiz, and seen the electric fur fly! In about a minute and a half I was fringed out with an electrical nimbus that flamed around for miles and miles and lit up all space like broad day. The comet was burning blue in the distance, like a sickly torch, when I first sighted him, but he begun to grow bigger and bigger as I crept up on him. I slipped up on him so fast that when I had gone about 150,000,000 miles I was close enough to be swallowed up in the phosphorescent glory of his wake, and I couldn't see anything for the glare. Thinks I, it won't do to run into him, so I shunted to one side and tore along. By and by I closed up abreast of his tail. Do you know what it was like? It was like a gnat closing up on the continent of America. I forged along. By and by I had sailed along his coast for a little upwards of a hundred and fifty million miles, and then I could see by the shape of him that I hadn't even got up to his waistband yet. Why, Peters, *we* don't know anything about comets, down here. If you want to see comets that *are* comets, you've got to go outside of our solar system —where there's room for them, you understand. My friend, I've seen comets out there that couldn't even lay down inside the *orbits* of our noblest comets without their tails hanging over.

Well, I boomed along another hundred and fifty million miles, and got up abreast his shoulder, as you may say. I was feeling pretty fine, I tell you; but just then I noticed the officer of the deck come to the side and hoist his glass in my direction. Straight off I heard him sing out—

"Below there, ahoy! Shake her up, shake her up! Heave on a hundred million billion tons of brimstone!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Pipe the stabboard watch! All hands on deck!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Send two hundred thousand million men aloft to shake out royals and sky-scrapers!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Hand the stuns'ls! Hang out every rag you've got! Clothe her from stem to rudder-post!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

In about a second I began to see I'd woke up a pretty ugly customer, Peters. In less than ten seconds that comet was just a blazing cloud of red-hot canvas. It was piled up into the heavens clean out of sight—the old thing seemed to swell out and occupy all space; the sulphur smoke from the furnaces—oh, well, nobody can describe the way it rolled and tumbled up into the skies, and nobody can half describe the way it smelt. Neither can anybody begin to describe the way that monstrous craft begun to crash along. And such another powwow—thousands of bo's'n's whistles screaming at once, and a crew like the populations of a hundred thousand worlds like ours all swearing at once. Well, I never heard the like of it before.

We roared and thundered along side by side, both doing our level best, because I'd never struck a comet before that could lay over me, and so I was bound to beat this one or break something. I judged I had some reputation in space, and I calculated to keep it. I noticed I wasn't gaining as fast, now, as I was before, but still I was gaining. There was a power of excitement on board the comet. Upwards of a hundred billion passengers swarmed up from below and rushed to the side and begun to bet on the race. Of course this careened her and damaged her speed. My, but wasn't the mate mad! He jumped at that crowd, with his trumpet in his hand, and sung out—

"Amidships! amidships, you——![1] or I'll brain the last idiot of you!"

Well, sir, I gained and gained, little by little, till at last I went skimming sweetly by the magnificent old conflagration's nose. By this time the captain of the comet had been rousted out, and he stood there in the red glare for'ard, by the mate, in his shirt-sleeves and slippers, his hair all rats' nests and one suspender hanging, and how sick those two men did look! I just simply couldn't help putting my thumb to my nose as I glided away and singing out:

"Ta-ta! ta-ta! Any word to send to your family?"

Peters, it was a mistake. Yes, sir, I've often regretted that—it was a mistake. You see, the captain had given up the race, but that remark

1 The captain could not remember what this word was. He said it was in a foreign tongue.

was too tedious for him—he couldn't stand it. He turned to the mate, and says he—

"Have we got brimstone enough of our own to make the trip?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sure?"

"Yes, sir—more than enough."

"How much have we got in cargo for Satan?"

"Eighteen hundred thousand billion quintillions of kazarks."

"Very well, then, let his boarders freeze till the next comet comes. Lighten ship! Lively, now, lively, men! Heave the whole cargo overboard!"

Peters, look me in the eye, and be calm. I found out, over there, that a kazark is exactly the bulk of a *hundred and sixty-nine worlds like ours!* They hove all that load overboard. When it fell it wiped out a considerable raft of stars just as clean is if they'd been candles and somebody blowed them out. As for the race, that was at an end. The minute she was lightened the comet swung along by me the same as if I was anchored. The captain stood on the stern, by the after-davits, and put his thumb to his nose and sung out—

"Ta-ta! ta-ta! Maybe *you've* got some message to send your friends in the Everlasting Tropics!"

Then he hove up his other suspender and started for'ard, and inside of three-quarters of an hour his craft was only a pale torch again in the distance. Yes, it was a mistake, Peters—that remark of mine. I don't reckon I'll ever get over being sorry about it. I'd 'a' beat the bully of the firmament if I'd kept my mouth shut.

But I've wandered a little off the track of my tale; I'll get back on my course again. Now you see what kind of speed I was making. So, as I said, when I had been tearing along this way about thirty years I begun to get uneasy. Oh, it was pleasant enough, with a good deal to find out, but then it was kind of lonesome, you know. Besides, I wanted to get somewhere. I hadn't shipped with the idea of cruising forever. First off, I liked the delay, because I judged I was going to fetch up in pretty warm quarters when I got through; but towards

the last I begun to feel that I'd rather go to—well, most any place, so as to finish up the uncertainty.

Well, one night—it was always night, except when I was rushing by some star that was occupying the whole universe with its fire and its glare—light enough then, of course, but I necessarily left it behind in a minute or two and plunged into a solid week of darkness again. The stars ain't so close together as they look to be. Where was I? Oh yes; one night I was sailing along, when I discovered a tremendous long row of blinking lights away on the horizon ahead. As I approached, they begun to tower and swell and look like mighty furnaces. Says I to myself—

"By George, I've arrived at last—and at the wrong place, just as I expected!"

Then I fainted. I don't know how long I was insensible, but it must have been a good while, for, when I came to, the darkness was all gone and there was the loveliest sunshine and the balmiest, fragrantest air in its place. And there was such a marvellous world spread out before me—such a glowing, beautiful, bewitching country. The things I took for furnaces were gates, miles high, made all of flashing jewels, and they pierced a wall of solid gold that you couldn't see the top of, nor yet the end of, in either direction. I was pointed straight for one of these gates, and a-coming like a house afire. Now I noticed that the skies were black with millions of people, pointed for those gates. What a roar they made, rushing through the air! The ground was as thick as ants with people, too—billions of them, I judge.

I lit. I drifted up to a gate with a swarm of people, and when it was my turn the head clerk says, in a businesslike way—

"Well, quick! Where are you from?"

"San Francisco," says I.

"San Fran—*what?*" says he.

"San Francisco."

He scratched his head and looked puzzled, then he says—

"Is it a planet?"

By George, Peters, think of it! "*Planet?*" says I; "it's a city. And moreover, it's one of the biggest and finest and—"

"There, there!" says he, "no time here for conversation. We don't deal in cities here. Where are you from in a *general* way?"

"Oh," I says, "I beg your pardon. Put me down for California."

I had him *again*, Peters! He puzzled a second, then he says, sharp and irritable—

"I don't know any such planet—is it a constellation?"

"Oh, my goodness!" says I. "Constellation, says you? No—it's a State."

"Man, we don't deal in States here. *Will* you tell me where you are from *in general—at large*, don't you understand?"

"Oh, now I get your idea," I says. "I'm from America,—the United States of America."

Peters, do you know I had him *again?* If I hadn't I'm a clam! His face was as blank as a target after a militia shooting-match. He turned to an under clerk and says—

"Where is America? *What* is America?"

The under clerk answered up prompt and says—

"There ain't any such orb."

"*Orb?*" says I. "Why, what are you talking about, young man? It ain't an orb; it's a country; it's a continent. Columbus discovered it; I reckon likely you've heard of *him*, anyway. America—why, sir, America—"

"Silence!" says the head clerk. "Once for all, where—are—you—*from?*"

"Well," says I, "I don't know anything more to say—unless I lump things, and just say I'm from the world."

"Ah," says he, brightening up, "now that's something like! *What* world?"

Peters, he had *me*, that time. I looked at him, puzzled, he looked at me, worried. Then he burst out—

"Come, come, what world?"

Says I, "Why, *the* world, of course."

"*The* world!" he says. "H'm! there's billions of them! . . . Next!"

That meant for me to stand aside. I done so, and a sky-blue man with seven heads and only one leg hopped into my place. I took a walk. It just occurred to me, then, that all the myriads I had seen

swarming to that gate, up to this time, were just like that creature. I tried to run across somebody I was acquainted with, but they were out of acquaintances of mine just then. So I thought the thing all over and finally sidled back there pretty meek and feeling rather stumped, as you may say.

"Well?" said the head clerk.

"Well, sir," I says, pretty humble, "I don't seem to make out which world it is I'm from. But you may know it from this—it's the one the Saviour saved."

He bent his head at the Name. Then he says, gently—

"The worlds He has saved are like to the gates of heaven in number—none can count them. What astronomical system is your world in?—perhaps that may assist."

"It's the one that has the sun in it—and the moon—and Mars"—he shook his head at each name—hadn't ever heard of them, you see—"and Neptune—and Uranus—and Jupiter—"

"Hold on!" says he—"hold on a minute! Jupiter . . . Jupiter . . . Seems to me we had a man from there eight or nine hundred years ago—but people from that system very seldom enter by this gate." All of a sudden he begun to look me so straight in the eye that I thought he was going to bore through me. Then he says, very deliberate, "Did you come *straight* here from your system?"

"Yes, sir," I says—but I blushed the least little bit in the world when I said it.

He looked at me very stern, and says—

"That is not true; and this is not the place for prevarication. You wandered from your course. How did that happen?"

Says I, blushing again—

"I'm sorry, and I take back what I said, and confess. I raced a little with a comet one day—only just the least little bit—only the tiniest lit—"

"So—so," says he—and without any sugar in his voice to speak of.

I went on, and says—

"But I only fell off just a bare point, and I went right back on my course again the minute the race was over."

"No matter—that divergence has made all this trouble. It has

brought you to a gate that is billions of leagues from the right one. If you had gone to your own gate they would have known all about your world at once and there would have been no delay. But we will try to accommodate you." He turned to an under clerk and says—

"What system is Jupiter in?"

"I don't remember, sir, but I think there is such a planet in one of the little new systems away out in one of the thinly worlded corners of the universe. I will see."

He got a balloon and sailed up and up and up, in front of a map that was as big as Rhode Island. He went on up till he was out of sight, and by and by he came down and got something to eat and went up again. To cut a long story short, he kept on doing this for a day or two, and finally he came down and said he thought he had found that solar system, but it might be fly-specks. So he got a microscope and went back. It turned out better than he feared. He had rousted out our system, sure enough. He got me to describe our planet and its distance from the sun, and then he says to his chief—

"Oh, I know the one he means, now, sir. It is on the map. It is called the Wart."

Says I to myself, "Young man, it wouldn't be wholesome for you to go down *there* and call it the Wart."

Well, they let me in, then, and told me I was safe forever and wouldn't have any more trouble.

Then they turned from me and went on with their work, the same as if they considered my case all complete and shipshape. I was a good deal surprised at this, but I was diffident about speaking up and reminding them. I did so hate to do it, you know; it seemed a pity to bother them, they had so much on their hands. Twice I thought I would give up and let the thing go; so twice I started to leave, but immediately I thought what a figure I should cut stepping out amongst the redeemed in such a rig, and that made me hang back and come to anchor again. People got to eying me—clerks, you know—wondering why I didn't get under way. I couldn't stand this long—it was too uncomfortable. So at last I plucked up courage and tipped the head clerk a signal. He says—

"What! you here yet? What's wanting?"

Says I, in a low voice and very confidential, making a trumpet with my hands at his ear—

"I beg pardon, and you mustn't mind my reminding you, and seeming to meddle, but hain't you forgot something?"

He studied a second, and says—

"Forgot something? . . . No, not that I know of."

"Think," says I.

He thought. Then he says—

"No, I can't seem to have forgot anything. What is it?"

"Look at me," says I, "look me all over."

He done it.

"Well?" says he.

"Well," says I, "you don't notice anything? If I branched out amongst the elect looking like this, wouldn't I attract considerable attention?—wouldn't I be a little conspicuous?"

"Well," he says, "I don't see anything the matter. What do you lack?"

"Lack! Why, I lack my harp, and my wreath, and my halo, and my hymn-book, and my palm branch—I lack everything that a body naturally requires up here, my friend."

Puzzled? Peters, he was the worst puzzled man you ever saw. Finally he says—

"Well, you seem to be a curiosity every way a body takes you. I never heard of these things before."

I looked at the man awhile in solid astonishment; then I says—

"Now, I hope you don't take it as an offence, for I don't mean any, but really, for a man that has been in the Kingdom as long as I reckon you have, you do seem to know powerful little about its customs."

"Its customs!" says he. "Heaven is a large place, good friend. Large empires have many and diverse customs. Even small dominions have, as you doubtless know by what you have seen of the matter on a small scale in the Wart. How can you imagine I could ever learn the varied customs of the countless kingdoms of heaven? It makes my head ache to think of it. I know the customs that prevail in those portions inhabited by peoples that are appointed to enter by my own

gate—and hark ye, that is quite enough knowledge for one individual to try to pack into his head in the thirty-seven millions of years I have devoted night and day to that study. But the idea of learning the customs of the whole appalling expanse of heaven—O man, how insanely you talk! Now I don't doubt that this odd costume you talk about is the fashion in that district of heaven you belong to, but you won't be conspicuous in this section without it."

I felt all right, if that was the case, so I bade him good-day and left. All day I walked towards the far end of a prodigious hall of the office, hoping to come out into heaven any moment, but it was a mistake. That hall was built on the general heavenly plan—it naturally couldn't be small. At last I got so tired I couldn't go any farther; so I sat down to rest, and begun to tackle the queerest sort of strangers and ask for information; but I didn't get any; they couldn't understand my language, and I could not understand theirs. I got dreadfully lonesome. I was so downhearted and homesick I wished a hundred times I never had died. I turned back, of course. About noon next day, I got back at last and was on hand at the booking-office once more. Says I to the head clerk—

"I begin to see that a man's got to be in his own heaven to be happy."

"Perfectly correct," says he. "Did you imagine the same heaven would suit all sorts of men?"

"Well, I had that idea—but I see the foolishness of it. Which way am I to go to get to my district?"

He called the under clerk that had examined the map, and he gave me general directions. I thanked him and started; but he says—

"Wait a minute; it is millions of leagues from here. Go outside and stand on that red wishing-carpet; shut your eyes, hold your breath, and wish yourself there."

"I'm much obliged," says I; "why didn't you dart me through when I first arrived?"

"We have a good deal to think of here; it was your place to think of it and ask for it. Good-by; we probably sha'n't see you in this region for a thousand centuries or so."

"In that case, *o revoor,*" says I.

I hopped onto the carpet and held my breath and shut my eyes and wished I was in the booking-office of my own section. The very next instant a voice I knew sung out in a business kind of a way—

"A harp and a hymn-book, pair of wings and a halo, size 13, for Cap'n Eli Stormfield, of San Francisco!—make him out a clean bill of health, and let him in."

I opened my eyes. Sure enough, it was a Pi Ute Injun I used to know in Tulare County; mighty good fellow—I remembered being at his funeral, which consisted of him being burnt and the other Injuns gauming their faces with his ashes and howling like wildcats. He was powerful glad to see me, and you may make up your mind I was just as glad to see him, and feel that I was in the right kind of a heaven at last.

Just as far as your eye could reach, there was swarms of clerks, running and bustling around, tricking out thousands of Yanks and Mexicans and English and A-rabs, and all sorts of people in their new outfits; and when they gave me my kit and I put on my halo and took a look in the glass, I could have jumped over a house for joy, I was so happy. "Now *this* is something like!" says I. "Now," says I, "I'm all right—show me a cloud."

Inside of fifteen minutes I was a mile on my way towards the cloud-banks and about a million people along with me. Most of us tried to fly, but some got crippled and nobody made a success of it. So we concluded to walk, for the present, till we had had some wing practice.

We begun to meet swarms of folks who were coming back. Some had harps and nothing else; some had hymn-books and nothing else; some had nothing at all; all of them looked meek and uncomfortable; one young fellow hadn't anything left but his halo, and he was carrying that in his hand; all of a sudden he offered it to me and says—

"Will you hold it for me a minute?"

Then he disappeared in the crowd. I went on. A woman asked me to hold her palm branch, and then *she* disappeared. A girl got me to hold her harp for her, and by George, *she* disappeared; and so on and so on, till I was about loaded down to the guards. Then comes a

smiling old gentleman and asked me to hold *his* things. I swabbed off the perspiration and says, pretty tart—

"I'll have to get you to excuse me, my friend,—*I* ain't no hat-rack."

About this time I begun to run across piles of those traps, lying in the road. I just quietly dumped my extra cargo along with them. I looked around, and, Peters, that whole nation that was following me were loaded down the same as I'd been. The return crowd had got them to hold their things a minute, you see. They all dumped their loads, too, and we went on.

When I found myself perched on a cloud, with a million other people, I never felt so good in my life. Says I, "Now this is according to the promises; I've been having my doubts, but now I *am* in heaven, sure enough." I gave my palm branch a wave or two, for luck, and then I tautened up my harp-strings and struck in. Well, Peters, you can't imagine anything like the row we made. It was grand to listen to, and made a body thrill all over, but there was considerable many tunes going on at once, and that was a drawback to the harmony, you understand; and then there was a lot of Injun tribes, and they kept up such another war-whooping that they kind of took the tuck out of the music. By and by I quit performing, and judged I'd take a rest. There was quite a nice mild old gentleman sitting next me, and I noticed he didn't take a hand; I encouraged him, but he said he was naturally bashful, and was afraid to try before so many people. By and by the old gentleman said he never could seem to enjoy music somehow. The fact was, I was beginning to feel the same way; but I didn't say anything. Him and I had a considerable long silence, then, but of course it warn't noticeable in that place. After about sixteen or seventeen hours, during which I played and sung a little, now and then—always the same tune, because I didn't know any other—I laid down my harp and begun to fan myself with my palm branch. Then we both got to sighing pretty regular. Finally, says he—

"Don't you know any tune but the one you've been pegging at all day?"

"Not another blessed one," says I.

"Don't you reckon you could learn another one?" says he.

"Never," says I; "I've tried to, but I couldn't manage it."

"It's a long time to hang to the one—eternity, you know."

"Don't break my heart," says I; "I'm getting low-spirited enough already."

After another long silence, says he—

"Are you glad to be here?"

Says I, "Old man, I'll be frank with you. This *ain't* just as near my idea of bliss as I thought it was going to be, when I used to go to church."

Says he, "What do you say to knocking off and calling it half a day?"

"That's me," says I. "I never wanted to get off watch so bad in my life."

So we started. Millions were coming to the cloud-bank all the time, happy and hosannahing; millions were leaving it all the time, looking mighty quiet, I tell you. We laid for the new-comers, and pretty soon I'd got them to hold all my things a minute, and then I was a free man again and most outrageously happy. Just then I ran across old Sam Bartlett, who had been dead a long time, and stopped to have a talk with him. Says I—

"Now tell me—is this to go on forever? Ain't there anything else for a change?"

Says he—

"I'll set you right on that point very quick. People take the figurative language of the Bible and the allegories for literal, and the first thing they ask for when they get here is a halo and a harp, and so on. Nothing that's harmless and reasonable is refused a body here, if he asks it in the right spirit. So they are outfitted with these things without a word. They go and sing and play just about one day, and that's the last you'll ever see them in the choir. They don't need anybody to tell them that that sort of thing wouldn't make a heaven—at least not a heaven that a sane man could stand a week and remain sane. That cloud-bank is placed where the noise can't disturb the old inhabitants, and so there ain't any harm in letting everybody get up there and cure himself as soon as he comes.

"Now you just remember this—heaven is as blissful and lovely as it can be; but it's just the busiest place you ever heard of. There ain't

any idle people here after the first day. Singing hymns and waving palm branches through all eternity is pretty when you hear about it in the pulpit, but it's as poor a way to put in valuable time as a body could contrive. It would just make a heaven of warbling ignoramuses, don't you see? Eternal Rest sounds comforting in the pulpit, too. Well, you try it once, and see how heavy time will hang on your hands. Why, Stormfield, a man like you, that had been active and stirring all his life, would go mad in six months in a heaven where he hadn't anything to do. Heaven is the very last place to come to *rest* in,—and don't you be afraid to bet on that!"

Says I—

"Sam, I'm as glad to hear it as I thought I'd be sorry. I'm glad I come, now."

Says he—

"Cap'n, ain't you pretty physically tired?"

Says I—

"Sam, it ain't any name for it! I'm dog-tired."

"Just so—just so. You've earned a good sleep, and you'll get it. You've earned a good appetite, and you'll enjoy your dinner. It's the same here as it is on earth—you've got to earn a thing, square and honest, before you enjoy it. You can't enjoy first and earn afterwards. But there's this difference, here: you can choose your own occupation, and all the powers of heaven will be put forth to help you make a success of it, if you do your level best. The shoemaker on earth that had the soul of a poet in him won't have to make shoes here."

"Now that's all reasonable and right," says I. "Plenty of work, and the kind you hanker after; no more pain, no more suffering—"

"Oh, hold on; there's plenty of pain here—but it don't kill. There's plenty of suffering here, but it don't last. You see, happiness ain't a *thing in itself*—it's only a *contrast* with something that ain't pleasant. That's all it is. There ain't a thing you can mention that is happiness in its own self—it's only so by contrast with the other thing. And so, as soon as the novelty is over and the force of the contrast dulled, it ain't happiness any longer, and you have to get something fresh. Well, there's plenty of pain and suffering in heaven—consequently there's plenty of contrasts, and just no end of happiness."

Says I, "It's the sensiblest heaven I've heard of yet, Sam, though it's about as different from the one I was brought up on as a live princess is different from her own wax figger."

Along in the first months I knocked around about the Kingdom, making friends and looking at the country, and finally settled down in a pretty likely region, to have a rest before taking another start. I went on making acquaintances and gathering up information. I had a good deal of talk with an old bald-headed angel by the name of Sandy McWilliams. He was from somewhere in New Jersey. I went about with him, considerable. We used to lay around, warm afternoons, in the shade of a rock, on some meadow-ground that was pretty high and out of the marshy slush of his cranberry-farm, and there we used to talk about all kinds of things, and smoke pipes. One day, says I—

"About how old might you be, Sandy?"

"Seventy-two."

"I judged so. How long you been in heaven?"

"Twenty-seven years, come Christmas."

"How old was you when you come up?"

"Why, seventy-two, of course."

"You can't mean it!"

"Why can't I mean it?"

"Because, if you was seventy-two then, you are naturally ninety-nine now."

"No, but I ain't. I stay the same age I was when I come."

"Well," says I, "come to think, there's something just here that I want to ask about. Down below, I always had an idea that in heaven we would all be young, and bright, and spry."

"Well, you *can* be young if you want to. You've only got to wish."

"Well, then, why didn't you wish?"

"I did. They all do. You'll try it, some day, like enough; but you'll get tired of the change pretty soon."

"Why?"

"Well, I'll tell you. Now you've always been a sailor; did you ever try some other business?"

"Yes, I tried keeping grocery, once, up in the mines; but I couldn't stand it; it was too dull—no stir, no storm, no life about it; it was like being part dead and part alive, both at the same time. I wanted to be one thing or t'other. I shut up shop pretty quick and went to sea."

"That's it. Grocery people like it, but you couldn't. You see you wasn't used to it. Well, I wasn't used to being young, and I couldn't seem to take any interest in it. I was strong, and handsome, and had curly hair,—yes, and wings, too!—gay wings like a butterfly. I went to picnics and dances and parties with the fellows, and tried to carry on and talk nonsense with the girls, but it wasn't any use; I couldn't take to it—fact is, it was an awful bore. What I wanted was early to bed and early to rise, and something to *do;* and when my work was done, I wanted to sit quiet, and smoke and think—not tear around with a parcel of giddy young kids. You can't think what I suffered whilst I was young."

"How long was you young?"

"Only two weeks. That was plenty for me. Laws, I was so lonesome! You see, I was full of the knowledge and experience of seventy-two years; the deepest subject those young folks could strike was only *a-b-c* to me. And to hear them argue—oh, my! it would have been funny, if it hadn't been so pitiful. Well, I was so hungry for the ways and the sober talk I was used to, that I tried to ring in with the old people, but they wouldn't have it. They considered me a conceited young upstart, and gave me the cold shoulder. Two weeks was a-plenty for me. I was glad to get back my bald head again, and my pipe, and my old drowsy reflections in the shade of a rock or a tree."

"Well," says I, "do you mean to say you're going to stand still at seventy-two, forever?"

"I don't know, and I ain't particular. But I ain't going to drop back to twenty-five any more—I know that, mighty well. I know a sight more than I did twenty-seven years ago, and I enjoy learning, all the time, but I don't seem to get any older. That is, bodily—my mind gets older, and stronger, and better seasoned, and more satisfactory."

Says I, "If a man comes here at ninety, don't he ever set himself back?"

"Of course he does. He sets himself back to fourteen; tries it a couple of hours, and feels like a fool; sets himself forward to twenty; it ain't much improvement; tries thirty, fifty, eighty, and finally ninety—finds he is more at home and comfortable at the same old figure he is used to than any other way. Or, if his mind begun to fail him on earth at eighty, that's where he finally sticks up here. He sticks at the place where his mind was last at its best, for there's where his enjoyment is best, and his ways most set and established."

"Does a chap of twenty-five stay always twenty-five, and look it?"

"If he is a fool, yes. But if he is bright, and ambitious and industrious, the knowledge he gains and the experiences he has, change his ways and thoughts and likings, and make him find his best pleasure in the company of people above that age; so he allows his body to take on that look of as many added years as he needs to make him comfortable and proper in that sort of society; he lets his body go on taking the look of age, according as he progresses, and by and by he will be bald and wrinkled outside, and wise and deep within."

"Babies the same?"

"Babies the same. Laws, what asses we used to be, on earth, about these things! We said we'd be always young in heaven. We didn't say *how* young—we didn't think of that, perhaps—that is, we didn't all think alike, anyway. When I was a boy of seven, I suppose I thought we'd all be twelve, in heaven; when I was twelve, I suppose I thought we'd all be eighteen or twenty in heaven; when I was forty, I begun to go back; I remember I hoped we'd all be about *thirty* years old in heaven. Neither a man nor a boy ever thinks the age he *has* is exactly the best one—he puts the *right* age a few years older or a few years younger than he is. Then he makes that ideal age the general age of the heavenly people. And he expects everybody to *stick* at that age—stand stock-still—and expects them to enjoy it!—Now just think of the idea of standing still in heaven! Think of a heaven made up entirely of hoop-rolling, marble-playing cubs of seven years! —or of awkward, diffident, sentimental immaturities of nineteen!— or of vigorous people of thirty, healthy-minded, brimming with ambition, but chained hand and foot to that one age and its limitations like so many helpless galley-slaves! Think of the dull sameness of a society

made up of people all of one age and one set of looks, habits, tastes and feelings. Think how superior to it earth would be, with its variety of types and faces and ages, and the enlivening attrition of the myriad interests that come into pleasant collision in such a variegated society."

"Look here," says I, "do you know what you're doing?"

"Well, what am I doing?"

"You are making heaven pretty comfortable in one way, but you are playing the mischief with it in another."

"How d'you mean?"

"Well," I says, "take a young mother that's lost her child, and—"

"'Sh!" he says. "Look!"

It was a woman. Middle-aged, and had grizzled hair. She was walking slow, and her head was bent down, and her wings hanging limp and droopy; and she looked ever so tired, and was crying, poor thing! She passed along by, with her head down, that way, and the tears running down her face, and didn't see us. Then Sandy said, low and gentle, and full of pity:

"*She's* hunting for her child! No, *found* it, I reckon. Lord, how she's changed! But I recognized her in a minute, though it's twenty-seven years since I saw her. A young mother she was, about twenty-two or four, or along there; and blooming and lovely and sweet? oh, just a flower. And all her heart and all her soul was wrapped up in her child, her little girl, two years old. And it died, and she went wild with grief, just wild! Well, the only comfort she had was that she'd see her child again, in heaven—'never more to part,' she said, and kept on saying it over and over, 'never more to part.' And the words made her happy; yes, they did; they made her joyful; and when I was dying, twenty-seven years ago, she told me to find her child the first thing, and say she was coming—'soon, soon, *very* soon, she hoped and believed!' "

"Why, it's pitiful, Sandy."

He didn't say anything for a while, but sat looking at the ground, thinking. Then he says, kind of mournful:

"And now she's come!"

"Well? Go on."

"Stormfield, maybe she hasn't found the child, but *I* think she has.

Looks so to me. I've seen cases before. You see, she's kept that child in her head just the same as it was when she jounced it in her arms a little chubby thing. But here it didn't elect to *stay* a child. No, it elected to grow up, which it did. And in these twenty-seven years it has learned all the deep scientific learning there is to learn, and is studying and studying and learning and learning more and more, all the time, and don't give a damn for anything *but* learning; just learning, and discussing gigantic problems with people like herself."

"Well?"

"Stormfield, don't you see? Her mother knows *cranberries,* and how to tend them, and pick them, and put them up, and market them; and not another blamed thing! Her and her daughter can't be any more company for each other *now* than mud turtle and bird o' paradise. Poor thing, she was looking for a baby to jounce; *I* think she's struck a disapp'intment."

"Sandy, what will they do—stay unhappy forever in heaven?"

"No, they'll come together and get adjusted by and by. But not this year, and not next. By and by."

II

I had been having considerable trouble with my wings. The day after I helped the choir I made a dash or two with them, but was not lucky. First off, I flew thirty yards, and then fouled an Irishman and brought him down—brought us both down, in fact. Next, I had a collision with a Bishop—and bowled him down, of course. We had some sharp words, and I felt pretty cheap, to come banging into a grave old person like that, with a million strangers looking on and smiling to themselves.

I saw I hadn't got the hang of the steering, and so couldn't rightly tell where I was going to bring up when I started. I went afoot the rest of the day, and let my wings hang. Early next morning I went to a private place to have some practice. I got up on a pretty high rock, and got a good start, and went swooping down, aiming for a bush a little over three hundred yards off; but I couldn't seem to calculate for the wind, which was about two points abaft my beam. I could see I was going considerable to looard of the bush, so I worked

my starboard wing slow and went ahead strong on the port one, but it wouldn't answer; I could see I was going to broach to, so I slowed down on both, and lit. I went back to the rock and took another chance at it. I aimed two or three points to starboard of the bush—yes, more than that—enough so as to make it nearly a head-wind. I done well enough, but made pretty poor time. I could see, plain enough, that on a head-wind, wings was a mistake. I could see that a body could sail pretty close to the wind, but he couldn't go in the wind's eye. I could see that if I wanted to go a-visiting any distance from home, and the wind was ahead, I might have to wait days, maybe, for a change; and I could see, too, that these things could not be any use at all in a gale; if you tried to run before the wind, you would make a mess of it, for there isn't any way to shorten sail—like reefing, you know—you have to take it *all* in—shut your feathers down flat to your sides. That would *land* you, of course. You could lay to, with your head to the wind—that is the best you could do, and right hard work you'd find it, too. If you tried any other game, you would founder, sure.

I judge it was about a couple of weeks or so after this that I dropped old Sandy McWilliams a note one day—it was a Tuesday—and asked him to come over and take his manna and quails with me next day; and the first thing he did when he stepped in was to twinkle his eye in a sly way, and say,—

"Well, Cap, what you done with your wings?"

I saw in a minute that there was some sarcasm done up in that rag somewheres, but I never let on. I only says,—

"Gone to the wash."

"Yes," he says, in a dry sort of way, "they mostly go to the wash—about this time—I've often noticed it. Fresh angels are powerful neat. When do you look for 'em back?"

"Day after to-morrow," says I.

He winked at me, and smiled.

Says I,—

"Sandy, out with it. Come—no secrets among friends. I notice you don't ever wear wings—and plenty others don't. I've been making an ass of myself—is that it?"

"That is about the size of it. But it is no harm. We all do it at first. It's perfectly natural. You see, on earth we jump to such foolish conclusions as to things up here. In the pictures we always saw the angels with wings on—and that was all right; but we jumped to the conclusion that that was their way of getting around—and that was all wrong. The wings ain't anything but a uniform, that's all. When they are in the field—so to speak,—they always wear them; you never seen an angel going with a message anywhere without his wings, any more than you would see a military officer presiding at a court-martial without his uniform, or a postman delivering letters, or a policeman walking his beat, in plain clothes. But they ain't to *fly* with! The wings are for show, not for use. Old experienced angels are like officers of the regular army—they dress plain, when they are off duty. New angels are like the militia—never shed the uniform—always fluttering and floundering around in their wings, butting people down, flapping here, and there, and everywhere, always imagining they are attracting the admiring eye—well, they just think they are the very most important people in heaven. And when you see one of them come sailing around with one wing tipped up and t'other down, you make up your mind he is saying to himself: 'I wish Mary Ann in Arkansaw could see me now. I reckon she'd wish she hadn't shook me.' No, they're just for show, that's all—only just for show."

"I judge you've got it about right, Sandy," says I.

"Why, look at it yourself," says he. "*You* ain't built for wings—no man is. You know what a grist of years it took you to come here from the earth—and yet you were booming along faster than any cannon-ball could go. Suppose you had to fly that distance with your wings—wouldn't eternity have been over before you got here? Certainly. Well, angels have to go to the earth every day—millions of them—to appear in visions to dying children and good people, you know—it's the heft of their business. They appear with their wings, of course, because they are on official service, and because the dying persons wouldn't know they were angels if they hadn't wings—but do you reckon they fly with them? It stands to reason they don't. The wings would wear out before they got half-way; even the pin-

feathers would be gone; the wing frames would be as bare as kite sticks before the paper is pasted on. The distances in heaven are billions of times greater; angels have to go all over heaven every day; could they do it with their wings alone? No, indeed; they wear the wings for style, but they travel any distance in an instant by *wishing*. The wishing-carpet of the Arabian Nights was a sensible idea—but our earthly idea of angels flying these awful distances with their clumsy wings was foolish.

"Our young saints, of both sexes, wear wings all the time—blazing red ones, and blue and green, and gold, and variegated, and rainbowed, and ring-streaked-and-striped ones—and nobody finds fault. It is suitable to their time of life. The things are beautiful, and they set the young people off. They are the most striking and lovely part of their outfit—a halo don't *begin*."

"Well," says I, "I've tucked mine away in the cupboard, and I allow to let them lay there till there's mud."

"Yes—or a reception."

"What's that?"

"Well, you can see one to-night if you want to. There's a barkeeper from Jersey City going to be received."

"Go on—tell me about it."

"This barkeeper got converted at a Moody and Sankey meeting, in New York, and started home on the ferryboat, and there was a collision and he got drowned. He is of a class that think all heaven goes wild with joy when a particularly hard lot like him is saved; they think all heaven turns out hosannahing to welcome them; they think there isn't anything talked about in the realms of the blest but their case, for that day. This barkeeper thinks there hasn't been such another stir here in years, as his coming is going to raise.—And I've always noticed this peculiarity about a dead barkeeper—he not only expects all hands to turn out when he arrives, but he expects to be received with a torchlight procession."

"I reckon he is disappointed, then."

"No, he isn't. No man is allowed to be disappointed here. Whatever he wants, when he comes—that is, any reasonable and unsacrilegious thing—he can have. There's always a few millions or billions

of young folks around who don't want any better entertainment than to fill up their lungs and swarm out with their torches and have a high time over a barkeeper. It tickles the barkeeper till he can't rest, it makes a charming lark for the young folks, it don't do anybody any harm, it don't cost a rap, and it keeps up the place's reputation for making all comers happy and content."

"Very good. I'll be on hand and see them land the barkeeper."

"It is manners to go in full dress. You want to wear your wings, you know, and your other things."

"Which ones?"

"Halo, and harp, and palm branch, and all that."

"Well," says I, "I reckon I ought to be ashamed of myself, but the fact is I left them laying around that day I resigned from the choir. I haven't got a rag to wear but this robe and the wings."

"That's all right. You'll find they've been raked up and saved for you. Send for them."

"I'll do it, Sandy. But what was it you was saying about unsacrilegious things, which people expect to get, and will be disappointed about?"

"Oh, there are a lot of such things that people expect and don't get. For instance, there's a Brooklyn preacher by the name of Talmage, who is laying up a considerable disappointment for himself. He says, every now and then in his sermons, that the first thing he does when he gets to heaven, will be to fling his arms around Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and kiss them and weep on them. There's millions of people down there on earth that are promising themselves the same thing. As many as sixty thousand people arrive here every single day, that want to run straight to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and hug them and weep on them. Now mind you, sixty thousand a day is a pretty heavy contract for those old people. If they were a mind to allow it, they wouldn't ever have anything to do, year in and year out, but stand up and be hugged and wept on thirty-two hours in the twenty-four. They would be tired out and as wet as muskrats all the time. What would heaven be, to *them?* It would be a mighty good place to get out of—you know that, yourself. Those are kind and gentle old Jews, but they ain't any fonder

of kissing the emotional highlights of Brooklyn than you be. You mark my words, Mr. T.'s endearments are going to be declined, with thanks. There are limits to the privileges of the elect, even in heaven. Why, if Adam was to show himself to every newcomer that wants to call and gaze at him and strike him for his autograph, he would never have time to do anything else but just that. Talmage has said he is going to give Adam some of his attentions, as well as A., I. and J. But he will have to change his mind about that."

"Do you think Talmage will really come here?"

"Why, certainly, he will; but don't you be alarmed; he will run with his own kind, and there's plenty of them. That is the main charm of heaven—there's all kinds here—which wouldn't be the case if you let the preachers tell it. Anybody can find the sort he prefers, here, and he just lets the others alone, and they let him alone. When the Deity builds a heaven, it is built right, and on a liberal plan."

Sandy sent home for his things, and I sent for mine, and about nine in the evening we begun to dress. Sandy says,—

"This is going to be a grand time for you, Stormy. Like as not some of the patriarchs will turn out."

"No, but will they?"

"Like as not. Of course they are pretty exclusive. They hardly ever show themselves to the common public. I believe they never turn out except for an eleventh-hour convert. They wouldn't do it then, only earthly tradition makes a grand show pretty necessary on that kind of an occasion."

"Do they all turn out, Sandy?"

"Who?—all the patriarchs? Oh, no—hardly ever more than a couple. You will be here fifty thousand years—maybe more—before you get a glimpse of all the patriarchs and prophets. Since I have been here, Job has been to the front once, and once Ham and Jeremiah both at the same time. But the finest thing that has happened in my day was a year or so ago; that was Charles Peace's reception—him they called 'the Bannercross Murderer'—an Englishman. There were four patriarchs and two prophets on the Grand Stand that time—there hasn't been anything like it since Captain Kidd came; Abel was there—the first time in twelve hundred years. A report got around

that Adam was coming; well, of course, Abel was enough to bring a crowd, all by himself, but there is nobody that can draw like Adam. It was a false report, but it got around, anyway, as I say, and it will be a long day before I see the like of it again. The reception was in the English department, of course, which is eight hundred and eleven million miles from the New Jersey line. I went, along with a good many of my neighbors, and it was a sight to see, I can tell you. Flocks came from all the departments. I saw Esquimaux there, and Tartars, Negroes, Chinamen—people from everywhere. You see a mixture like that in the Grand Choir, the first day you land here, but you hardly ever see it again. There were billions of people; when they were singing or hosannahing, the noise was wonderful; and even when their tongues were still the drumming of the wings was nearly enough to burst your head, for all the sky was as thick as if it was snowing angels. Although Adam was not there, it was a great time anyway, because we had three archangels on the Grand Stand—it is a seldom thing that even one comes out."

"What did they look like, Sandy?"

"Well, they had shining faces, and shining robes, and wonderful rainbow wings, and they stood eighteen feet high, and wore swords, and held their heads up in a noble way, and looked like soldiers."

"Did they have halos?"

"No—anyway, not the hoop kind. The archangels and the upper-class patriarchs wear a finer thing than that. It is a round, solid, splendid glory of gold, that is blinding to look at. You have often seen a patriarch in a picture, on earth, with that thing on—you remember it?—he looks as if he had his head in a brass platter. That don't give you the right idea of it at all—it is much more shining and beautiful."

"Did you talk with those archangels and patriarchs, Sandy?"

"Who—*I*? Why, what can you be thinking about, Stormy? I ain't worthy to speak to such as they."

"Is Talmage?"

"Of course not. You have got the same mixed-up idea about these things that everybody has down there. I had it once, but I got over it. Down there they talk of the heavenly King—and that is right—

but then they go right on speaking as if this was a republic and everybody was on a dead level with everybody else, and privileged to fling his arms around anybody he comes across, and be hail-fellow-well-met with all the elect, from the highest down. How tangled up and absurd that is! How are you going to have a republic under a king? How are you going to have a republic at all, where the head of the government is absolute, holds his place forever, and has no parliament, no council to meddle or make in his affairs, nobody voted for, nobody elected, nobody in the whole universe with a voice in the government, nobody asked to take a hand in its matters, and nobody *allowed* to do it? Fine republic, ain't it?"

"Well, yes—it *is* a little different from the idea I had—but I thought I might go around and get acquainted with the grandees, anyway—not exactly splice the main-brace with them, you know, but shake hands and pass the time of day."

"Could Tom, Dick and Harry call on the Cabinet of Russia and do that?—on Prince Gortschakoff, for instance?"

"I reckon not, Sandy."

"Well, this is Russia—only more so. There's not the shadow of a republic about it anywhere. There are ranks, here. There are viceroys, princes, governors, sub-governors, sub-sub-governors, and a hundred orders of nobility, grading along down from grand-ducal archangels, stage by stage, till the general level is struck, where there ain't any titles. Do you know what a prince of the blood is, on earth?"

"No."

"Well, a prince of the blood don't belong to the royal family exactly, and he don't belong to the mere nobility of the kingdom; he is lower than the one, and higher than t'other. That's about the position of the patriarchs and prophets here. There's some mighty high nobility here—people that you and I ain't worthy to polish sandals for—and *they* ain't worthy to polish sandals for the patriarchs and prophets. That gives you a kind of an idea of their rank, don't it? You begin to see how high up they are, don't you? Just to get a two-minute glimpse of one of them is a thing for a body to remember and tell about for a thousand years. Why, Captain, just think of this: if Abraham was to set his foot down here by this door, there would be

a railing set up around that foot-track right away, and a shelter put over it, and people would flock here from all over heaven, for hundreds and hundreds of years, to look at it. Abraham is one of the parties that Mr. Talmage, of Brooklyn, is going to embrace, and kiss, and weep on, when he comes. He wants to lay in a good stock of tears, you know, or five to one he will go dry before he gets a chance to do it."

"Sandy," says I, "I had an idea that *I* was going to be equals with everybody here, too, but I will let that drop. It don't matter, and I am plenty happy enough anyway."

"Captain, you are happier than you would be, the other way. These old patriarchs and prophets have got ages the start of you; they know more in two minutes than you know in a year. Did you ever try to have a sociable improving-time discussing winds, and currents and variations of compass with an undertaker?"

"I get your idea, Sandy. He couldn't interest me. He would be an ignoramus in such things—he would bore me, and I would bore him."

"You have got it. You would bore the patriarchs when you talked, and when they talked they would shoot over your head. By and by you would say, 'Good morning, your Eminence, I will call again'—but you wouldn't. Did you ever ask the slush-boy to come up in the cabin and take dinner with you?"

"I get your drift again, Sandy. I wouldn't be used to such grand people as the patriarchs and prophets, and I would be sheepish and tongue-tied in their company, and mighty glad to get out of it. Sandy, which is the highest rank, patriarch or prophet?"

"Oh, the prophets hold over the patriarchs. The newest prophet, even, is of a sight more consequence than the oldest patriarch. Yes, sir, Adam himself has to walk behind Shakespeare."

"Was Shakespeare a prophet?"

"Of course he was; and so was Homer, and heaps more. But Shakespeare and the rest have to walk behind a common tailor from Tennessee, by the name of Billings; and behind a horse-doctor named Sakka, from Afghanistan. Jeremiah, and Billings and Buddha walk together, side by side, right behind a crowd from planets not in our astronomy; next come a dozen or two from Jupiter and other worlds;

next come Daniel, and Sakka and Confucius; next a lot from systems outside of ours; next come Ezekiel, and Mahomet, Zoroaster, and a knife-grinder from ancient Egypt; then there is a long string, and after them, away down toward the bottom, come Shakespeare and Homer, and a shoemaker named Marais, from the back settlements of France."

"Have they really rung in Mahomet and all those other heathens?"

"Yes—they all had their message, and they all get their reward. The man who don't get his reward on earth, needn't bother—he will get it here, sure."

"But why did they throw off on Shakespeare, that way, and put him away down there below those shoemakers and horse-doctors and knife-grinders—a lot of people nobody ever heard of?"

"That is the heavenly justice of it—they warn't rewarded according to their deserts, on earth, but here they get their rightful rank. That tailor Billings, from Tennessee, wrote poetry that Homer and Shakespeare couldn't begin to come up to; but nobody would print it, nobody read it but his neighbors, an ignorant lot, and they laughed at it. Whenever the village had a drunken frolic and a dance, they would drag him in and crown him with cabbage leaves, and pretend to bow down to him; and one night when he was sick and nearly starved to death, they had him out and crowned him, and then they rode him on a rail about the village, and everybody followed along, beating tin pans and yelling. Well, he died before morning. He wasn't ever expecting to go to heaven, much less that there was going to be any fuss made over him, so I reckon he was a good deal surprised when the reception broke on him."

"Was you there, Sandy?"

"Bless you, no!"

"Why? Didn't you know it was going to come off?"

"Well, I judge I did. It was the talk of these realms—not for a day, like this barkeeper business, but for twenty years before the man died."

"Why the mischief didn't you go, then?"

"Now how you talk! The like of me go meddling around at the reception of a prophet? A mudsill like me trying to push in and help

receive an awful grandee like Edward J. Billings? Why, I should have been laughed at for a billion miles around. I shouldn't ever heard the last of it."

"Well, who did go, then?"

"Mighty few people that you and I will ever get a chance to see, Captain. Not a solitary commoner ever has the luck to see a reception of a prophet, I can tell you. All the nobility, and all the patriarchs and prophets—every last one of them—and all the archangels, and all the princes and governors and viceroys, were there,—and *no* small fry—not a single one. And mind you, I'm not talking about only the grandees from *our* world, but the princes and patriarchs and so on from *all* the worlds that shine in our sky, and from billions more that belong in systems upon systems away outside of the one our sun is in. There were some prophets and patriarchs there that ours ain't a circumstance to, for rank and illustriousness and all that. Some were from Jupiter and other worlds in our own system, but the most celebrated were three poets, Saa, Bo and Soof, from great planets in three different and very remote systems. These three names are common and familiar in every nook and corner of heaven, clear from one end of it to the other—fully as well known as the eighty Supreme Archangels, in fact—whereas our Moses, and Adam, and the rest, have not been heard of outside of our world's little corner of heaven, except by a few very learned men scattered here and there—and they always spell their names wrong, and get the performances of one mixed up with the doings of another, and they almost always locate them simply *in our solar system*, and think that is enough without going into little details such as naming the particular world they are from. It is like a learned Hindoo showing off how much he knows by saying Longfellow lives in the United States—as if he lived all over the United States, and as if the country was so small you couldn't throw a brick there without hitting him. Between you and me, it does gravel me, the cool way people from those monster worlds outside our system snub our little world, and even our system. Of course we think a good deal of Jupiter, because our world is only a potato to it, for size; but then there are worlds in other systems that Jupiter isn't even a mustard-seed to—like the planet

Goobra, for instance, which you couldn't squeeze inside the orbit of Halley's comet without straining the rivets. Tourists from Goobra (I mean parties that lived and died there—natives) come here, now and then, and inquire about our world, and when they find out it is so little that a streak of lightning can flash clear around it in the eighth of a second, they have to lean up against something to laugh. Then they screw a glass into their eye and go to examining *us*, as if we were a curious kind of foreign bug, or something of that sort. One of them asked me how long our day was; and when I told him it was twelve hours long, as a general thing, he asked me if people where I was from considered it worth while to get up and wash for such a day as that. That is the way with those Goobra people—they can't seem to let a chance go by to throw it in your face that their day is three hundred and twenty-two of our years long. This young snob was just of age—he was six or seven thousand of his days old—say two million of our years—and he had all the puppy airs that belong to that time of life—that turning-point when a person has got over being a boy and yet ain't quite a man exactly. If it had been anywhere else but in heaven, I would have given him a piece of my mind. Well, anyway, Billings had the grandest reception that has been seen in thousands of centuries, and I think it will have a good effect. His name will be carried pretty far, and it will make our system talked about, and maybe our world, too, and raise us in the respect of the general public of heaven. Why, look here—Shakespeare walked backwards before that tailor from Tennessee, and scattered flowers for him to walk on, and Homer stood behind his chair and waited on him at the banquet. Of course that didn't go for much *there*, amongst all those big foreigners from other systems, as they hadn't heard of Shakespeare or Homer either, but it would amount to considerable down there on our little earth if they could know about it. I wish there was something *in* that miserable spiritualism, so we could send them word. That Tennessee village would set up a monument to Billings, then, and his autograph would outsell Satan's. Well, they had grand times at that reception—a small-fry noble from Hoboken told me all about it—Sir Richard Duffer, Baronet."

"What, Sandy, a nobleman from Hoboken? How is that?"

"Easy enough. Duffer kept a sausage-shop and never saved a cent in his life because he used to give all his spare meat to the poor, in a quiet way. Not tramps,—no, the other sort—the sort that will starve before they will beg—honest square people out of work. Dick used to watch hungry-looking men and women and children, and track them home, and find out all about them from the neighbors, and then feed them and find them work. As nobody ever *saw* him give anything to anybody, he had the reputation of being mean; he died with it, too, and everybody said it was a good riddance; but the minute he landed here, they made him a baronet, and the very first words Dick the sausage-maker of Hoboken heard when he stepped upon the heavenly shore were, 'Welcome, Sir Richard Duffer!' It surprised him some, because he thought he had reasons to believe he was pointed for a warmer climate than this one."

All of a sudden the whole region fairly rocked under the crash of eleven hundred and one thunder blasts, all let off at once, and Sandy says,—

"There, that's for the barkeep."

I jumped up and says,—

"Then let's be moving along, Sandy; we don't want to miss any of this thing, you know."

"Keep your seat," he says; "he is only just telegraphed, that is all."

"How?"

"That blast only means that he has been sighted from the signal-station. He is off Sandy Hook. The committees will go down to meet him, now, and escort him in. There will be ceremonies and delays; they won't be coming up the Bay for a considerable time, yet. It is several billion miles away, anyway."

"*I* could have been a barkeeper and a hard lot just as well as not," says I, remembering the lonesome way I arrived, and how there wasn't any committee nor anything.

"I notice some regret in your voice," says Sandy, "and it is natural enough; but let bygones be bygones; you went according to your lights, and it is too late now to mend the thing."

"No, let it slide, Sandy, I don't mind. But you've got a Sandy Hook *here*, too, have you?"

"We've got everything here, just as it is below. All the States and Territories of the Union, and all the kingdoms of the earth and the islands of the sea are laid out here just as they are on the globe—all the same shape they are down there, and all graded to the relative size, only each State and realm and island is a good many billion times bigger here than it is below. There goes another blast."

"What is that one for?"

"That is only another fort answering the first one. They each fire eleven hundred and one thunder blasts at a single dash—it is the usual salute for an eleventh-hour guest; a hundred for each hour and an extra one for the guest's sex; if it was a woman we would know it by their leaving off the extra gun."

"How do we know there's eleven hundred and one, Sandy, when they all go off at once?—and yet we certainly do know."

"Our intellects are a good deal sharpened up, here, in some ways, and that is one of them. Numbers and sizes and distances are so great, here, that we have to be made so we can *feel* them—our old ways of counting and measuring and ciphering wouldn't ever give us an idea of them, but would only confuse us and oppress us and make our heads ache."

After some more talk about this, I says: "Sandy, I notice that I hardly ever see a white angel; where I run across one white angel, I strike as many as a hundred million copper-colored ones—people that can't speak English. How is that?"

"Well, you will find it the same in any State or Territory of the American corner of heaven you choose to go to. I have shot along, a whole week on a stretch, and gone millions and millions of miles, through perfect swarms of angels, without ever seeing a single white one, or hearing a word I could understand. You see, America was occupied a billion years and more, by Injuns and Aztecs, and that sort of folks, before a white man ever set his foot in it. During the first three hundred years after Columbus's discovery, there wasn't ever more than one good lecture audience of white people, all put together, in America—I mean the whole thing, British Possessions and all; in the beginning of our century there were only 6,000,000

or 7,000,000—say seven; 12,000,000 or 14,000,000 in 1825; say 23,000,000 in 1850; 40,000,000 in 1875. Our death-rate has always been 20 in 1000 per annum. Well, 140,000 died the first year of the century; 280,000 the twenty-fifth year; 500,000 the fiftieth year; about a million the seventy-fifth year. Now I am going to be liberal about this thing, and consider that fifty million whites have died in America from the beginning up to to-day—make it sixty, if you want to; make it a hundred million—it's no difference about a few millions one way or t'other. Well, now, you can see, yourself, that when you come to spread a little dab of people like that over these hundreds of billions of miles of American territory here in heaven, it is like scattering a ten-cent box of homœopathic pills over the Great Sahara and expecting to find them again. You can't expect us to amount to anything in heaven, and we *don't*—now that is the simple fact, and we have got to do the best we can with it. The learned men from other planets and other systems come here and hang around a while, when they are touring around the Kingdom, and then go back to their own section of heaven and write a book of travels, and they give America about five lines in it. And what do they say about us? They say this wilderness is populated with a scattering few hundred thousand billions of red angels, with now and then a curiously complected *diseased* one. You see, they think we whites and the occasional nigger are Injuns that have been bleached out or blackened by some leprous disease or other—for some peculiarly rascally *sin,* mind you. It is a mighty sour pill for us all, my friend—even the modestest of us, let alone the other kind, that think they are going to be received like a long-lost government bond, and hug Abraham into the bargain. I haven't asked you any of the particulars, Captain, but I judge it goes without saying—if my experience is worth anything—that there wasn't much of a hooraw made over you when you arrived—now was there?"

"Don't mention it, Sandy," says I, coloring up a little; "I wouldn't have had the family see it for any amount you are a mind to name. Change the subject, Sandy, change the subject."

"Well, do you think of settling in the California department of bliss?"

"I don't know. I wasn't calculating on doing anything really defi-

nite in that direction till the family come. I thought I would just look around, meantime, in a quiet way, and make up my mind. Besides, I know a good many dead people, and I was calculating to hunt them up and swap a little gossip with them about friends, and old times, and one thing or another, and ask them how they like it here, as far as they have got. I reckon my wife will want to camp in the California range, though, because most all her departed will be there, and she likes to be with folks she knows."

"Don't you let her. You see what the Jersey district of heaven is, for whites; well, the Californian district is a thousand times worse. It swarms with a mean kind of leather-headed mud-colored angels—and your nearest white neighbor is likely to be a million miles away. *What a man mostly misses, in heaven, is company*—company of his own sort and color and language. I have come near settling in the European part of heaven once or twice on that account."

"Well, why didn't you, Sandy?"

"Oh, various reasons. For one thing, although you *see* plenty of whites there, you can't understand any of them, hardly, and so you go about as hungry for talk as you do here. I like to look at a Russian or a German or an Italian—I even like to look at a Frenchman if I ever have the luck to catch him engaged in anything that ain't indelicate—but *looking* don't cure the hunger—what you want is talk."

"Well, there's England, Sandy—the English district of heaven."

"Yes, but it is not so very much better than this end of the heavenly domain. As long as you run across Englishmen born this side of three hundred years ago, you are all right; but the minute you get back of Elizabeth's time the language begins to fog up, and the further back you go the foggier it gets. I had some talk with one Langland and a man by the name of Chaucer—old-time poets—but it was no use, I couldn't quite understand them, and they couldn't quite understand me. I have had letters from them since, but it is such broken English I can't make it out. Back of those men's time the English are just simply foreigners, nothing more, nothing less; they talk Danish, German, Norman French, and sometimes a mixture of all three; back of *them*, they talk Latin and ancient British, Irish, and Gaelic; and then back of these come billions and billions of pure savages that

talk a gibberish that Satan himself couldn't understand. The fact is, where you strike one man in the English settlements that you can understand, you wade through awful swarms that talk something you can't make head nor tail of. You see, every country on earth has been overlaid so often, in the course of a billion years, with different kinds of people and different sorts of languages, that this sort of mongrel business was bound to be the result in heaven."

"Sandy," says I, "did you see a good many of the great people history tells about?"

"Yes—plenty. I saw kings and all sorts of distinguished people."

"Do the kings rank just as they did below?"

"No; a body can't bring his rank up here with him. Divine right is a good-enough earthly romance, but it don't go, here. Kings drop down to the general level as soon as they reach the realms of grace. I knew Charles the Second very well—one of the most popular comedians in the English section—draws first rate. There are better, of course—people that were never heard of on earth—but Charles is making a very good reputation indeed, and is considered a rising man. Richard the Lion-hearted is in the prize-ring, and coming into considerable favor. Henry the Eighth is a tragedian, and the scenes where he kills people are done to the very life. Henry the Sixth keeps a religious-book stand."

"Did you ever see Napoleon, Sandy?"

"Often—sometimes in the Corsican range, sometimes in the French. He always hunts up a conspicuous place, and goes frowning around with his arms folded and his field-glass under his arm, looking as grand, gloomy and peculiar as his reputation calls for, and very much bothered because he don't stand as high, here, for a soldier, as he expected to."

"Why, who stands higher?"

"Oh, a *lot* of people *we* never heard of before—the shoemaker and horse-doctor and knife-grinder kind, you know—clodhoppers from goodness knows where, that never handled a sword or fired a shot in their lives—but the soldiership was in them, though they never had a chance to show it. But here they take their right place, and Cæsar and Napoleon and Alexander have to take a back seat. The greatest mili-

tary genius our world ever produced was a bricklayer from somewhere back of Boston—died during the Revolution—by the name of Absalom Jones. Wherever he goes, crowds flock to see him. You see, everybody knows that if he had had a chance he would have shown the world some generalship that would have made all generalship before look like child's play and 'prentice work. But he never got a chance; he tried heaps of times to enlist as a private, but he had lost both thumbs and a couple of front teeth, and the recruiting sergeant wouldn't pass him. However, as I say, everybody knows, now, what he *would* have been, and so they flock by the million to get a glimpse of him whenever they hear he is going to be anywhere. Cæsar, and Hannibal, and Alexander, and Napoleon are all on his stuff, and ever so many more great generals; but the public hardly care to look at *them* when *he* is around. Boom! There goes another salute. The barkeeper's off quarantine now."

Sandy and I put on our things. Then we made a wish, and in a second we were at the reception-place. We stood on the edge of the ocean of space, and looked out over the dimness, but couldn't make out anything. Close by us was the Grand Stand—tier on tier of dim thrones rising up toward the zenith. From each side of it spread away the tiers of seats for the general public. They spread away for leagues and leagues—you couldn't see the ends. They were empty and still, and hadn't a cheerful look, but looked dreary, like a theatre before anybody comes—gas turned down. Sandy says,—

"We'll sit down here and wait. We'll see the head of the procession come in sight away off yonder pretty soon, now."

Says I,—

"It's pretty lonesome, Sandy; I reckon there's a hitch somewheres. Nobody but just you and me—it ain't much of a display for the barkeeper."

"Don't you fret, it's all right. There'll be one more gun-fire—then you'll see."

In a little while we noticed a sort of a lightish flush, away off on the horizon.

"Head of the torchlight procession," says Sandy.

It spread, and got lighter and brighter; soon it had a strong glare like a locomotive headlight; it kept on getting brighter and brighter till it was like the sun peeping above the horizon-line at sea—the big red rays shot high up into the sky.

"Keep your eyes on the Grand Stand and the miles of seats—sharp!" says Sandy, "and listen for the gun-fire."

Just then it burst out, "Boom-boom-boom!" like a million thunder-storms in one, and made the whole heavens rock. Then there was a sudden and awful glare of light all about us, and in that very instant every one of the millions of seats was occupied, and as far as you could see, in both directions, was just a solid pack of people, and the place was all splendidly lit up! It was enough to take a body's breath away. Sandy says,—

"That is the way we do it here. No time fooled away; nobody straggling in after the curtain's up. Wishing is quicker work than travelling. A quarter of a second ago these folks were millions of miles from here. When they heard the last signal, all they had to do was to wish, and here they are."

The prodigious choir struck up,—

We long to hear thy voice,
To see thee face to face.

It was noble music, but the uneducated chipped in and spoilt it, just as the congregations used to do on earth.

The head of the procession began to pass, now, and it was a wonderful sight. It swept along, thick and solid, five hundred thousand angels abreast, and every angel carrying a torch and singing—the whirring thunder of the wings made a body's head ache. You could follow the line of the procession back, and slanting upward into the sky, far away in a glittering snaky rope, till it was only a faint streak in the distance. The rush went on and on, for a long time, and at last, sure enough, along comes the barkeeper, and then everybody rose, and a cheer went up that made the heavens shake, I tell you! He was all smiles, and had his halo tilted over one ear in a cocky way, and was the most satisfied-looking saint I ever saw. While he marched up the steps of the Grand Stand, the choir struck up,—

The whole wide heaven groans,
And waits to hear that voice.

There were four gorgeous tents standing side by side in the place of honor, on a broad railed platform in the centre of the Grand Stand, with a shining guard of honor round about them. The tents had been shut up all this time. As the barkeeper climbed along up, bowing and smiling to everybody, and at last got to the platform, these tents were jerked up aloft all of a sudden, and we saw four noble thrones of gold, all caked with jewels, and in the two middle ones sat old white-whiskered men, and in the two others a couple of the most glorious and gaudy giants, with platter halos and beautiful armor. All the millions went down on their knees, and stared, and looked glad, and burst out into a joyful kind of murmurs. They said,—

"Two archangels!—that is splendid. Who can the others be?"

The archangels gave the barkeeper a stiff little military bow; the two old men rose; one of them said, "Moses and Esau welcome thee!" and then all the four vanished, and the thrones were empty.

The barkeeper looked a little disappointed, for he was calculating to hug those old people, I judge; but it was the gladdest and proudest multitude you ever saw—because they had seen Moses and Esau. Everybody was saying, "Did you see them?—I did—Esau's side face was to me, but I saw Moses full in the face, just as plain as I see you this minute!"

The procession took up the barkeeper and moved on with him again, and the crowd broke up and scattered. As we went along home, Sandy said it was a great success, and the barkeeper would have a right to be proud of it forever. And he said *we* were in luck, too; said we might attend receptions for forty thousand years to come, and not have a chance to see a brace of such grand moguls as Moses and Esau. We found afterwards that we had come near seeing another patriarch, and likewise a genuine prophet besides, but at the last moment they sent regrets. Sandy said there would be a monument put up there, where Moses and Esau had stood, with the date and circumstances, and all about the whole business, and travellers would come for thousands of years and gawk at it, and climb over it, and scribble their names on it.

COLONEL STERETT RELATES MARVELS

Alfred Henry Lewis

"AS I ASSERTS FREQUENT," OBSERVED THE OLD CATTLEMAN, THE while delicately pruning a bit of wood he'd picked up on his walk, "the funds of information, gen'ral an' speshul, which Colonel William Greene Sterett packs about would freight a eight-mule team. It's even money which of 'em saveys the most, him or Doc Peets. For myself, after careful study, I inclines to the theery that Colonel Sterett's knowledge is the widest, while Peets's is the most exact. Both is college gents; an' yet they differs as to the valyoo of sech sem'naries. The Colonel coppers colleges, while Peets plays 'em to win.

" 'Them temples of learnin',' says the Colonel, 'is a heap ornate; but they don't make good.' This is doubted by Peets.

"One evenin' Dan Boggs, who's allers tantalisin' 'round askin' questions—it looks like a sleepless cur'osity is proned into Dan—ropes at Peets concernin' this topic.

" 'Whatever do they teach in colleges, Doc?' asks Dan.

" 'They teaches all of the branches,' retorts Peets.

" 'An' none of the roots,' adds Colonel Sterett, 'as a cunnin' Yank once remarks on a o'casion sim'lar.'

"No, the Colonel an' Peets don't go lockin' horns in these differences. Both is a mighty sight too well brought up for that; moreover, they don't allow to set the camp no sech examples. They entertains too high a regyard for each other to take to pawin' about pugnacious, verbal or otherwise.

"The Colonel's information is as wide flung as a buzzard's wing. Thar's mighty few mysteries he ain't authorised to eloocidate. An'

from time to time, accordin' as the Colonel's more or less in licker, he enlightens Wolfville on a multitoode of topics. Which the Colonel is a profound eddicational inflooence; that's whatever!

"It's one evenin' an' the moon is swingin' high in the bloo-black heavens an' looks like a gold door-knob to the portals of the eternal beyond. Texas Thompson fixes his eyes tharon, meditative an' pensive, an' then he wonders:

" 'Do you-all reckon, now, that folks is livin' up thar?"

" 'Whatever do you think yourse'f, Colonel?' says Enright, passin' the conundrum over to the editor of the *Coyote*. 'Do you think thar's folks on the moon?'

" 'Do I think thar's folks on the moon?' repeats the Colonel as ca'mly confident as a club flush. 'I don't think,—I knows.'

" 'Whichever is it then?' asks Dan Boggs, whose ha'r already begins to bristle, he's that inquisitive. 'Simply takin' a ignorant shot in the dark that away, I says, "No." That moon looks like a mighty lonesome loominary to me.'

" 'Jest the same,' retorts the Colonel, an' he's a lot dogmatic, 'that planet's fairly speckled with people. An' if some gent will recall the errant fancies of Black Jack to a sense of dooty, I'll onfold how I knows.

" 'It's when I'm crowdin' twenty,' goes on the Colonel, followin' the ministrations of Black Jack, 'an' I'm visitin' about the meetropolis of Looeyville. I've been sellin' a passel of runnin' hosses; an' as I rounds up a full peck of doubloons for the fourteen I disposes of, I'm feelin' too contentedly cunnin' to live. It's evenin' an' the moon is shinin' same as now. I jest pays six bits for my supper at the Galt House, an' lights a ten cent seegyar—Oh! I has the bridle off all right! —an' I'm romancin' leesurly along the street, when I encounters a party who's ridin' herd on one of these yere telescopes, the same bein' p'inted at the effulgent moon. Gents, she's shorely a giant spy-glass, that instrooment is; bigger an' longer than the smokestack of any steamboat between Looeyville an' Noo Orleans. She's swung on a pa'r of shears; each stick a cl'ar ninety foot of Norway pine. As I goes pirootin' by, this gent with the telescope pipes briskly up.

" ' "Take a look at the moon?"

" ' "No," I replies, wavin' him off some haughty, for that bag of doubloons has done puffed me up. "No, I don't take no interest in the moon."

" 'As I'm comin' back, mebby it's a hour later, this astronomer is still swingin' an' rattlin' with the queen of night. He pitches his lariat ag'in an' now he fastens.

" ' "You-all better take a look; they're havin' the time of their c'reers up thar."

" ' "Whatever be they doin'?"

" ' "Tellin' wouldn't do no good," says the savant; "it's one of them rackets a gent has to see to savey."

" ' "What's the ante?" I asks, for the fires of my cur'osity begins to burn.

" ' "Four bits! An' considerin' the onusual doin's goin' for'ard, it's cheaper than corn whiskey."

" 'No; I don't stand dallyin' 'round, tryin' to beat this philosopher down in his price. That ain't my style. When I'm ready to commit myse'f to a enterprise, I butts my way in, makes good the tariff, an' no delays. Tharfore, when this gent names four bits, I onpouches the *dinero* an' prepares to take a astronomic peek.

" ' "How long do I gaze for four bits?" I asks, battin' my right eye to get it into piercin' shape.

" ' "Go as far as you likes," retorts the philosopher; "thar's no limit."

" 'Gents,' says the Colonel, pausin' to renoo his Valley Tan, while Dan an' Texas an' even Ole Man Enright hitches their cha'rs a bit nearer, the interest is that intense; 'gents, you-all should have took a squint with me through them lenses. Which if you enjoys said privilege, you can gamble Dan an' Texas wouldn't be camped 'round yere none tonight, exposin' their ignorance an' lettin' fly croode views concernin' astronomy. That telescope actooally brings the moon plumb into Kaintucky;—brings her within the reach of all. You could stretch to her with your hand, she's that clost.'

" 'But is thar folks thar?' says Dan, who's excited by the Colonel's disclosures. 'Board the kyard, Colonel, an' don't hold us in suspense.'

" 'Folks!' returns the Colonel. 'I wishes I has two-bit pieces for

every one of 'em! The face of that orb is simply festered with folks! She teems with life; ant-hills on election day means desertion by compar'son. Thar's thousands an' thousands of people, mobbin' about indiscrim'nate; I sees 'em as near an' plain as I sees Dan.'

"'An' whatever be they doin'?' asks Dan.

"'They're pullin' off a hoss race,' says the Colonel, lookin' steady in Dan's eye. 'An' you hears me! I never sees sech bettin' in my life.'

"Nacherally we-all feels refresh'd with these experiences of Colonel Sterett's, for as Enright observes, it's by virchoo of sech casooal chunks of information that a party rounds out a eddication.

"'It ain't what a gent learns in schools,' says Enright, 'that broadens him an' stiffens his mental grip; it's knowledge like this yere moon story from trustworthy sources that augments him an' fills him full. Go on, Colonel, an' onload another marvel or two. You-all must shore have witnessed a heap!'

"'Them few sparse facts touchin' the moon,' returns Colonel Sterett, 'cannot be deemed wonders in any proper sense. They're merely interestin' details which any gent gets onto who brings science to his aid. But usin' the word "wonders," I does once blunder upon a mir'cle which still waits to be explained. That's a shore-enough marvel! An' to this day, all I can state is that I sees it with these yere eyes.'

"'Let her roll!' says Texas Thompson. 'That moon story prepares us for anything.'

"'Texas,' observes the Colonel, a heap severe, 'I'd hate to feel that your observations is the jeerin' offspring of distrust.'

"'Me distrust!' replies Texas, hasty to squar' himse'f. 'I'd as soon think of distrustin' that Laredo divorce of my former he'pmeet! An' as the sheriff drives off two hundred head of my cattle by way of alimony, I deems the fact of that sep'ration as fixed beyond cavil. No, Colonel, you has my fullest confidence. I'd go doubtin' the even-handed jestice of Cherokee's faro game quicker than distrustin' you.'

"'An' I'm present to say,' returns the Colonel mighty complacent, 'that I looks on sech assoorances as complimentary. To show which I onhesitatin'ly reels off that eepisode to which I adverts.

"'I'm only a child; but I retains my impressions as sharp cut an' cl'ar as though she happens yesterday. It's a time when one of

these legerdemain sharps pastes up his bills in our village an' lets on he'll give a show in Liberty Hall on the comin' Saturday evenin'. An' gents, to simply read of the feats he threatens to perform would loco you! Besides, thar's a picture of Satan, black an' fiery an' frightful, where he's he'pin' this gifted person to foist said mir'cles upon the age. I don't exaggerate none when I asserts that the moment our village gets its eye on these three-sheets it comes to a dead halt.

" 'Old Squar' Alexanders is the war chief of the hamlet, an' him an' the two other selectmen c'llects themse'fs over their toddies an' canvasses whether they permits this wizard to give his fiendish exhibitions in our midst. They has it pro an' con ontil the thirteenth drink, when Squar' Alexanders who's ag'in the wizard brings the others to his views; an' as they staggers forth from the tavern it's the yoonanimous decision to bar that Satan-aided show.

" ' "Witches, wizards, elves, gnomes, bull-beggars, fiends, an' devils is debarred the Bloo Grass Country," says Squar' Alexanders, speakin' for himse'f an' his fellow selectmen, "an' they're not goin' to be allowed to hold their black an' sulphurous mass meetin's yere."

" 'It comes Saturday evenin' an' the necromancer is in the tavern eatin' his supper. Shore! he looks like common folks at that! Squar' Alexanders is waitin' for him in the bar. When he shows up, carelessly pickin' his teeth, it's mebby half a hour before the show, Squar' Alexanders don't fritter away no time, but rounds up the wizard.

" ' " 'Thar's no show which has Satan for a silent partner goin' to cut itse'f loose in this village," says Squar' Alexanders.

" ' " 'What's this talk about Satan?" responds the wizard. "I don't savey no more about Satan than I does about you."

" ' " 'Look at them bills," says Squar' Alexanders, an' he p'ints to where one is hangin' on the barroom wall. It gives a picture of the foul fiend, with pitchfork, spear-head tail an' all. "Whatever do you call that?"

" ' " 'That's a bluff," says the wizard. "If Kaintucky don't get tangled up with Satan ontil I imports him to her fertile shores, you cimmarons may regyard yourse'fs as saved."

" ' " 'Be you-all goin' to do the sundry deeds you sets forth in the programmes?" asks Squar' Alexanders after a pause.

" ' "Which I shorely be!" says the wizard, "an' if I falls down or fails you can call me a ab'litionist."

" ' "Then all I has to say is this," returns Squar' Alexanders; "no gent could do them feats an' do 'em on the level. You'd have to have the he'p of demons to pull em off. An' that brings us back to my first announcement; an' stranger, your show don't go."

" 'At this the wizard lets on he's lost patience with Squar' Alexanders an' declares he won't discuss with him no more. Also, he gives it out that, Satan, or no Satan, he'll begin to deal his game at eight o'clock.

" ' "Very well!" rejoins Squar' Alexanders. "Since you refooses to be warned I shall shore instruct the constable to collar you on the steps of Liberty Hall." As he says this, Squar' Alexanders p'ints across to Chet Kishler, who's the constable, where he's restin' himse'f in front of Baxter's store.

" 'This yere Chet is a giant an' clost onto eight foot high. It's a warm evenin', an' as the wizard glances over at Chet, he notices how that offishul is lazily fannin' himse'f with a barn-door which he's done lifted off the hinges for that coolin' purpose. The wizard don't say nothin', but he does turn a mite pale; he sees with half a eye that Satan himse'f would be he'pless once Chet gets his two paws on him. However, he assoomes that he's out to give the show as per schedoole.

" 'It's makin' toward eight when the wizard lights a seegyar, drinks four fingers of Willow Run, an' goes p'intin' out for Liberty Hall. Chet gets up, hangs the barn-door back on its hinges, an' sa'nters after. Squar' Alexanders has posted Chet as to his dooties an' his orders is to pounce on the necromancer if he offers to enter the hall. That's how the cavalcade lines up: first, the wizard; twenty foot behind is Chet; an' twenty foot behind our constable comes the public in a body.

" 'About half way to Liberty Hall the wizard begins to show nervous an' oncertain. He keeps lookin' back at Chet; an' even in my childish simplicity I sees that he ain't pleased with the outlook. At last he weakens an' abandons his idee of a show. Gents, as I fills my glass, I asks you-all however now do you reckon that wizard beats a retreat?'

"Thar's no reply. Dan, Texas, an' the others, while Colonel Sterett acquires his licker, shakes their heads dumbly as showin' they gives is up.

" 'Which you'd shorely never guess!' retorts the Colonel, wipin' his lips. 'Of a sudden, this wizard tugs somethin' outen his pocket that looks like a ball of kyarpet-rags. Holdin' one end, quick as thought he tosses the ball of kyarpet-rags into the air. It goes straight up ontil lost to view, onwindin' itse'f in its flight because of the wizard holdin' on.

" 'Gents, that ball of kyarpet-rags never does come down no more! An' it's all done as easy as a set-lock rifle! The wizard climbs the danglin' string of kyarpet-rags, hand over hand; then he drifts off an' up'ards ontil he don't look bigger than a bumble-bee; an' then he's lost in the gatherin' shadows of the Jooly night.

" 'Squar' Alexanders, Chet, an' the village stands strainin' their eyes for twenty minutes. But the wizard's vamosed; an' at last, when each is convinced tharof, the grown folks led by Squar' Alexanders reepairs back into the tavern an' takes another drink.'

" 'That's a mighty marvellous feat your necromancer performs, Colonel,' remarks Enright, an' the old chief is grave as becomes the Colonel's revelations; 'he's a shore-enough wonder-worker, that wizard is!'

"But I ain't got to the wonders none as yet,' remonstrates the Colonel, who spunks up a bit peevish for him. 'An' from the frequent way wherein I'm interrupted, it don't look much like I will. Goin' sailin' away into darklin' space with that ball of enchanted kyarpet-rags,—that ain't the soopernacheral part at all! Shore! ondoubted it's some hard to do as a feat, but still thar's other feachers which from the standp'int of the marvellous overpowers it like four kings an' a ace. That wonder is this: It's quarter to eight when the wizard takes his flight by means of the kyarpet-rags. Gents, at eight o'clock sharp the same evenin' he walks on the stage an' gives a show at St. Looey, hundreds of miles away.' "

A TRUE STORY

Lucian

ONCE UPON A TIME, SETTING OUT FROM THE PILLARS OF HERCULES and heading for the western ocean with a fair wind, I went a-voyaging. On the eightieth day, the sun came out suddenly and at no great distance we saw a high, wooded island. Putting in and going ashore, we told off thirty of our number to stay and guard the ship and twenty to go inland with me and look over the island.

We had not gone far when we came upon a river of wine; after crossing the river at a place where it was fordable, we found something wonderful in grapevines. The part which came out of the ground, the trunk itself, was stout and well-grown, but the upper part was in each case a woman, entirely perfect from the waist up. They were like our pictures of Daphne turning into a tree when Apollo is just catching her. Out of their finger-tips grew the branches, and they were full of grapes. Actually, the hair of their heads was tendrils and leaves and clusters! When we came up, they welcomed and greeted us, some of them speaking Lydian, some Indian, but the most part Greek. They even kissed us on the lips, and everyone that was kissed at once became reeling drunk. They did not suffer us, however, to gather any of the fruit, but cried out in pain when it was plucked. Some of them actually wanted us to embrace them, and two of my comrades complied, but could not get away again. They were held fast by the part which had touched them, for it had grown in and struck root. Already branches had grown from their fingers, tendrils entwined them, and they were on the point of bearing fruit like the others any minute. Leaving them in the lurch, we made off to the boat, and on getting there, told the men we had left behind about everything, including the affair of our comrades with the vines.

MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT

T. S. Eliot

MACAVITY'S A MYSTERY CAT: HE'S CALLED THE HIDDEN PAW—
For he's the master criminal who can defy the law.
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
For when they reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*
You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air—
But I tell you once and once again, *Macavity's not there!*

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.
His eyes are deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.
You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square—
But when a crime's discovered, then *Macavity's not there!*

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,

Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair—
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! *Macavity's not there!*

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—*Macavity's not there!*
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
"It *must* have been Macavity!"—but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs,
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T
THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operation: the Napoleon of Crime!

PRIVATE ROGER JONES

William March

I NEVER SAW THE TRENCHES SO QUIET AS THEY WERE IN THAT TIME at Verdun. There wasn't a squarehead in sight, and except for the fact that they fired a machine gun every once in a while, and sent up a rocket, you wouldn't have known there was anybody ahead of us at all. Everything would be very quiet when suddenly the rocket would go whizzing up and the machine gun would splutter a time or two. Then a few minutes later another rocket would go off, farther down the trench, and there would be a dozen more machine-gun bullets to go with it.

The boys made up a story that there wasn't anybody in front of us except an old man, who rode a bicycle, and his wooden-legged wife. The man would ride down the duckboards, with his wife running behind him carrying the machine gun. Then the man would stop and send up a rocket, while the old woman fired the gun. After that they started all over, and kept it up all night.

The boys talked about the old German, and his wife with the wooden leg, until, after a while, everybody began to believe they were actually there.

"It's just like a German to make his wife run behind him and carry the heavy gun," said Emile Ayres one night. "They all beat their wives, too, I've heard it said."

"That's a lie!" said Jakie Brauer, whose mother and father were both born in Germany. "Germans are as good to their wives as Americans, or anybody else!"

"Then why don't he carry the gun sometime?" Emile asked; "why don't he carry the gun and let the old woman ride on the bicycle?"

TALL TALES OF THE G.I.'s

Sergeant Bill Davidson

I

WE WERE POLICING THE GROUNDS AROUND THE BARRACKS ONE DAY, picking up, as the sergeant put it, "everything that don't grow," when a terrific cyclone hit the camp area. We ducked into the nearest cellar and waited for the wind to subside.

When it subsided, we went outside again. The sergeant's eyes almost popped out of his head. Miraculously, the ground around the barracks was stripped clear of debris. Not a single cigarette butt could be seen—not even a grain of loose sand. And strangest of all, the debris was piled neatly in the waste receptacle out on the company street.

"What," yelled the sergeant, "goes on here?" And he called the corporal in charge of the detail over for an explanation.

"Well," said the corporal, "this is what happened. I saw that tornado as it reached the far end of the barracks. I yelled out 'Column right—march!' And the twister swept around the corner. When it reached the next corner, I gave it a column right again, and it went around *that* corner. I kept giving the twister column rights until it had gone all around the barracks."

"How come it stopped where it did?" asked the sergeant.

"I yelled out 'Company halt!' "

"And how about the junk all ending up in the waste can?"

"That was easy, sarge. I just yelled out 'Fall in!' "

II

It was inspection day in the hospital area, and the ward boys were busy with their clean-up duties.

The ward officer came in for a routine check-up to see how his men were doing. Everything seemed to be O.K., but then he noticed a strange thing.

In one corner of the room, where three soldiers were industriously mopping the floor, he noticed a fourth come in with an empty wheelbarrow, turn the wheelbarrow over on the wet part of the floor, and then wheel it outside again. A moment later the soldier returned and repeated the same procedure.

The other three men unconcernedly went about their duties.

Finally the officer could stand it no longer. He went up to the man with the wheelbarrow. "Would you mind telling me what the devil you're doing there?" demanded the officer.

"Not at all, sir," said the soldier sweetly. "These men are mopping the floor—"

"I know that," shouted the exasperated officer, "but what are *you* doing with the *wheelbarrow?*"

"Oh, that," said the soldier. "You see, we want to get finished in a hurry, so I bring in these wheelbarrowsfull of sunshine—and dump it here on the wet places, to dry the floor off."

III

A sergeant in my old outfit named Bumps was stationed in a little hut once with seven other men. The hut was on a high bluff about a mile from a camp in the Canal Zone.

The men in the hut got so bored after a while that they start playing a little game in which they abolish laws. The guy who does the best job of abolishing a law for a whole day collects a buck each from the other seven guys. One day they abolish the Law of Supply and Demand. The next day they abolish the Law of Personal Property. Finally Bumps says, "Let's abolish the Law of Gravity."

"All right," the other guys say, "but let's wait until tomorrow. It's too late now."

And they go to sleep.

The next morning Bumps gets up and there's a guy snoring. Bumps heaves a boot at the guy, but the boot don't fall. It stays right against the wall where it hits.

Bumps wakes everybody up, and they start throwing things around. Nothing falls to the ground, and the hut is full of suspended shoes, pillows, and mess kits. This keeps up all day. One guy comes back from chow with a pocket full of rice and beans. He throws this around the room and it looks like it's snowing. Bumps has to get a broom and sweep a path about five feet off the floor so they can walk around without getting their mouths and eyes full of rice and beans.

By this time, there is no argument as to who has done the best job of repealing a law, and everyone pays Bumps a dollar.

After that they go to bed—Bumps with the seven dollars under his pillow. Everything is quiet until midnight. Then the Law of Gravity suddenly goes on again. Everything falls from the ceiling in a big shower of shoes, mess kits, and rice. Everyone gets sore as hell. And in the confusion, the seven dollars disappears from under Bumps' pillow. All he has from the experience is a handful of knobs on his head where a sack of falling potatoes hits him.

And that's where Bumps gets his nickname.

THE ELKS

Julius Caesar

THERE ARE ALSO ANIMALS CALLED ELKS. THEY ARE LIKE GOATS IN their general conformation and the spotted appearance of their hides, but they are a little bigger. They shed their horns, and they have legs without any joints. They do not lie down in order to rest, and if they fall accidentally, they are not able to get up. They use trees as beds, leaning against them and taking their rest propped against the trunks. When hunters have tracked them to their usual haunts, they undermine at the roots all the trees in the vicinity, or cut notches in them, so that they only look as if they were standing. And so when the elks, in their usual fashion, lean against the trees, they break them down with their weight and collapse along with them.

SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

Ludwig Bemelmans

THE UNDERSECRETARY OF THE DIVISION OF SPRING OF THE MINISTRY of the Four Seasons unrolled an ivy-green runner on the balcony of the Ministry of Strength-through-Joy at the precise moment that the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Discipline and Order placed thereon his microphone; then both listened to the bells strike seven in the morning and opened the door behind which stood in proper uniform, with all buttons buttoned, the Ministers of Spring, of Discipline and Order, and of Strength-through-Joy. The Minister of the Four Seasons and the Minister of Discipline and Order announced the beginning of Spring.

Dutifully, with dispatch and promptness, there appeared blossoms in their proper colors on all trees in the land, buttercups growing orderly along the brooks opened their little faces to the sun, forget-me-nots in the forests, heather in the marshes, daisies among the fields, and even edelweiss high up in the mountains.

In the windowboxes of the workingmen geraniums bloomed, tulips in the gardens of the civil servants of the classes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and roses in the classes from 6 to 12. Above that, in classes 13 to 15, there was no need of Spring—flowers were in bloom the year round in the winter-gardens of generals, bishops, directors of banks and gas factories. Heartwarming and admirable was the success with which the state and particularly the Ministry of Strength-through-Joy, the Division of Spring of the Ministry of the Four Seasons, and the Ministry of Discipline had succeeded in the administration of all details, down to the orderly joy of the little girls, who marched out into the lovely greenery in proper white starched dresses and in battalion formation,

starting at seven-thirty in the morning, the smallest in front, the tallest in back.

There the little girls stopped to sing the appropriate songs, simple *Lieder* written for the occasion. On this day there were sung: The *Lied* of the *Lindenbaum* for the linden trees, the song of the *Heidenröslein,* for the little wild rose. How good! How without problems was life ahead for the little blond girls! How provident was the Ministry of the Four Seasons and, for that matter, the Ministry of Youth, of Motherhood, and even of Love!

No one was forgotten. The railroads ran extra trains to take each and every citizen out into the Spring. And even the railroad was an example of the forethought and order of the provident State. There were first-class carriages with red plush upholstery and umber curtains; there were second-class compartments with green herringbone sailcloth; third class (a) with wooden seats, soft wood tailored to conform to the curves of the body; and third class (b) with hard wooden benches, non-conforming; and sixth-class carriages, to stand up in.

Malcontents, enemies of the Government, and scoffers told of a sixth-class carriage that had no floor—just a roof and sides—in which the passengers had to run along the tracks. That, of course, was not so. Besides, there were no malcontents left.

The unsleeping vigilance of the Ministry of Justice had run all non-conformists into the ground, or successfully converted them. That is, all but one man, the Outsider, the One, by name Kratzig, Emil, who walked alone in his own disorderly path.

When all the citizens were out in the Spring, Emil Kratzig sat at home with his curtains drawn and read forbidden books; and again when all were snug at home in the Winter, singing the songs of the "Oven," "Grandfather's clock, tick tock, tick tock," or *"Ich bin so gern, so gern daheim, daheim in meiner stillen Klause,"* he ran around outside in the snow and whistled.

There was a long official report under K—Kratzig, Emil. But while the Political Police shadowed him, they nevertheless left him alone. They did not disturb him. "We must save him," said the Minister of Justice. "He is the last one; we may need him as an example."

Besides, Emil Kratzig was an old man, and a foreigner: his maternal great-grandfather had been a Frenchman.

So Emil Kratzig lived apart and sat alone. And on the street the policeman, Umlauf, who was stationed at the City Hall square to keep him under surveillance, filled his little notebook with the discordant reports of the goings and comings of the dissenter.

The leaves in the official notebook of Policeman Umlauf, pages 48 to 55, carry the story of the sad end of the incorrigible, insubordinate Emil Kratzig. . . .

On the sunlit morning of a green May day, when all in the city went out to look at the blossoms, take deep breaths, and sing in the new, light-flowered prints designed by the Ministry of Dress and Underwear, Kratzig, wrapped in a muffler, burdened with galoshes and heavy winter coat, fled alone to the meanest landscape he could find, a district that contained the municipal incinerators, the garbage trucks, and the streetcleaning apparatus. There he spent the day crossing and recrossing the cobblestones, with wild tirades; made free with the names of ministers, the Government, the nation as a whole, and that night came home and slept with open windows. That night, of course, there was a frost, and it was this frost which took many blossoms and reached out also for the life of Emil Kratzig.

The next day Emil Kratzig was ill. A cold turned to pleurisy of the left lobar cavity, and the Government doctor, who came the following day and ordered him to stay in bed, shook his head as he left the house. But Emil Kratzig got up again, in violation of the doctor's orders, and with a high fever ran to the City Hall.

"Aha," said Policeman Umlauf, and in his notebook he remarked: "The end is near and Herr Kratzig is coming to heel."

And it looked as if at last, indeed, this misguided Kartzig had decided to mend his ways. He passed by the Bureaus of Birth, Taxation, and Marriages, and properly opened the door to the Bureau of Funerals, on the second floor. He entered the room, removed his hat, and stood quietly in the line of citizens who had business with the clerk of that department. He patiently awaited his turn with hat in hand and finally spoke his desire . . . to make arrangements for himself.

The clerk pushed forward a chair for Herr Kratzig. On the top of his desk was a large album. He opened it for Emil Kratzig's inspection.

The Chief Clerk appeared and pushed a platoon of underclerks away. With his own lips he blew dust from the funeral album (this album was used only in extraordinary cases); he washed his hands in the air with anticipation, patted Kratzig on the shoulder, cleared his throat, and opened the cover.

"Now this," said the Chief Clerk, "is the first-class funeral." He pointed to the first of the many pictures and recited, "The first-class funeral is composed of the wagon, first class," indicating with the rubber end of his pencil the four angels of Annunciation carved in the teakwood, who stood at the four corners of the wagon, at the rubber tires, at the betasseled curtains of black brocade.

"This wagon is drawn by six horses, with black cloaks and black plumes. They wear this silver harness. There is besides a bishop and two priests, sixty *Sängerknaben,* a band, the bells of all the churches ring, there is a salute of guns, incense, and, at the high mass, twelve of these golden candelabra are used with scented beeswax candles. But this is not for you. It is for the classes 13 to 15 of the Civil Service."

He turned the page of the second-class funeral. "Here we have the same car, rubber tires, four horses with black cloaks, black plumes, and silver harness, three priests, but no bishop, forty *Sängerknaben,* incense, six of the first-class candelabra at the high mass, the bells of half the churches, no guns, and, in the first-class candelabra, plain unscented candles."

Again he turned a huge page. "Now we come to the third-class funeral," he continued. "There is a different wagon, but also very nice, with one mourning angel sitting on top, cretonne curtains, two horses with nickel harness, black cloaks and plumes, two priests, no *Sängerknaben,* but a male quartet, nickel candelabra, of course no guns, but the two bells of the cemetery chapel and one priest with two apprentice priests, incense, and a very nice grade of candles, not beeswax but scented. But that is not for you either."

He shifted the weight of his body to his left foot and his voice changed. "The fourth-class funeral is somewhat plainer. We have here the wagon of the third class, one horse with cloak and plume

and nickel harness, one priest, one singer, two altar boys, and incense. For the mass, organ music and two candelabra with candles.

"The fifth-class funeral," he went on, "is here." And he turned the page. "Here is a strong solid wagon, and one horse, no cloak, no plume, but it is a black horse, an apprentice priest, and one singer, one altar boy, incense, no music at the mass, and two wooden candelabra with used candles."

He paused.

"And finally we come to the sixth-class funeral," he said. "Here again you get the wagon of the fifth class, the black horse, an apprentice priest, no singer, one altar boy, two wooden candelabra with used substitute-wax candles, a little bell." And he turned the page to show a drawing. "And with this funeral goes a rented coffin—it saves you buying one."

A working drawing of this imaginative, melancholy piece of black carpentry was attached, also photographs showing its economical performance. It looked like any other frugal coffin, but had an ingenious device—two doors at the bottom opened when a lever was pulled. Once occupied and having been carried to its destination, the coffin opened at the bottom and the occupant was dropped into the grave. So the rented coffin could be used over and over again.

"Very simple, after all," said the clerk and, turning, he left the sentence open, because Emil Kratzig was gone.

Emil Kratzig was not seen again until the middle of the next night. Policeman Umlauf, standing in the center of the market square, saw a pale man coming toward him. The man was dressed in a long, white nightshirt. On his head was a top hat. Tied to it with a piece of crepe was a black plume. In his hand he held two burning candles and he carried a shovel under his arm.

"I am Emil Kratzig," said the man. "I died last night. I am going up to the cemetery. This is a seventh-class funeral."

THE ELF IN ALGIERS

John Steinbeck

THIS STORY COULD NOT BE WRITTEN IF THERE WERE NOT WITNESSES—not vague unknown men, but Quentin Reynolds and H. R. Knickerbocker and Clark Lee and Jack Belden, who was hurt at Salerno, and John Lardner and a number of others who will come clamoring forward if anyone doubts the facts here to be presented.

The thing began when a British consul met Quentin Reynolds in the hall of the Alletti Hotel in Algiers. The consul was a small, innocent, well-mannered man who liked to think of the British and Americans as allies and who was willing to make amicable gestures. In good faith he asked Reynolds where he was staying and in equal good faith Reynolds replied that he had not yet been billeted.

"There's an extra bed in my room," the consul said. "You're welcome to it if you like."

That was the beginning, and what happened was nobody's fault. It was just one of those accidents. The consul had a nice room with a balcony that overlooked the harbor and from which you could watch air raids. It wasn't Reynolds's fault. He accepted hospitality for himself, not for the nine other war correspondents who moved in with him. Nine is only a working number. Sometimes there were as many as eighteen. They slept on the floor, on the balcony, in the bathroom and some even slept in the hall outside the door of room 140, Alletti Hotel, Algiers.

It was generally agreed that the consul should have his own bed, that is, if he kept it. But let him get up to go to the bathroom and he returned to find Knickerbocker or Lee or Belden, or all three, in it. Another thing bothered the consul a little. Correspondents don't sleep much at night. They talked and argued and sang so that the poor consul didn't get much rest. There was too much going on in his

room. He had to work in the daytime, and he got very little sleep at night. Toward the end of the week he took to creeping back in the middle of the afternoon for a nap. He couldn't get his bed then. Someone always had it. But at 3 in the afternoon it was usually quiet enough so that he could curl up on the floor and get a little rest.

The foregoing is not the unbelievable part—quite the contrary. It is what follows that will require witnesses. It was during one of the all-night discussions of things in general that someone, perhaps Clark Lee, perhaps dour Jack Belden, suggested that we were getting very tired of Algerian wine and wouldn't it be nice if we had some Scotch. From that point on this is our story and we intend to stick to it.

Someone must have rubbed something, a ring or a lamp or perhaps the utterly exhausted British consul. At any rate, there was a puff of blue smoke, and standing in the room was a small man with pointed ears and a very jolly stomach. He wore a suit of green leather and his cap and the toes of his shoes ended in sharp points and they were green, too.

"Saints of Galway," said Reynolds. "Do you see what I see?"

"Yes," said Clark Lee.

"Well, do you believe it?"

"No," said Lee, who is after all a realist and was at Corregidor.

Jack Belden has lived in China for many years and he knows about such things. "Who are you?" he asked sternly

"I'm little Charley Lytle," the elf said.

"Well, what do you want, popping in on us?" Belden cried.

The British consul groaned and turned over and pulled the covers over his head. Knickerbocker has since admitted that his first impulse was to kill the elf and stuff him to go beside the sailfish in his den. In fact, he was creeping up when Charley Lytle held up his hand.

"When war broke out I tried to enlist," he said. "But I was rejected on political grounds. It isn't that I have any politics," he explained. "But the Army's position is that if I did have, heaven knows what they would be. There hasn't been a Republican leprechaun since Coolidge. So I was rejected pending the formation of an Elves-in-Exile Battalion. I decided then that I would just make people happy, soldiers and war correspondents and things like that."

Reynolds's eyes narrowed dangerously. He is very loyal. "Are you insinuating that we aren't happy?" he gritted— "That my friends aren't happy?"

"I'm not happy," said the British consul, but no one paid any attention to him.

Little Charley Lytle said, "I heard some mention made of Scotch whisky. Now it just happens that I have"—

"How much?" said Clark Lee, who is a realist.

"Why, all you want."

"I mean how much money?" Lee demanded.

"You don't understand," said Little Charley. "There is no money involved. It is my contribution to the war—I believe you call it EFFORT."

"I'm going to kill him," cried Knickerbocker. "Nobody can sneer at my war and get away with it."

Reynolds said, "Could we get a case?"

"Surely," said Little Charley.

"Three cases?"

"Certainly."

Jack Belden broke in "Now don't you strain him. You don't know what his breaking point is."

"When can you deliver?" Reynolds asked.

Instead of answering, Little Charley Lytle made a dramatic and slightly ribald gesture. There was one puff of smoke and he had disappeared. There followed three small explosions, like a series of tiny depth charges, and there on the floor of room 140 of the Alletti Hotel in Algiers were three cases of Haig & Haig pinch bottle.

That night there was an air raid, and even the British consul enjoyed it.

Anyone who doesn't believe this story can ask any of the people involved.

LORD DELIVER US

Donald Cowie

TO DISCOVER THAT HIS WIFE MILDRED WAS SLEEPING WITH THE lodger was all Private Lyves of the Bluffs obtained from an ardent wish, expressed during a military sojourn overseas, that he should be transported home to see what the old folk were doing. Yet it should not be assumed that such a result was typical of the revelations granted by the Almighty when He decided, after being deafened during a period of human war by conflicting prayers of mortals for aid, temporarily to suspend the order of nature and allow men to achieve their immediate desire. Thus the oft-repeated invocation of a young wife and mother named Truelove in Appletree Garden Suburb that her dear God should permit them to have Daddy back from the battlefield for a single night was strangely answered. Lieutenant Truelove arrived with a stop-watch in his hand and a wild expression in his eye. He sweated profusely and displayed a tendency to vomit whenever his young wife spoke to him. All right, all right, he said, I'll be with you in the morning, but to-night we attack for the first time, do you hear, attack. After which he brandished a pistol at his little girl Gloria, and informed her that if she budged an inch in a rearwards direction when the order came then he would carve out her guts from behind with half a dozen well aimed bullets. Concluding that her husband had degenerated through the Army drinking habits she had heard about into a homicidal maniac, the young wife fled from Appletree Garden Suburb to become a grim worker for the Temperance Union.

Whether or not she was to be pitied is a nice question, but if so then an equal meed of sympathy should perhaps be extended to an elderly baker in the nearby town of Grinding, who, by the name Mealey, was suddenly granted a pious request that he should be

allowed to bake alive in his (Mealey's) oven the local Inspector of Weights and Measures. The Inspector, a grey individual named Nicker, was soon done to a turn, but the aroma of his cooking brought the local Inspector of Meats and Offals to the door, with the result that Mealey was heavily fined for contravening in his establishment the Restriction of Bakers' Ovens to Pure Flour Products Only (Prohibition of Meat Pies) Order B/60/qR29.

Yet that was possibly an insignificant case beside the calamity which befell those women members of Parliament who had been discussing in committee the Government's absurd refusal to permit the formation of a women's mercantile marine service. It is not fair, cried one stout creature, the militant member for Goodshow Major, Mrs. Mary Itcherwood Uppe-Horsey, it is not fair that those poor men should be torpedoed and our girls should never suffer underwater attack. I agree with you, said a sharp young woman named Catfish, and I wish to God that we could all be transported to the high seas in order to see what is really going on. Within a second the entire committee was transferred from Westminster to the deck of the Liverpool freighter, *John Thomas II,* and within half an hour that vessel was entirely denuded of its original hardy crew, which, having previously fought off twelve aerial attacks and five submarine assaults, was quite unable to resist the masterful encroachment of the parliamentary ladies. The crew took to the mid-Atlantic in boats, floats, life-jackets and even without any kind of support rather than endure the enthusiastic lecturing of Mrs. Mary Itcherwood Uppe-Horsey a minute longer. As one of them put it, Nazis are one thing but these here skirts are dangerous. When a short time later the *John Thomas II* was boarded by a U-boat commander, Hans Hoffe (Oak Leaves with Acorns), the mingled verbosity and retching of the ladies was such that the ship was deemed almost excessively neutral and abandoned with hurried courtesy. What subsequently transpired is a mystery of the sea only to be ranked with that of the *Marie Celeste,* inasmuch as when carried eventually by the tides into the River Platte the *John Thomas II* was empty of all human life save a gibbering object up the foremast identified after several royal commissions as Miss Ida Catfish, M.P. There are nautical writers, however, who

connect the mystery with that strange phenomenon at Manly Beach, Sydney, when several man-eating sharks floated belly uppermost inshore with glazed expressions in their eyes and a continual clatter of feminist voices in their stomachs.

But there we pass from the strictly factual to the Australian, and would be better concerned with the more easily verified case of that retired solicitor Cornelius Gammon (Gammon and Spinach of Swindel) who uttered in neighbourly conversation one night: My God, I'm an old man, but if I were at the front I'd show 'em how wars are won. Which the worthy man of law instantly proceeded to do. Dropped down in a frontline trench he was at first dazed, then horrified, and finally shot through the back of the head. Or we could turn to the revelation of Letty Ravish, a courtesan of Curzon Street, who prayed impetuously one day for a real fighting man to be thrust into her arms and found herself wrestling for dear life with a Borneo headhunter, named Bigga Bogga. Letty's subsequent retirement into a Nunnery was the sensation of an otherwise dull week for Fleet Street.

Yet the melancholy fate of the woman could scarcely be compared with that of a young subaltern in the Army named Tom Terrier. Discussing the forthcoming campaign with his Colonel, old Flatulent-Flintlock, he had stuttered brightly 'Oh yes, sir, I only wish to God I could lay my hands on one of those Nazi blighters at this moment. Whereat he was transported instantly to a German dug-out and constrained there to place his paws upon the torso, bared for ablutions, of a young storm-trooper. Believing that the lad was a moral pervert, and shocked to the depths of their jack-boots, the Germans hastily despatched Tom back to his own lines, where, however, the tale was soon told, and the unhappy subaltern discharged from the Army without a character. There are things that an officer and gentleman does not do, explained Colonel Sir Flatulent-Flintlock to his staff, after which he discussed with them a scheme to blast a village off the face of the earth. Poor Terrier, lacking that character without which an Englishman is so alive that in the eyes of his fellow countrymen he is better dead, returned to a sceptred isle and tossed up whether he should commit suicide or get a good job in munitions. He chose the uglier fate and became a works manager.

But what is even such a harrowing story as Terrier's beside the impact of the Divine humour on those glorious individuals to whom, in greater or lesser degree, the actual conduct of the war was entrusted? There was the discomfiture of Mr. Alfred Bluff, the Minister for Recruitment, who told a great audience that he wanted to see the whole nation doing some form of war work and found on his return home that his wife, secretary, cook, chambermaid, butler, chauffeur and gardener had all vanished, leaving him to labour like a slavey at his own chores. One could also dilate upon the fate of that Food Controller who wished publicly for nothing better than a potato pie at the end of a day's work and found the desired dish waiting him in bed that night, placed in such a position that he could not miss it when he plunged between the sheets. Or consider the melancholy case of that Air Force functionary who prayed devoutly that he could drop all he had on Berlin, and was immediately hurled upon the astonished city in question together with his town house, his country seat, his wife, his daughter and several tons of sequestered American securities.

Far pleasanter, perhaps, to enter the most exalted circles and so conclude a profoundly amoral tale. Here was the democratic leader, Bramley Pippin, ending a stirring oration with the words, And so I commend our just cause to the Almighty, praying that He will give us the victory. There was Belligerus the totalitarian leader concluding a passionate speech with the words, And so I commend our just cause to the Almighty, praying that He will give us the victory. Whereupon the good God, finding that He was no longer amused, allowed the nations to surge forward in supreme efforts and each reach the conclusion, after vast expenditure of blood and treasure, that theirs had indeed been the victory. Read the history books of each nation and you will find that this was so.

(It may occur to some readers that God should have ended the war earlier in response to what must have been the prayers of many. On the contrary, He did not receive a single petition to end the war at all costs which He could accept as remotely genuine.)

THE VOICE OF GOD

Winifred Holtby

ONCE UPON A TIME AN INVENTOR MADE AN INSTRUMENT BY WHICH he could listen in to the past.

Being a shy man, he kept himself to himself and told nobody of his invention; but he found his new instrument more entertaining than his wireless set, and would sit for hours when his day's work was over listening in to Queen Victoria scolding Prince Albert on a wet Sunday at Balmoral, or to Mr. Gladstone saying whatever he did say in 1868.

One evening it happened that a young reporter, hurrying home from the offices of the *Daily Standard*, was knocked off his motor-cycle just outside the inventor's window. Though shy, the inventor was a kind man, and without waiting to switch off his instrument, he ran down, invited the young man in, bound his cut hands and offered him a brandy and soda.

'And how do you feel now?' he asked.

The reporter listened to the instrument, which was just then recording an interview between King Charles II and a lady friend, and he said, 'Thank you very much. I feel all right, but I think I must have had a bang on the head. I keep on hearing things.'

'What sort of things?' asked the inventor.

'Well, the sort of things you don't generally hear over the wireless,' said the reporter, and he blushed.

'But that isn't exactly the wireless,' said the inventor, and he explained exactly what it was.

'But that's impossible!' cried the reporter. 'It's more than impossible. It's a scoop.' And he ran straight off and telephoned to his newspaper.

The news editor was a cautious man, but he did not want to miss anything, so he sent down a senior reporter who arrived in time to hear Mrs. Disraeli telling Mr. Disraeli what she really thought about Queen Victoria. Then he rang up the editor, who sent down the dramatic critic, the chief sporting correspondent, three photographers, and the editor of the financial page. The inventor let them listen in to Nelson bombarding the neutral fleets at Copenhagen, but they said that this was not really British, and could not be genuine. So the inventor then tuned in to the last directors' meeting of the *Daily Standard*, and they heard the proprietor telling the editor just what he thought about the advertising figures; and after that they were convinced. They acquired the exclusive news rights on the instrument.

The invention as news was an immense success.

The proprietor of the *Daily Standard* himself wrote a column explaining that the instrument was a striking example of British enterprise, revealing to the world the whole story of our empire's greatness. The Federation of British Industries issued a statement that it would be good for trade and help to restore confidence in our empire market. The scientists said that it would enlarge the field of human knowledge, and the editor of the *Daily Standard* ordered a symposium, on 'If I could listen in to the past, which scene would I choose, and why?' commissioning contributions from a movie star, a tennis champion, an Atlantic flyer, an ex-Secretary of State for India, and a Dean.

The Dean sat down to write his contribution explaining that of all past scenes he would prefer to hear that in which John Knox denounced Mary Queen of Scots. But when he came to say why he preferred this, he found no good reason except the true one, which was that he disliked all women and thought well of their detractors; but this he felt, was not good journalism.

So he sat biting his pen and contemplating a row of his own published works on Plotinus, Origen, the British Empire and other sacred subjects; and as he looked at them, he had a great idea.

It was a really great idea. The longer he thought of it the more he was impressed, as a priest by its solemnity, as a patriot by its power, and as a journalist by its superb news value.

He tore up his tribute to John Knox and scribbled along a sheet of foolscap half a dozen headlines: 'When Christ returns to London'; 'The Scientist's Miracle'; 'The Voice of God.'

Then he began to write his greatest article.

Three mornings later, the readers of the *Daily Standard* left their breakfast bacon while they repeated to each other, 'Can it be true? Surely it can't be true.'

For the Dean had written that the invention was an instrument chosen by God Himself to enable man to hear the Voice of Christ. For two thousand years the world had tried to reconstruct from the inspired fragments of the Gospels the full record of His tremendous doctrine. The time had come to confess that Man had failed. Much was incomprehensible; much uncertain. Scholars had argued, armies fought and martyrs died because of Man's imperfect understanding. But now science, the handmaid, not the enemy, of religion, had wrought the miracle, and men might listen again, not only to the true Sermon on the Mount, not only to the evidence of the Resurrection, but to all those lessons which had never been recorded, to the full story of that Perfect Life. Everything would at last be known beyond all doubt. To the housewife in Clapham, to the savage in an African forest, to the Chinese mandarin and the professional footballer, the Voice of God Himself at last would speak.

The first time, wrote the Dean, that the Voice of God was heard on earth, the world was unprepared for it. Society was ignorant, the listeners few, the words went unrecorded. The Jews, a servile and uncultured people, proved quite unworthy of their splendid privilege, and responded only by the Crucifixion. But when God spoke a second time, the world would be awaiting him. He would speak, not to a group of Jewish fishermen, but to a Great Imperial People. The whole resources of science and learning would lie at His disposal. Now would be no indifference, no misunderstanding. Suddenly, as in the twinkling of an eye, society would be changed. Worldliness and materialism, selfishness and sloth would flee away for ever and we should be summoned to a new crusade for righteousness and true religion.

The effect of the Dean's article was instantaneous. Letters poured

in to the inventor. Questions were asked in the House of Commons. Special services were held in every church and chapel. A Baptist minister, stripping off his clothes, girded himself in sackcloth and ran down Piccadilly crying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Repent ye in the name of the Lord.' He tried also to live on locusts and wild honey, but locusts he could not obtain, though Messrs. Fortnum & Mason offered to procure some if given reasonable notice. The Vatican held aloof, but a rich manufacturer of wireless instruments offered to finance the construction of a new, larger instrument capable of listening in to Palestine two thousand years ago, and wrote off the cost as Advertisement Expenses.

The offer was accepted, the instrument made, the public informed, and a date fixed for the first hearing.

But then the trouble began.

The *Daily Standard*, having acquired exclusive news rights on the instrument, demanded that nothing should be published save through its columns or under its auspices. The Archbishop of Canterbury considered that the invention should be placed in a consecrated building, Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral. The Nonconformists all protested that the established Church had no monopoly of the Word of God, and the Rationalist Press declared that, this being a matter for scientific evidence, the sooner it was secularised the better. *The Times* brought out a special supplement on 'Church, Empire, and the Voice of God,' but took no line that could offend the Government.

At length a compromise was reached.

The instrument remained where it had been constructed, in the inventor's house, but the Archbishop was permitted to bless the freehold property, which had just been acquired by the *Daily Standard*. The instrument was connected by wireless with loud speakers placed in every public hall and church and chapel in the kingdom. The King and Queen consented to attend a First Reception Service at Westminster Abbey, and the *Daily Standard* organised a vast meeting in Wembley Stadium at which its readers could hear the first words spoken by the Voice.

The day arrived; the crowds collected; the massed bands of Guards

in the arena played the Hallelujah Chorus. Led by a world-famed contralto, the audience joined in the community singing of 'Abide with Me.' The massed bands played a great fanfare on their trumpets. The people rose and stood in breathless silence, broken only by sobs of emotion and scattered sighs as strong men fainted from the strain.

Then, out of the silence, amplified on the hundreds of loud speakers, the Voice spoke.

The people listened.

At first they listened with awe, then with bewilderment, then with increasing agitation.

For the Voice spoke in a completely unknown language. They could not understand a word of it.

The editor of the *Daily Standard,* listening in at his private office, flung off his earphones in a rage. 'Something's gone wrong. The instrument's out of order. Ring through to the inventor at once and tell him that if he lets us down, I'll have him hounded out of England. It's a farce. It's a flop. With the King listening too, it's an insult to His Majesty. Why, a hitch here will send our circulation down by thirty-five per cent.'

But the inventor declared that nothing was wrong with his instrument. The voices that they heard were indeed voices, speaking in Galilee two thousand years ago, and speaking, as might be expected, in Aramaic dialect. 'Did you expect,' asked the inventor with surprise, 'that they would speak in English?'

As that was, indeed, just what the editor had expected, there really was nothing to say. Being a man of initiative, however, he had a microphone connected with the loud speakers at the stadium, and informed the waiting public that they had heard at last the authentic Voice of God. This fact alone should be sufficient to transform the whole course of their lives; but in order to make the Voice not only heard but comprehensible, English translations would be published henceforward serially in the *Daily Standard,* until the great sacred record was complete.

Having done that, the editor sent immediately to all the known scholars of oriental languages, offering immense salaries to those who

could translate archaic Aramaic. Contrary to his expectation, the response was not immediate. In spite of its circulation of three million, very few scholars read the *Daily Standard*, and when approached personally, one declared that he was correcting examination papers for the Final Honours School of Oriental Languages at Oxford and did not wish to be disturbed. Another was excavating remains in Mesopotamia, a third was due to sail for a summer school in San Francisco, a fourth stated that he had never read the *Daily Standard*, never wished to read the *Daily Standard*, and refused to co-operate in any enterprise organised by the *Daily Standard*, even if it were the Second Coming itself. The Catholic theologians were forbidden to handle the matter unless the instrument was transferred to the control of His Holiness at Rome. A learned Unitarian quarrelled with an Anglo-Catholic about the translation of the first sentence that he heard, and the inventor himself, worn out by wrangling and discussion, succumbed to influenza and died after three days' distressing illness.

His death was followed by extraordinary demonstrations. The *Daily Standard*, relying upon the work of quite inferior scholars, published each morning a translated extract which it declared to be an authentic interpretation of the Voice. The scholars, bound to secrecy, shut up in their office, listened day and night to sounds recorded by the instrument. But as in Palestine two thousand years before, the Voice did not immediately reveal itself to listeners as the Voice of God, so now in Fleet Street it was difficult to distinguish the speaker of the words received. Sometimes the sentences recorded seemed quite trivial, sometimes incomprehensible, and sometimes it was quite impossible to translate their unfamiliar dialect. Yet each day the scholars had to be ready with their copy in order that the *Daily Standard* might not disappoint its readers. On one occasion, after the publication of a profoundly eloquent address on righteousness, the scholars discovered that it had been spoken by a Pharisee who was later condemned by the Voice for his hypocrisy. The scholars immediately informed the editor, asking him to publish an acknowledgment of error, but he replied by his usual formula, 'The *Daily Standard* never makes mistakes,' and told them to get on with their own business.

For the sales of the *Daily Standard* were now quite unprecedented.

No scoop in the whole history of journalism equalled this. From every country in the world came orders from millions of excited readers, longing for the new revelation which should change their lives.

It is true that not every one was happy. The *Evening Express*, the *Daily Standard's* rival, published allegations that the scholars were tampering with the instrument. Students of oriental languages disagreed about the translations and filled the correspondence columns with amendments. Spain and Italy, as the leading Catholic countries, complained that England, being heretical, had no right to the instrument. The Soviet Government, bitterly distressed, declared that all the misery of Tsarist Russia, the lice, poverty, ignorance of infant hygiene, primitive sanitation and illiterate peasantry, had been due to this perverse and degrading interest in God, and that the attempt to revive it must be checked at once. The American House of Representatives, as a precautionary measure, rushed through a new tariff law, a bigger navy programme and an amendment to the constitution. The International Federation of Trades Unions summoned a special conference at Amsterdam to discuss the bearing upon trade-union regulations of the command that those who have been bidden to walk one mile should walk two, and the Stock Exchange suffered an unheard-of slump under the threat of the command to sell all that one had and give it to the poor. The National Savings Association made a plea for suppression of those passages relating to 'take no thought for the morrow,' and the World League for Sexual Reform temporarily suspended its activities. The Zionists petitioned the League of Nations for special police protection, and the British Israelites, after a meeting in the Albert Hall, led a demonstration against the Jews, Freemasons, Theosophists and revolutionaries that ended in a free fight outside the offices of the *Daily Standard*.

The editor of the *Daily Standard* responded heroically. He summoned his readers to a new crusade for the Protection of the Holy Voice, adopting the slogan, 'Keep it Pure and Keep it British.' The Churches, restive and uncertain, failed to check the rising excitement of the people. A bishop was assassinated. An Oxford professor, who dared to question the authenticity of one published message, ate powdered glass in his boiled celery, and died in dreadful pain, while

an attempt was made by armed and desperate robbers to kidnap the instrument from the inventor's house.

Finally, martial law was proclaimed in London. Day after day fresh bloodshed was reported. The Council of the League of Nations held three special sessions, and two British Cabinet Ministers died of apoplexy.

None watched these events with greater concern and foreboding than the Dean. He felt himself responsible. Had he been content to praise the admirable Knox, had his journalistic acumen not overcome his original impulse, bloodshed and misery, violence and scandal would have been avoided. Men would still have ignored the Gospels, or each would have continued to interpret them according to his own immediate interest. Economic advantage would have counter-balanced ethical law, and all would have been as well as ever.

The Dean repented his vainglorious action.

He witnessed the increase of mob violence. He read of the order to the New Crusaders to shoot at sight any one seen to tamper with the instrument. He made up his mind what he must do.

One night he went by himself to the inventor's house. As the most distinguished ecclesiastical journalist on the *Daily Standard* he was at once admitted, the guards believing that he had come to write up a new descriptive article on 'The Instrument in Action.' He went into the room where the invention stood, and knelt before its complex mechanism.

'O God,' he prayed, 'Your Voice has spoken to us through the centuries, and always those who had ears to hear have heard, as You once warned us. We heard according each to our capacity. Two thousand years ago we were unprepared for Your high doctrine; to-day, O Lord, we are no more prepared. It is too much for us. Whenever You speak we fall into strange madness. In Your Name we have slain, tortured, burned and persecuted; we have waged wars; we have thrust men into prison. We have heard You call us to whatever work our own desire indicated. When left alone we can, through patience, learn a little kindliness, a little wisdom. The Churches have, through years of long endeavour, adapted Your teaching to the needs of men, remembering their difficulties and limitations. But when You speak,

Your council of perfection destroys our humble work of compromise. It is too high for us. We cannot stand it. Depart from us, for we are sinful men, O Lord.'

Then, raising the hatchet which he had brought with him for this purpose, he smashed the instrument, crushing its fragile valves and tearing its slender wires till it was quite destroyed.

Hearing the noise, the guards rushed in and found him hurling the screws and nuts around the room. They fired, and he fell with a dozen bullets in his body.

The destruction of the instrument was final, for since the death of the inventor nobody knew how to make another. The excitement aroused by the possibility of obtaining full records of the Voice died down; indeed, many began to doubt whether it had been ever heard.

The sales of the *Daily Standard* suffered a temporary decline, but this was received by the editor with the philosophic resignation of the really great. 'Ah, well,' he said, 'if the Dean hadn't gone gaga I should have to have put a stop to it all myself some time, for though a stunt like that is excellent for circulation, the uncertainty and excitement is bad for trade and puts a check on advertising. After all, taking it by and large, advertisements matter more than circulation. What about starting a new crusade for really womanly women and pleasing the big drapers? I think that, on the whole, it should pay better.'

THE JUDGEMENT SEAT

W. Somerset Maugham

THEY AWAITED THEIR TURN PATIENTLY, BUT PATIENCE WAS NO new thing to them; they had practised it, all three of them, with grim determination, for thirty years. Their lives had been a long preparation for this moment and they looked forward to the issue now, if not with self-confidence, for that on so awful an occasion would have been misplaced, at all events with hope and courage. They had taken the strait and narrow path when the flowery meads of sin stretched all too invitingly before them; with heads held high, though with breaking hearts, they had resisted temptation; and now, their arduous journey done, they expected their reward. There was no need for them to speak, since each knew the others' thoughts, and they felt that in all three of them the same emotion of relief filled their bodiless souls with thanksgiving. With what anguish now would they have been wrung if they had yielded to the passion which then had seemed so nearly irresistible and what a madness it would have been if for a few short years of bliss they had sacrificed that Life Everlasting which with so bright a light at long last shone before them! They felt like men who with the skin of their teeth have escaped a sudden and violent death and touch their feet and hands and, scarce able to believe that they are still alive, look about them in amazement. They had done nothing with which they could reproach themselves and when presently their angels came and told them that the moment was come, they would advance, as they had passed through the world that was now so far behind, happily conscious that they had done their duty. They stood a little on one side, for the press was great. A terrible war was in progress and for years the soldiers of all nations, men in the full flush of their gallant youth, had marched in an interminable

procession to the Judgement Seat; women and children too, their lives brought to a wretched end by violence or, more unhappily, by grief, disease and starvation; and there was in the courts of heaven not a little confusion.

It was on account of this war, too, that these three wan, shivering ghosts stood in expectation of their doom. For John and Mary had been passengers on a ship which was sunk by the torpedo of a submarine; and Ruth, broken in health by the arduous work to which she had so nobly devoted herself, hearing of the death of the man whom she had loved with all her heart, sank beneath the blow and died. John, indeed, might have saved himself if he had not tried to save his wife; he hated her; he had hated her to the depths of his soul for thirty years; but he had always done his duty by her and now, in the moment of dreadful peril, it never occurred to him that he could do otherwise.

At last their angels took them by the hand and led them to the Presence. For a little while the Eternal took not the slightest notice of them. If the truth must be told he was in a bad humour. A moment before there had come up for judgement a philosopher, deceased full of years and honours, who had told the Eternal to his face that he did not believe in him. It was not this that would have disturbed the serenity of the King of Kings, this could only have made him smile; but the philosopher, taking perhaps an unfair advantage of the regrettable happenings just then upon Earth, had asked him how, considering them dispassionately, it was possible to reconcile his All-Power with his All-Goodness.

"No one can deny the fact of Evil," said the philosopher, sententiously. "Now, if God cannot prevent Evil he is not all-powerful, and if he can prevent it and will not, he is not all-good."

This argument was of course not new to the Omniscient, but he had always refused to consider the matter; for the fact is, though he knew everything, he did not know the answer to this. Even God cannot make two and two five. But the philosopher, pressing his advantage, and, as philosophers often will, drawing from a reasonable premise an unjustifiable inference, the philosopher had finished with a statement that in the circumstances was surely preposterous.

"I will not believe," he said, "in a God who is not All-Powerful and All-Good."

It was not then perhaps without relief that the Eternal turned his attention to the three shades who stood humbly and yet hopefully before him. The quick, with so short a time to live, when they talk of themselves, talk too much; but the dead, with eternity before them, are so verbose that only angels could listen to them with civility. But this in brief is the story that these three recounted. John and Mary had been happily married for five years and till John met Ruth they loved each other, as married couples for the most part do, with sincere affection and mutual respect. Ruth was eighteen, ten years younger than he was, a charming, graceful animal, with a sudden and all-conquering loveliness; she was as healthy in mind as she was in body, and, eager for the natural happiness of life, was capable of achieving that greatness which is beauty of soul. John fell in love with her and she with him. But it was no ordinary passion that seized them; it was something so overwhelming that they felt as if the whole long history of the world signified only because it had led to the time and place that had brought them together. They loved as Daphnis and Chloe or as Paolo and Francesca. But after that first moment of ecstasy when each discovered the other's love they were seized with dismay. They were decent people and they respected themselves, the beliefs in which they had been bred, and the society in which they lived. How could he betray an innocent girl and what had she to do with a married man? Then they grew conscious that Mary was aware of their love. The confident affection with which she had regarded her husband was shaken; and there arose in her feelings of which she would never have thought herself capable, jealousy and the fear that he would desert her, anger because her possession of his heart was threatened and a strange hunger of the soul which was more painful than love. She felt that she would die if he left her; and yet she knew that if he loved it was because love had come to him, not because he had sought it. She did not blame him. She prayed for strength; she wept silent, bitter tears. John and Ruth saw her pine away before their eyes. The struggle was long and bitter. Sometimes their hearts failed them and they felt

that they could not resist the passion that burned the marrow of their bones. They resisted. They wrestled with evil as Jacob wrestled with the angel of God and at last they conquered. With breaking hearts, but proud in their innocence, they parted. They offered up to God, as it were a sacrifice, their hopes of happiness, the joy of life and the beauty of the world.

Ruth had loved too passionately ever to love again and with a stony heart she turned to God and to good works. She was indefatigable. She tended the sick and assisted the poor. She founded orphanages and managed charitable institutions. And little by little her beauty which she cared for no longer left her and her face grew as hard as her heart. Her religion was fierce and narrow; her very kindness was cruel because it was founded not on love but on reason; she became domineering, intolerant and vindictive. And John resigned, but sullen and angry, dragged himself along the weary years waiting for the release of death. Life lost its meaning to him; he had made his effort and in conquering was conquered; the only emotion that remained with him was the unceasing, secret hatred with which he looked upon his wife. He used her with kindness and consideration; he did everything that could be expected of a man who was a Christian and a gentleman. He did his duty. Mary, a good, faithful and (it must be confessed) exceptional wife, never thought to reproach her husband for the madness that had seized him; but all the same she could not forgive him for the sacrifice he had made for her sake. She grew acid and querulous. Though she hated herself for it, she could not refrain from saying the things that she knew would wound him. She would willingly have sacrificed her life for him, but she could not bear that he should enjoy a moment's happiness when she was so wretched that a hundred times she had wished she was dead. Well, now she was and so were they; grey and drab had life been, but that was past; they had not sinned and now their reward was at hand.

They finished and there was silence. There was silence in all the courts of heaven. Go to hell were the words that came to the Eternal's lips, but he did not utter them, for they had a colloquial association that he rightly thought unfitting to the solemnity of the occasion.

Nor indeed would such a decree have met the merits of the case. But his brow darkened. He asked himself if it was for this that he had made the rising sun shine on the boundless sea and the snow glitter on the mountain tops; was it for this that the brooks sang blithely as they hastened down the hillsides and the golden corn waved in the evening breeze?

"I sometimes think," said the Eternal, "that the stars never shine more brightly than when reflected in the muddy waters of a wayside ditch."

But the three shades stood before him and now that they had unfolded their unhappy story they could not but feel a certain satisfaction. It had been a bitter struggle, but they had done their duty. The Eternal blew lightly, he blew as a man might blow out a lighted match, and, behold! where the three poor souls had stood—was nothing. The Eternal annihilated them.

"I have often wondered why men think I attach so much importance to sexual irregularity," he said. "If they read my works more attentively they would see that I have always been sympathetic to that particular form of human frailty."

Then he turned to the philosopher who was still waiting for a reply to his remarks.

"You cannot but allow," said the Eternal, "that on this occasion I have very happily combined my All-Power with my All-Goodness."

THE SENSITIVE GOLDFISH

Christina Stead

HENRY, THE SECURITIES CLERK, WAS BORN UNDER THE SIGN OF Pisces, but he had not learned swimming, for all the water he had seen had been in London Pool and in the goldfish pond on the roof-terrace of the Bank of Central Honduras. The Bank of Central Honduras, I have no need to say, is the Bastille of the City: the humble citizen who passes its buttressed, unpierced walls, thinks of the mountains of gold under the mined pavement, and for a moment comes into his pale eye an imperial glint, the look of the slave-driver, the frontiersman, the dragoon.

The yellow-vested porters have the composed mien and slow speech formerly associated with a five-thousand acre pheasant shoot. At sunset, the flag is struck, and the Bank's private band plays soft martial music while the steel doors within, all over the building, automatically swing to: the yellow day porters go off and the sable night watchmen come on.

Henry smiled each morning when, arriving at the Bank, the auroral liveries of the porters put him in mind of the goldfish in their Chinese sleeves and skirts. He was called a securities clerk, but his function was to aërate and feed the fish; and a large part of each day he spent in a stone cabin on top of the building listening to the voices, motor-horns and sirens ascending through the fog which often covered the City's business; or, on a clearish day, following with shaded eyes the barges moving slowly down the sluggish golden flood which at noonday rolls under London Bridge. Often, too, on a moony, brown night, he leaned on the kerb of the goldfish pond and listened to the soft voices of the goldfish, then gambolling, white, dark and silver, in

the basin. How many of them were there? He had never counted: they were like leaves.

Henry had discovered long ago that his fish were temperamental. On certain days, quite apart from the occasional sad tinges lent them by soot, fog or nightfall, the fish appeared to change colour, hourly, and even momently, due to secret and invisible movements of the water, or its animalculæ, or to the filtration of light through the plankton, or to the thoughts of those finned mages themselves. Sometimes, their bars and mottlings, their scars, freckles and wine-marks would glow and burn, redden, blacken, glower: sometimes, the fish would turn paler and the outlines of their beauties fade.

Henry dreamed of other climes and postulated to himself other habits. He saw goldfish swimming in the sunken tarns of impassable mountains, goldfish in brimming rivers floating through the reeds, goldfish in the shape of a wild boar's head pressing through the packed flood-waters of the Yellow River, goldfish in the one-franc glass bowls of the Paris bird-market, goldfish in bamboo cages and oiled-paper tanks, goldfish momentarily glinting behind a rattan screen in the Maughamy air of some Eurasian bungalow, with milk-fed feline clumsily pawing and the shriek of overturned globe. He pondered so deep that often he thought he heard a voice arising from the depths of the artificial pool, as if he were in the thicket by Melisande's glade, and a fatal voice foretelling harm smote his heart: then whistles, as of distant wild geese affecting that imagined sky, seemed to drop to him from the vaporous circles of the moon, moving rheumily over the sky in its crinolines of mist, shadowing, with its morbid light, airy spites and watery turbulences.

Thus he dreamed: but never, day or night, forgot to feed the fish on powdered liver, which swelled their mandarin bellies and reddened their metal coats.

He, at other times, seemed to himself that ancient mandarin whose loving-cup, in jellied alabaster, painted with twin carps in Chinese red, was now preserved by the heaven-descended professor of ichthyology in an inferior Canton College, and catalogued in a shop in Piccadilly. The marble basin stood in his hand, he offered it full of wine to some beautiful girl bought for a phenomenal price—a beauty

of such high birth that her full eyes were scarcely almond, and her complexion the colour of the cup with two red carps floating in her cheeks.

He kissed the flat-tasting water of the pool, lying in the shadow of the Bank's parapet, and a goldfish, rising suddenly, presented a viscous, cool surface to his lips. Ungrateful for this caress, the youth wished for the day to come when he could take service in foreign branches, and look down from the glass top of his table upon the silent steps of some masted sea-port, and the swilling quays, grown with seaweed of a foreign sort, in a land of coral. He blamed himself again, looking at the fish sporting their unmerchantable plates of gold, that he could think of no scheme for making money; with his opportunities (as his sister said). Looking through the goldfish and through the bottom of the pool, he transpierced the beamed rooms, the mahogany, marble, plush and shagrin, into the vaults of the bank, where (he believed) attendants dressed like Phantomas glided above a vast honeycomb of gold, sealed in cold chambers, along slippery corridors, guarded by impenetrable steel doors, full of wheels and cogs, and bombs of tear-gas, and subterranean lakes in cement basins.

The City is a machine miraculously organised for extracting gold from the seas, airs, clouds, from barren lands, holds of ships, mines, plantations, cottage hearth-stones, trees and rocks; and he, wretchedly waiting in the exterior halls, like the porters, or the newsboys, could not even get his finger on one tiny, tiny lever. More, newsboys, proverbially became noble lords, but what known bank-clerk had done so? Newsboys got tips, telephone-operators tuned in on important calls, cashiers—sometimes got away, but the road before him was long, slow, footworn and desperately unspeculative. He saw himself like a sparrow on the Bank-top; sitting on the wherewithal for a thousand, thousand meals and dropping dead from hunger the first day of winter. The fish had liver, the fish had marble, the fish changed their colour from day to day, and were a matter of concern to the Baron; but what was he?

As the securities clerk despaired one day, in this style, the chief director, Baron Franz-August de Geldreich, came out in the pallid late sunlight and peered through the mist at the goldfish now coloured

like brass showing through rubbed silver. The clerk gazed at the Baron, at his superiorly stolid, red phiz, his sad-coloured eyes and pensive moustache: the Baron had his shoes patched once a month and never took a taxi, even when it rained. In the last two matters Henry resembled the Baron.

The Baron said in his deliberate, impeccably-accented voice,

"Look after these fish carefully for me, like a good fellow. They have a curious colour: did you feed them this morning?"

"Yes," said Henry.

"These fish are most valuable, most extraordinary," said the Baron; "watch them carefully. I had them, you know," he continued, turning pleasantly to the youth, "from an old Chinaman, politician, sage and poet. He poisoned his wife and sold his sister, but was a good friend to his friends, did well by his fifteen illegitimate sons, and was said to have been altogether in the sway of his last mistress, a child he found sailing paper boats in a fountain in the hills.

"These fish are over two hundred years old; and were said, by the informants of my sage, to have come from the cataracts of Kin-Saï, in a miraculous tempest which raged over Pekin all one night. It was so fierce that when morning drew near the coolies were afraid to go out to work, but did so, and found the ground moist only with dew, and thick with unsmirched flowers. On that night, these fish and others like them appeared in the fountains of the Emperor, a holy prince who waged war continually with the enemies of the State and whose treasury was drained to the last ounce of gold-dust. Immediately after the appearance of these fish, the Emperor was granted an enormous loan on most favourable terms by our own country, and although he himself was poisoned, with his uncle and son, by his mother, shortly after, the next Emperor, his mother's son by a second marriage, was enabled to live long and abdicate in time, by a discovery and study of the secret virtues of the fish. This is, of course, the tale told me by the donor of the fish. Have you an ichthyological turn? While taking this freshwater story with what salt you think necessary, you may be sure the fish are of the rarest breed—are, indeed, unique! Watch them carefully," said the Baron Franz-August, "if anything should ever happen to them, let me know at once, per-

sonally." He smiled at the curator, and departed with the delicate, pointed tread of a quick-witted stout man.

The youth peered at the ancient fish, sons of Kin-Saï, who turned like scythes round the coppery spindles of the fog-sifted sunlight. It even seemed to him that on their great caudal and pectoral fins the black, orange, rose and silver markings took curious shapes; here was a blue willow, there a cluster of lanterns, there, weeping night-blue hair, garment of a sallow face.

He cautiously drew from his inside coat-pocket at last, preparatory to going downstairs, the day's copy of "The Speculative Times." He did not care for the true nature of the Junonian milk, the curvature of the earth's, or infantile, spines, Sir James Jeans's cosmogony, or the flights of contemporary Teutonic statecraft: his speculations concerned Spratt & Brown's Brewing Process, Emprunt & Borrow's new share capital and the North Atlantis Gold Mining and Diamond Syndicate, Ltd.

Henry's study of this paper was necessarily furtive, for no-one in the Bank would have been seen reading anything inferior to the "Commercial & Financial Chronicle." Indeed, "The Speculative Times" which habitually took an unhappy and morose, no, even malcontent view of most things that happened in what it was pleased to call "that adamantine, floating, faery isle, the City," was scarcely a paper to be seen about with. It marked a man as having no vision, no future, no honorific qualities, but as having the nature of a tick, termite or hookworm, and a taste for whispering behind hands concerning men of high principle, of battening on the battener. Henry had seen the wretched office where this prophetic sheet was printed, and yet he hoped that (with his opportunities) he would be one day able to tell a bargain from a ramp, make a scoop, and rapidly advance up the rungs that led to the East, the West, and directors' participations.

He looked at the goldfish which seemed flushed with emotion. Did they bring fortune? for the Baron, for the Bank, or for whom? He wished he could have one of all those fish to predict fortune for him, and to bring him good luck. In a romantic head, temptation germinates fearfully fast. The next day Henry slipped into the Bank with

an air of virtue, because he had brought with him a goldfish bowl the size of a cricket-ball in which he intended to carry home, just for one night, one of the Baron's miraculous goldfish, the smallest, the plainest. There were one hundred and twenty-five goldfish that he counted before he abstracted his small one, and all were red as paint. When he got home and showed his small fish to his loving sister, he was dismayed to see that it was very pale, although quite healthy, and he took it for a bad omen, tossing all night, and hardly able to wait for daylight, so that he could get up and take the fish back to the Bank.

His sister came in to wake him, from the heavy sleep into which he had at length fallen, and whispered to him that the fish had gone: it was not in the bowl—perhaps the cat had taken it. They beat the cat, and Henry went to work without any breakfast, feeling like death. He dragged himself up to the roof and looked dismally at his wards. He saw in the basin a very small fish. He counted the fish, and found there were still one hundred and twenty-five. He rubbed his eyes. That night, trembling with his daring and folly, he took home again, in a new and larger glass bowl, another goldfish, after carefully counting them all again. The next morning his bowl was empty but the tale at the Bank was complete. To have evidence of the miracle he, next night, put a gold wire delicately round the tail of a goldfish and carried it home. On the way home he looked in at the offices of the North Atlantis Gold Mining Syndicate to see what he could see, but the offices were shut up, with thick doors, barred windows and padlocks like a gaol, and when he knocked, a little suspicious man popped up a tiny slot in the pane of a door and asked him rudely what was his business. Henry asked for the last annual balance-sheet of the North Atlantis Syndicate, and when, after a prolonged cross-examination, it was grudgingly handed to him, he was so upset that he asked the janitor's leave to sit a minute on the stool placed in the frigid iron-barred corridor. There he took out his fish to see if it was still with him, and found it not only there but brilliantly red. He got up and walked across to the grim door of the North Atlantis Gold Mining, watching his fish. The fish was now red as blood. Henry, to save it from bursting from apoplexy, turned on his

heel and hurried out of the building. The janitor shook his head in astonishment.

Henry and his sister spent the whole evening looking at the goldfish. A visitor disturbed them, a young bank-clerk from a branch bank, the suitor of Henry's sister: under the seal of secrecy, he was told the marvellous tale of Kin-Saï and the temperamental goldfish, and he offered to buy the fish from Henry. Henry refused, but as the clerk raised his bid for the fish (for he intended to promenade it round all the speculative companies of the City the next day) Henry suddenly remembered that the ingenious youth might well buy it and take it home, it would be at the Bank again in the morning, whatever happened. He accepted the offer. The youth made off almost at once and Henry, when he heard the front-door close, went pale and dashed out after him. But the youth was nowhere to be seen. "What if the fish, once sold, stays with its buyer?" he asked his sister, trembling: "and can Herbert be trusted?"

"Herbert could be trusted with a million pounds, or secrets of state," said Henry's sister indignantly. Henry sighed.

The next morning, the fish with the gold wire on its tail was back in the pool. It is sad to relate that during the next few weeks Henry sold the same fish to one hundred ambitious bank-clerks, and the legend of Kin-Saï had become one of the most widely-spread legends of the City. Henry, likewise, had, to console the desolated and mystified Herbert, gone shares with him in a small flutter in North Atlantis shares: they bought the shares at 7/6 and they rose to 12/6, at which price the youths sold out and took their profit.

Now, to the end of my tale.

One morning, a year or so ago, the clerk mounted the stairs on a Friday morning and perceived a marked agitation in the building. When he asked questions, a hundred answers were given him, and one of the clerks, sniggering, said, "It is the Lord fluttering his account-books of his chosen." It was, in fact, not only the day before the Jewish Sabbath, but the most dismal Friday in all the year, the one which precedes the Day of Atonement, when all Israël mourns: it is then that the Lord makes up his accounts of good and evil for

the year, and closes, after a brief respite, that journal for ever. The chief director, Baron Franz-August, necessarily, was not at the Bank, but was attending to his spiritual business.

Nevertheless, at eleven o'clock the directors of the Bank assembled hurriedly, and there was a going and coming all day. Henry, in the exceptional rumours of the day, had neglected his goldfish for a few hours. At eleven o'clock he took the lift to the roof and the most dreadful sight met his apprehensive eyes. The pool was strewn with fish, which were not only past gasping, but were all of a shocking colour, and limp and blown-up, as if they had been dead a week, at least: the scales had fallen off in places, the eyes were completely clouded, the gills pale, fungus had appeared on the bodies and the fins were eaten. Henry thought of putting his head in the pool along with the valuable dead, and cutting short a breath much less prized by man. Next, he considered that the water might be poisoned, and like us all, he did not wish to meet an unknown death, but only the one chosen. He ran to the lift, trembling violently, almost running out at every floor, and making a mistake in the end, and getting out at the sixth instead of the fourth floor.

Here, as luck would have it, a director hailed him, gave him a sealed note and said in the gravest and most peremptory way, "Henry, run as quickly as you can, take a taxi, to the Duke Street synagogue, and give this note to the Baron Franz-August: tell the attendant that nothing could be more important."

The jaws of fate presented themselves: he rushed in. He was now convinced that in one of its journeys his stolen fish had caught some inimical germ, communicated it to all the fish, and that he, in fact, had killed them. The world whirled away past him like the waves of the ocean rushing innumerably past a ship. He reached the synagogue, was admitted, and there, touching the shoulder of the mourner, he whispered, "Baron, Baron, I don't know how to tell you, but the goldfish are dead!" The Baron followed him quickly from the synagogue, and took the letter from his hand, saying "Dead? All? Just now? You were right to tell me! What time is it?" and he followed the palpitating youth into a taxi. He had been followed by

the inquisitive and anxious looks and was now followed by the inquisitive and anxious persons of such other business men of wealth as found themselves in the temple.

At the Bank, Henry, wonderfully elated at being seen with the Baron, paid the taxi-driver, and when he turned, found the Baron out of sight. He had already reached his broker's office. Henry waited all day for the Baron to go and look at the fish. In the evening, he regretfully picked them out of the foul water, gutted them, cleaned them and put them in his cabin while he went and fetched glass jars, white slides, formalin and paraffin. He then put each fish in a separate jar with the label, "Goldfish from Kin-Saï" with a word of history and the date of decease, put in formalin, closed the jars with paraffin and set up his funereal museum on the roof for the Baron to see when he arrived.

He spent a sad week-end. The Saturday afternoon came with electric warnings in the air, and a stir in the City. He passed Sunday rather sadly looking at the columns of "Positions Vacant." He awakened on Monday to a changed world! That was the morning on which our country declared publicly an embargo on the export of gold, "went off the gold standard" as they said. I trust the ladies will forgive my mentioning these details.

In the afternoon of this day Henry found the Baron on the roof-terrace. "Where are the fish?" said the Baron. Henry showed him. The Baron laughed and said, "Pickle; never inter!" He took the young man's arm and walked him into the lift, still holding his arm till he reached the sixth floor, where he went out and left Henry to the lift-attendant's respectful congratulations.

"What the Baron touches," said the lift-man, "turns to gold: and he has only to shake hands with a man for him to make money: I believe in you, sir: I'll make you a proposition. You pick out a stock and I'll put up the money: we share fifty-fifty, either way, but you do the business."

Henry was impressed by the lift-man's words, took the money and bought one hundred shares of North Atlantis Gold Mining and Diamond Syndicate Ltd. at 17/6, and sold them at a shade less than 39/9, the best price this company's shares ever saw in the

market. At the price just mentioned the lamentable discovery was made that diamonds were a drug in the market, and gold absent from the North Atlantis workings, at least in the northern parts, that the directors were taking rest-cures on the Continent and the hyperbolic geologist who had made the reports was cruising along the Dalmatian coast. Henry, who had received a jar containing one of the sensitive goldfish, as a personal present from the Baron, and who always kept this souvenir on his mantelpiece, one morning began speculating to himself and said aloud, "Now if North Atlantis goes up again . . ." when he noticed the goldfish go as pale as a sheet. Experimentally, he said, as if still thinking aloud, "Perhaps, though, I should *sell* North Atlantis . . ." and he observed that the dead goldfish became red again. The same day he took an option on the sale of 1,000 North Atlantis and before the end of the month had realised a large profit on the down-grade.

Except for this singular accident, Henry would never have made any money. But now we can safely leave him with his foot well advanced for the slipper of fortune, and pursue no farther than to-day the remarkable and true, yet fantastic story of the Sensitive Goldfish. I should say that the rest of the goldfish have been secreted by the Baron, for they are not always exactly of the same shade of opinion, and he is then obliged to take a majority ruling.

PANIC: THE ORSON WELLES BROADCAST THAT HOAXED AMERICA

—From various newspapers, dateline October 31, 1938

PATROLMAN JOHN MORRISON WAS ON DUTY AT THE SWITCHboard in Bronx Police Headquarters when "all the lines became busy at the same time." Plugging in, Patrolman Morrison heard a man shouting: "They're bombing New Jersey!"

"How do you know?"

"I heard it on the radio! Then I went to the roof and I could see the smoke from the bombs, drifting over toward New York. What shall I do?"

"I can see the fire from here!" screamed a Boston woman to a newspaper reporter. "I'm getting out of here! Everybody in the neighborhood is getting out of here!"

Not all listeners were terrified. A San Franciscoan roared into the telephone: "My God, where can I volunteer my services? We've got to stop this awful thing!"

In Macon, Georgia, a man hospitalized to recover from a surgical operation leapt from his bed, tearing the stitches loose, collapsed.

The city power plant at Concrete, Washington, failed at the height of the broadcast, plunging the town into darkness. To the already terrified populace, this was final proof. Many of them fled into the surrounding hills, would not return to their homes until posses had been sent for them.

A Pittsburgher entered his home in the middle of the broadcast to find his wife lutching a bottle of poison, screaming, "I'd rather die this way than like that!" He snatched away the poison, succeeded in calming her.

Weeping and hysterical women swamped the switchboard of the Providence (Rhode Island) *Journal* with requests for information about the "massacre" in New York, and the local power company was besieged with calls demanding that all lights be cut off to save the city from "the enemy."

A New Jersey man telephoned the Dixie Bus Terminal in New York to "keep your busses out of the war zone." He refused additional information, saying, "The world is coming to an end, and I have a lot to do."

In East Orange, New Jersey, a man searched frantically for gas-masks, found two of the ammonia type, useless against modern war gasses. For his wife, his mother-in-law, his three children and himself, he could find no other protection. So he loaded his shotgun. "If we could not escape the gas I was going to use the gun to kill my children," he said. "And when I found out it was only a play I wanted to kill the man responsible."

All over the eastern seaboard, hundreds of doctors and nurses telephoned police to volunteer their services for aid to the victims of the Martians' death-rays and gasses.

Officers and men of the National Guard heard that mobilization was ordered; they heard that the troops sent against the Martians were being burned to death like ants in a forest fire—yet hundreds of them telephoned New Jersey headquarters asking where they should report for duty to take their turn.

HERE FOLLOWS *the script of a historical broadcast. Nothing ever put on the air has stirred up such a tempest of both indignation and amusement. When, on the evening of October 30, Orson Welles and his Mercury Theater players stood before the mike with the script of a dramatization of a Mr. H. G. Wells novel called "The War of the Worlds," they were anxious about the public's reception because they were afraid the book was "too old-fashioned." They thought the backneyed theme of "men from Mars" might drive all their listeners away. But they forgot that the world was only two short weeks from a heart-breaking war scare, forgot that millions of Charlie McCarthy's*

listeners would tune away from him and therefore give their ears to the Mercury Theater only after the stage had been set. They reckoned without placing full value on their own acting ability and the frightening potency of the devices with which Mr. Welles had adapted "The War of the Worlds." The broadcast is history.

So, here it is . . .

ANNOUNCER: The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air in "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and Gentlemen: The director of the Mercury Theater and star of these broadcasts, Orson Welles . . .

WELLES: We know that in the early years of the twentieth century this world was being watched closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own. We know now that as human beings busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacence people went to and fro over the earth about their little affairs, serene in the assurance of their dominion over this small spinning fragment of solar driftwood which by chance or design man has inherited out of the dark mystery of time and space. Yet across an immense ethereal gulf, minds that are to our minds as ours are to the beasts in the jungle, intellects vast, cool and unsympathetic regarded this earth with envious eyes and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. In the thirty-ninth year of the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

It was near the end of October. Business was better. The war scare was over. More men were back at work. Sales were picking up. On this particular evening, October 30, the Crossley service estimated that thirty-two million people were listening in on radios.

PROGRAM FADES TO AN ANNOUNCER GIVING A WEATHER REPORT: . . . for the next twenty-four hours not much change in temperature. A slight atmospheric disturbance of undetermined origin is reported over Nova Scotia, causing a low-pressure area to move down rather

rapidly over the northeastern states, bringing a forecast of rain, accompanied by winds of light gale force. Maximum temperature 66 . . . minimum 48. This weather report comes to you from the Government Weather Bureau.

. . . We now take you to the Meridian Room in the Hotel Park Plaza in downtown New York, where you will be entertained by the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra.

(SPANISH THEME SONG . . . FADES.)

ANNOUNCER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. From the Meridian Room in the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra. With a touch of the Spanish, Ramon Raquello leads off with La Cumparsita.

(PIECE STARTS PLAYING.)

ANOTHER ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. At twenty minutes before eight, central time, Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory, Chicago, Illinois, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars. The spectroscope indicates the gas to be hydrogen and moving towards the earth with enormous velocity. Professor Pierson of the observatory at Princeton confirms Farrell's observation, and describes the phenomenon as (QUOTE) like a jet of blue flame shot from a gun. (UNQUOTE.) We now return you to the music of Ramon Raquello, playing for you in the Meridian Room of the Park Plaza Hotel, situated in downtown New York.

(MUSIC PLAYS FOR A FEW MOMENTS UNTIL PIECE ENDS . . . SOUND OF APPLAUSE)—CUE TO

Now a tune that never loses favor, the ever popular "Star Dust," Ramon Raquello and his orchestra . . . (MUSIC).

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, following on the news given in our bulletin a moment ago, the Government Meteorological Bureau has requested the large observatories of the country to keep an astronomical watch on any further disturbances occurring on the planet Mars. Due to the unusual nature of this occurrence, we have arranged an interview with the noted astronomer, Professor Pierson, who will

give us his views on this event. We are ready now to take you to the Princeton Observatory at Princeton, where Carl Phillips, our commentator, will interview Professor Richard Pierson, famous astronomer. We take you now to Princeton, New Jersey.

(There follows an interview in which Professor Pierson explains that although Mars is popularly supposed to be inhabited, it probably is not; and that it is approximately forty million miles from the earth. During the interview a message arrives from a New York scientist stating that his seismograph has registered a shock of earthquake intensity within a radius of twenty miles of Princeton. Professor Pierson is asked to investigate. The program is switched back to the New York studio.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, here is the latest bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News, Toronto, Canada. Professor Morse of Macmillan University reports observing a total of three explosions on the planet Mars, between the hours of 7:45 p.m. and 9:20 p.m. eastern standard time. This confirms earlier reports received from American observatories. Now, near home, comes a special announcement from Trenton, New Jersey. It is reported that at 8:50 p.m., a huge flaming object, believed to be a meteorite, fell on a farm in the neighborhood of Grovers Mill, New Jersey, twenty-two miles from Trenton. The flash in the sky was visible within a radius of several hundred miles and the noise of the impact was heard as far north as Elizabeth. We have dispatched a special mobile unit to the scene, and will have our commentator, Mr. Phillips, give you a word description as soon as he can reach there from Princeton. In the meantime, we take you to the Hotel Martinet in Brooklyn, where Bobby Millette and his orchestra are offering a program of dance music.

(SWING BAND FOR 20 SECONDS . . . THEN CUT.)

ANNOUNCER: We take you now to Grovers Mill, New Jersey.

(CROWD NOISES . . . POLICE SIRENS.)

PHILLIPS: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Carl Phillips again, at the Wilmuth farm, Grovers Mill, New Jersey. Professor Pierson and myself made the eleven miles from Princeton in ten minutes. Well, I . . . I hardly know where to begin, to paint for you a word-picture of the strange scene before my eyes, like something out of a

modern Arabian Nights. Well, I just got here. I haven't had a chance to look around yet. I guess that's *it*. Yes, I guess that's the . . . *thing*, directly in front of me, half buried in a vast pit. Must have struck with terrific force. The ground is covered with splinters of a tree it must have struck on its way down. What I can see of the . . . object itself doesn't look very much like a meteor, at least not the meteors I've seen. It looks more like a huge cylinder. It has a diameter of . . . what would you say, Professor Pierson?

PIERSON (OFF): About thirty yards.

PHILLIPS: About thirty yards . . . The metal on the sheath is . . . well, I've never seen anything like it. The color is sort of yellowish-white. Curious spectators now are pressing close to the object in spite of the efforts of the police to keep them back. They're getting in front of my line of vision. Would you mind standing on one side, please.

COP: One side, there. One side!

PHILLIPS: I wish I could convey the atmosphere . . . the background of this . . . fantastic scene. Hundreds of cars are parked in a field in back of us. Police are trying to rope off the roadway leading into the farm. But it's no use. They're breaking right through. Their headlights throw an enormous spot on the pit where the object's half buried. Some of the more daring souls are venturing near the edge. Their silhouettes stand out against the metal sheen.

(FAINT HUMMING SOUND.)

One man wants to touch the thing . . . he's having an argument with a policeman. The policeman wins . . . Now, ladies and gentlemen, there's something I haven't mentioned in all this excitement, but it's becoming more distinct. Perhaps you've caught it already on your radio. Listen: (LONG PAUSE) . . . Do you hear it? It's a curious humming sound that seems to come from inside the object. I'll move the microphone nearer. Here. (PAUSE) Now we're not more than twenty-five feet away. Can you hear it now? Oh, Professor Pierson!

PIERSON: Yes, Mr. Phillips?

PHILLIPS: Can you tell us the meaning of that scraping noise inside the Thing?

PIERSON: Possibly the unequal cooling of its surface.

PHILLIPS: Do you still think it's a meteor, Professor?

PIERSON: I don't know what to think. The metal casing is definitely extra-terrestrial . . . not found on this earth. Friction with the earth's atmosphere usually tears holes in a meteorite. This thing is smooth and, as you can see, of cylindrical shape.

PHILLIPS: Just a minute! Something's happening! Ladies and gentlemen, this is terrific! This end of the thing is beginning to flake off! The top is beginning to rotate like a screw! The thing must be hollow!

VOICES: She's a-movin'! Look, the darn thing's unscrewing! Keep back, there! Keep back, I tell you. Maybe there's men in it trying to escape! It's red hot, they'll burn to a cinder! Keep back there! Keep those idiots back!

(SUDDENLY THE CLANKING SOUND OF A HUGE PIECE OF FALLING METAL.)

VOICES: She's off! The top's loose! Look out there! Stand back!

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the most terrifying thing I have ever witnessed . . . Wait a minute, someone's *crawling out of the hollow top*. Someone or . . . something. I can see peering out of that black hole two luminous disks . . . are they eyes? It might be a face. It might be . . .

(SHOUT OF AWE FROM THE CROWD.)

Good heavens, something's wriggling out of the shadow like a gray snake. Now it's another one, and another. They look like tentacles to me. There, I can see the thing's body. It's large as a bear and it glistens like wet leather. But that face. It . . . it's indescribable. I can hardly force myself to keep looking at it. The eyes are black and gleam like a serpent. The mouth is V-shaped with saliva dripping from its rimless lips that seem to quiver and pulsate. The monster or whatever it is can hardly move. It seems weighed down by . . . possibly gravity or something. The thing's raising up. The crowd falls back. They've seen enough. This is the most extraordinary experience. I can't find words . . . I'm pulling this microphone with

me as I talk. I'll have to stop the description until I've taken a new position. Hold on, will you please, I'll be back in a minute.

(FADE INTO PIANO.)

ANNOUNCER: We are bringing you an eye-witness account of what's happening on the Wilmuth farm, Grovers Mill, New Jersey.

(MORE PIANO.)

We now return you to Carl Phillips at Grovers Mill.

PHILLIPS: Ladies and gentlemen (am I on?), ladies and gentlemen, here I am, back of a stone wall that adjoins Mr. Wilmuth's garden. From here I get a sweep of the whole scene. I'll give you every detail as long as I can talk. As long as I can see. More state police have arrived. They're drawing up a cordon in front of the pit, about thirty of them. No need to push the crowd back now. They're willing to keep their distance. The captain is conferring with someone. We can't quite see who. Oh yes, I believe it's Professor Pierson. Yes, it is. Now they've parted. The Professor moves around one side, studying the object, while the captain and two policemen advance with something in their hands. I can see it now. It's a white handkerchief tied to a pole . . . a flag of truce. If those creatures know what that means . . . what anything means! . . . *Wait!* Something's happening!

(HISSING SOUND FOLLOWED BY A HUMMING THAT INCREASES IN INTENSITY.)

A humped shape is rising out of the pit. I can make out a small beam of light against a mirror. What's that? There's a jet of flame springing from that mirror, and it leaps right at the advancing men. It strikes them head on! Good Lord, they're turning into flame!

(SCREAMS AND UNEARTHLY SHRIEKS.)

Now the whole field's caught fire. (EXPLOSION.) The woods . . . the barns . . . the gas tanks of automobiles . . . it's spreading everywhere. It's coming this way. About twenty yards to my right . . .

(CRASH OF MICROPHONE . . . THEN DEAD SILENCE . . .)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, due to circumstances beyond our control, we are unable to continue the broadcast from Grovers Mill. Evidently there's some difficulty with our field transmission.

However, we will return to that point at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, we have a late bulletin from San Diego, California. Professor Indellkoffer, speaking at a dinner of the California Astronomical Society, expressed the opinion that the explosions on Mars are undoubtedly nothing more than severe volcanic disturbances on the surface of the planet. We continue now with our piano interlude.

(PIANO . . . THEN CUT.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been handed a message that came in from Grovers Mill by telephone. Just a moment. At least forty people, including six state troopers, lie dead in a field east of the village of Grovers Mill, their bodies burned and distorted beyond all possible recognition. The next voice you hear will be that of Brigadier General Montgomery Smith, Commander of the State Militia at Trenton, New Jersey.

SMITH: I have been requested by the Governor of New Jersey to place the counties of Mercer and Middlesex as far west as Princeton, and east to Jamesburg, under martial law. No one will be permitted to enter this area except by special pass issued by state or military authorities. Four companies of State Militia are proceeding from Trenton to Grovers Mill, and will aid in the evacuation of homes within the range of military operations. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: You have just been listening to General Montgomery Smith commanding the State Militia at Trenton. In the meantime, further details of the catastrophe at Grovers Mill are coming in. The strange creatures, after unleashing their deadly assault, crawled back in their pit and made no attempt to prevent the efforts of the firemen to recover the bodies and extinguish the fire. Combined fire departments of Mercer County are fighting the flames, which menace the entire countryside.

We have been unable to establish any contact with our mobile unit at Grovers Mill, but we hope to be able to return you there at the earliest possible moment. In the meantime we take you—uh, just one moment, please.

(LONG PAUSE.) (WHISPER.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been informed that we have finally established communication with an eyewitness of the tragedy.

Professor Pierson has been located at a farm-house near Grovers Mill where he has established an emergency observation post. As a scientist, he will give you his explanation of the calamity. The next voice you hear will be that of Professor Pierson, brought to you by direct wire. Professor Pierson.

PIERSON: Of the creatures in the rocket cylinder at Grovers Mill, I can give you no authoritative information—either as to their nature, their origin, or their purposes here on earth. Of their destructive instrument, I might venture some conjectural explanation. For want of a better term, I shall refer to the mysterious weapon as a heat-ray. It's all too evident that these creatures have scientific knowledge far in advance of our own. It is my guess that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute nonconductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose, by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of light. That is my conjecture of the origin of the heat-ray. . . .

ANNOUNCER: Thank you, Professor Pierson. Ladies and gentlemen, here is a bulletin from Trenton. It is a brief statement informing us that the charred body of Carl Phillips has been identified in a Trenton Hospital. Now here's another bulletin from Washington, D. C. Office of the director of the National Red Cross reports ten units of Red Cross emergency workers have been assigned to the headquarters of the State Militia stationed outside of Grovers Mill, New Jersey. Here's a bulletin from State Police, Princeton Junction. The fires at Grovers Mill and vicinity now under control. Scouts report all quiet in the pit, and no sign of life appearing from the mouth of the cylinder . . . And now ladies and gentlemen, we have a special statement from Mr. Harry McDonald, vice president in charge of operations.

(Talks are then made by McDonald, stating all radio has been turned over to the State Militia. A Captain Lansing of the Signal Corps states that the situation is well in hand. His troops are advancing, seven thousand strong, against the handful of invaders and their metal cask. He concludes:)

LANSING: But wait. I see something on top of the cylinder. It's

something moving . . . solid metal . . . kind of a shieldlike affair rising up out of the cylinder. It's going higher and higher. Why, it's standing on legs . . . actually rearing up on a sort of metal framework. Now it's reaching above the trees and the searchlights are on it. Hold on.

(There follows further description of the battle between the Thing and the soldiers, the dreadful heat-ray, invincible. Then a break in his talk . . .)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following announcement, a part of the dramatization, is probably largely responsible for the panic among certain listeners, inasmuch as persons just tuning to the broadcast would have no choice but to think that they were hearing news dispatches. The added speech by the Secretary of the Interior gave a shuddery authenticity and awfulness to the "realistic" treatment.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, I have a grave announcement to make. Incredible as it may seem, both the observations of science and the evidence of our eyes lead to the inescapable assumption that those strange beings who landed in the Jersey farmlands tonight are the vanguard of an invading army from the planet Mars. The battle which took place tonight at Grovers Mill has ended in one of the most startling defeats ever suffered by an army in modern times; seven thousand men armed with rifles and machine-guns pitted against a single fighting machine of the invaders from Mars. 120 known survivors. The rest strewn over the battle area from Grovers Mill to Plainsboro, crushed and trampled to death under the metal feet of the monster, or burned to cinders by its heat-ray. The monster is now in control of the middle section of New Jersey and has effectively cut the state through its center. Communication lines are down from Pennsylvania to the Atlantic Ocean. Railroad tracks are torn and service from New York to Philadelphia discontinued, except routing some of the trains through Allentown and Phoenixville. Highways to the north, south and west are clogged with frantic human traffic. Police and army reserves are unable to control the mad flight. By morning the fugitives will have swelled Philadelphia, Camden and Trenton, it is estimated, to twice their normal population. At this time martial law prevails throughout New Jersey and eastern

Pennsylvania. We take you now to Washington for a special broadcast on the national emergency . . . the Secretary of the Interior . . .

SECRETARY: Citizens of the nation. I shall not try to conceal the gravity of the situation that confronts the country, nor the concern of your government in protecting the lives and property of its people. However, I wish to impress upon you—private citizens and public officials, all of you—the urgent need of calm and resourceful action. Fortunately, this formidable enemy is still confined to a comparatively small area, and we may place our faith in the military forces to keep them there. In the meantime, placing our faith in God, we must continue the performance of our duties each and every one of us, so that we may confront this destructive adversary with a nation united, courageous, and consecrated to the preservation of human supremacy on this earth. I thank you.

ANNOUNCER: You have just heard the Secretary of the Interior speaking from Washington. Bulletins too numerous to read are piling up in the studio here. We are informed that the central portion of New Jersey is blacked out from radio communication due to the effect of the heat-ray upon power lines and electrical equipment. Here is a special bulletin from New York. Cables received from English, French, German scientific bodies offering assistance. Astronomers report continued gas outbursts at regular intervals on planet Mars. Majority voice opinion that enemy will be reinforced by additional rocket machines. Attempts made to locate Professor Pierson of Princeton, who has observed Martians at close range. It is feared he was lost in recent battle. LANGHAM FIELD, VIRGINIA—Scouting planes report three Martian machines visible above tree-tops, moving north towards Summerville with population fleeing ahead of them. Heat-ray not in use. Although advancing at express-train speed, invaders pick their way carefully. They seem to be making conscious effort to avoid destruction of cities and countryside. However, they stop to uproot power lines, bridges, and railroad tracks. Their apparent objective is to crush resistance, paralyze communication, and disorganize human society.

Here is a bulletin from Basking Ridge, New Jersey—Coon-hunters have stumbled on a second cylinder, similar to the first, embedded in

the great swamp twenty miles south of Morristown. U. S. Army field-pieces are proceeding from Newark to blow up second invading unit before cylinder can be opened and the fighting machine rigged. They are taking up position in the foothills of Watchung Mountains. Another bulletin from Langham Field, Virginia—Scouting planes report enemy machines, now three in number, increasing speed northward, kicking over houses and trees in their evident haste to form a conjunction with their allies south of Morristown. Machines also sighted by telephone operator east of Middlesex, within ten miles of Plainfield. Here's a bulletin from Winston Field, Long Island—Fleet of army bombers carrying heavy explosives flying north in pursuit of enemy. Scouting planes act as guides. They keep speeding enemy in sight. Just a moment, please. Ladies and gentlemen, we've run special wires to the artillery line in adjacent villages to give you direct reports in the zone of the advancing enemy. First we take you to the battery of the 22nd Field Artillery, located in the Watchung Mountains.

(Listeners hear an officer giving directions to a gunner as they fire at the Martians. The Martians reply with gas which routs the army. Next voice is that of an army aviator in a plane off Bayonne, New Jersey. He is in command of eight bombers. They sight the enemy and wheel to attack. The Martians spray them with flame, annihilating them. The play switches to various radio operators giving news of the attack, news of the Martians advancing on New York, then fades to an announcer back in New York.)

ANNOUNCER: I'm speaking from the roof of Broadcasting Building, New York City. The bells you hear are ringing to warn the people to evacuate the city as the Martians approach. Estimated in last two hours, three million people have moved out along the roads to the north Hutchison River Parkway, still kept open for motor traffic. Avoid bridges to Long Island . . . hopelessly jammed. All communication with Jersey shore closed ten minutes ago. No more defenses. Our army wiped out . . . artillery, air force, everything wiped out. This may be the last broadcast. We'll stay here to the end . . . People are holding service below us . . . in the cathedral.

(VOICES SINGING HYMN.)

Now I look down the harbor. All manner of boats, overloaded with fleeing population, pulling out from docks.

(SOUND OF BOAT WHISTLES.)

Streets are all jammed. Noise in crowds like New Year's Eve in city. Wait a minute . . . Enemy now in sight above the Palisades. Five great machines. First one is crossing river. I can see it from here, wading the Hudson like a man wading through a brook . . . A bulletin's handed me . . . Martian cylinders are falling all over the country. One outside Buffalo, one in Chicago, St. Louis . . . seem to be timed and spaced . . . Now the first machine reaches the shore. He stands watching, looking over the city. His steel, cowlish head is even with the skyscrapers. He waits for the others. They rise like a line of new towers on the city's West Side . . . Now they're lifting their metal hands. This is the end now. Smoke comes out . . . black smoke, drifting over the city. People in the streets see it now. They're running towards the East River . . . thousands of them, dropping in like rats. Now the smoke's spreading faster. It's reached Times Square. People trying to run away from it, but it's no use. They're falling like flies. Now the smoke's crossing Sixth Avenue . . . Fifth Avenue . . . 100 yards away . . . it's fifty feet . . .

VOICE OF RADIO OPERATOR: 2X2L calling CQ. 2X2L calling CQ. 2X2L calling CQ . . . New York: Isn't there anyone on the air? Isn't there anyone . . . 2X2L——

(MIDDLE BREAK)

ANNOUNCER: You are listening to a CBS presentation of Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air in an original dramatization of "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells. The performance will continue after a brief intermission.

This is the COLUMBIA . . . BROADCASTING SYSTEM.

ANNOUNCER: "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells, starring Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air . . .

(MUSIC.)

(At this point, after approximately thirty minutes of broadcasting, the mischief had been done. Listeners were in panic, police stations

were besieged, eastern telephone exchanges were jammed, New Jersey highways were a shambles. Not in our time has any misunderstanding spread with such prairie-fire rapidity. From this time on, sensible listeners were quick to perceive that the words they were hearing was not news but fiction.)

PIERSON: As I set down these notes on paper, I'm obsessed by the thought that I may be the last living man on earth. I have been hiding in this empty house near Grovers Mill—a small island of daylight cut off by the black smoke from the rest of the world. I look down at my blackened hands, my torn shoes, my tattered clothes, and I try to connect them with a professor who lives at Princeton and who on the night of October 20, glimpsed through his telescope an orange splash of light on a distant planet. In writing down my daily life I tell myself I shall preserve human history between the dark covers of this little book . . . But to write I must live, and to live I must eat . . . I find moldy bread in the kitchen, and an orange not too spoiled to swallow. I keep watch at the window. From time to time I catch sight of a Martian above the black smoke.

Exhausted by terror, I fall asleep . . . It's morning. Sun streams in the window. The black cloud of gas has lifted. I venture from the house. No traffic. Here and there a wrecked car. I push on north. Next day I came to a city vaguely familiar in its contours, yet its buildings strangely dwarfed and levelled off, as if a giant had sliced off its highest towers with a capricious sweep of his hand. I found Newark, undemolished but humbled by some whim of the advancing Martians. Presently, with an odd feeling of being watched, I caught sight of something crouching in a doorway. I made a step towards it, and it rose up and became a man—a man, armed with a large knife.

STRANGER: Stop . . . Where did you come from?

PIERSON: I come from . . . many places. A long time ago from Princeton. Have you seen any Martians?

STRANGER: They've gone over to New York. At night the sky is alive with their lights. Just as if people were still living in it. By

daylight you can't see them. Five days ago a couple of them carried something big across the flats from the airport. I believe they're learning how to fly.

PIERSON: Then it's all over with humanity. Stranger, there's still you and I. Two of us left.

(They talk, the professor and the stranger. The stranger is an ex-artilleryman. He has thought it all out. He realizes that men don't know enough to fight the Martians but they can learn. He outlines his plans to live underground in the subways and in the tunnels where the Martians cannot find them, studying, learning. Then, when he gets enough good men together, they'll steal some of the Martians' own machines and turn the heat-ray guns on the Martians and wipe them out. But Professor Pierson wants none of that plan. He walks on through Holland Tunnel, under the Hudson, and arrives in New York City.)

I reached Fourteenth Street, and there again were black powder and several bodies, and an evil, ominous smell from the gratings of the cellars of some of the houses. I wandered up through the Thirties and Forties; I stood alone on Times Square. I caught sight of a lean dog running down Seventh Avenue with a piece of dark-brown meat in his jaws, and a pack of starving mongrels at his heels. He made a wide circle around me, as though he feared I might prove a fresh competitor. I walked up Broadway in the direction of that strange powder —past silent shop windows, displaying their mute wares to empty sidewalks—past the Capitol Theatre, silent, dark—past a shooting-gallery, where a row of empty guns faced an arrested line of wooden ducks. Near Columbus Circle I noticed models of 1939 motor cars in the show-rooms facing empty streets. From over the top of the General Motors Building, I watched a flock of black birds circling in the sky. I hurried on. Suddenly I caught sight of the hood of a Martian machine, standing somewhere in Central Park, gleaming in the late afternoon sun. An insane idea! I rushed recklessly across Columbus Circle and into the park. I climbed a small hill above the pond at 60th Street. From there I could see, standing in a silent row along the Mall, nineteen of those great metal Titans, their cowls empty, their steel arms hanging listlessly by their sides. I looked in vain for

the monsters that inhabit those machines. Suddenly my eyes were attracted to the immense flock of black birds that hovered directly below me. They circled to the ground, and there before my eyes, stark and silent, lay the Martians, with the hungry birds pecking and tearing brown shreds of flesh from their dead bodies. Later, when their bodies were examined in laboratories, it was found that they were killed by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared . . . slain after all man's defenses had failed, by the humblest thing that God in his wisdom put upon this earth.

Before the cylinder fell there was a general persuasion that through all the deep of space no life existed beyond the petty surface of our minute sphere. Now we see further. Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed-bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of sidereal space. But that is a remote dream. It may be that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us is the future ordained perhaps.

Strange it now seems to sit in my peaceful study at Princeton writing down this last chapter of the record begun at a deserted farm in Grovers Mill. Strange to see from my window the university spires dim and blue through an April haze. Strange to watch children playing in the streets. Strange to see young people strolling on the green, where the new spring grass heals the last black scars of a bruised earth. Strange to watch the sight-seers enter the museum where the dissembled parts of a Martian machine are kept on public view.

* * *

WELLES: This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen, out of character to assure you that THE WAR OF THE WORLDS has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be. The Mercury Theater's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying Boo! Starting now, we couldn't soap all your windows and steal all your garden gates by tomorrow night . . . so we did the best next thing. We annihilated the world before your very ears and utterly destroyed the Columbia Broadcasting System. You will be relieved, I hope, to learn that we didn't mean it,

and that both institutions are still open for business. So good-by, everybody, and remember, please, for the next day or so, the terrible lesson you learned tonight. That grinning, glowing, globular invader of your living-room is an inhabitant of the pumpkin patch, and if your doorbell rings and nobody's there, that was no Martian . . . it's Hallowe'en.

(CLOSING)

ANNOUNCER: Tonight the Columbia Broadcasting System, and its affiliated stations Coast to Coast, has brought you "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells . . . the seventeenth in its weekly series of dramatic broadcasts featuring Orson Welles and the Mercury Theater on the Air.

THE SOUL OF LAPLOSHKA

H. H. Munro ("Saki")

LAPLOSHKA WAS ONE OF THE MEANEST MEN I HAVE EVER MET, and quite one of the most entertaining. He said horrid things about other people in such a charming way that one forgave him for the equally horrid things he said about oneself behind one's back. Hating anything in the way of ill-natured gossip ourselves, we are always grateful to those who do it for us and do it well. And Laploshka did it really well.

Naturally Laploshka had a large circle of acquaintances, and as he exercised some care in their selection it followed that an appreciable proportion were men whose bank balances enabled them to acquiesce indulgently in his rather one-sided views on hospitality. Thus, although possessed of only moderate means, he was able to live comfortably within his income and still more comfortably within those of various tolerantly disposed associates.

But towards the poor or to those of the same limited resources as himself his attitude was one of watchful anxiety; he seemed to be haunted by a besetting fear lest some fraction of a shilling or franc, or whatever the prevailing coinage might be, should be diverted from his pocket or service into that of a hard-up companion. A two-franc cigar would be cheerfully offered to a wealthy patron, on the principle of doing evil that good may come; but I have known him indulge in agonies of perjury rather than admit the incriminating possession of a copper coin when change was needed to tip a waiter. The coin would have been duly returned at the earliest opportunity—he would have taken means to ensure against forgetfulness on the part of the borrower—but accidents might happen, and even the temporary estrangement from his penny or sou was a calamity to be avoided.

The knowledge of this amiable weakness offered a perpetual temptation to play upon Laploshka's fears of involuntary generosity. To offer him a lift in a cab and pretend not to have enough money to pay the fare, to fluster him with a request for a sixpence when his hand was full of silver just received in change, these were a few of the petty torments that ingenuity prompted as occasion afforded. To do justice to Laploshka's resourcefulness it must be admitted that he always emerged somehow or other from the most embarrassing dilemma without in any way compromising his reputation for saying "No." But the gods send opportunities at some time to most men, and mine came one evening when Laploshka and I were supping together in a cheap boulevard restaurant. (Except when he was the bidden guest of some one with an irreproachable income, Laploshka was wont to curb his appetite for high living; on such fortunate occasions he let it go on an easy snaffle.) At the conclusion of the meal a somewhat urgent message called me away, and without heeding my companion's agitated protest, I called back cruelly, "Pay my share; I'll settle with you tomorrow." Early on the morrow Laploshka hunted me down by instinct as I walked along a side street that I hardly ever frequented. He had the air of a man who had not slept.

"You owe me two francs from last night," was his breathless greeting.

I spoke evasively of the situation in Portugal, where more trouble seemed brewing. But Laploshka listened with the abstraction of the deaf adder, and quickly returned to the subject of the two francs.

"I'm afraid I must owe it to you," I said lightly and brutally. "I haven't a sou in the world," and I added mendaciously, "I'm going away for six months or perhaps longer."

Laploshka said nothing, but his eyes bulged a little and his cheeks took on the mottled hues of an ethnographical map of the Balkan Peninsula. That same day, at sundown, he died. "Failure of the heart's action" was the doctor's verdict; but I, who knew better, knew that he had died of grief.

There arose the problem of what to do with his two francs. To have killed Laploshka was one thing; to have kept his beloved money would have argued a callousness of feeling of which I am not capable.

The ordinary solution, of giving it to the poor, would by no means fit the present situation, for nothing would have distressed the dead man more than such a misuse of his property. On the other hand, the bestowal of two francs on the rich was an operation which called for some tact. An easy way out of the difficulty seemed, however, to present itself the following Sunday, as I was wedged into the cosmopolitan crowd which filled the side-aisle of one of the most popular Paris churches. A collecting-bag, for "the poor of Monsieur le Curé," was buffeting its tortuous way across the seemingly impenetrable human sea, and a German in front of me, who evidently did not wish his appreciation of the magnificent music to be marred by a suggestion of payment, made audible criticisms to his companion on the claims of the said charity.

"They do not want money," he said; "they have too much money. They have no poor. They are all pampered."

If that were really the case my way seemed clear. I dropped Laploshka's two francs into the bag with a murmured blessing on the rich of Monsieur le Curé.

Some three weeks later chance had taken me to Vienna, and I sat one evening regaling myself in a humble but excellent little Gasthaus up in the Währinger quarter. The appointments were primitive, but the Schnitzel, the beer, and the cheese could not have been improved on. Good cheer brought good custom, and with the exception of one small table near the door every place was occupied. Half-way through my meal I happened to glance in the direction of that empty seat, and saw that it was no longer empty. Poring over the bill of fare with the absorbed scrutiny of one who seeks the cheapest among the cheap was Laploshka. Once he looked across at me, with a comprehensive glance at my repast, as though to say, "It is my two francs you are eating," and then looked swiftly away. Evidently the poor of Monsieur le Curé had been genuine poor. The Schnitzel turned to leather in my mouth, the beer seemed tepid; I left the Emmenthaler untasted. My one idea was to get away from the room, away from the table where *that* was seated; and as I fled I felt Laploshka's reproachful eyes watching the amount that I gave to the piccolo—out of his two francs. I lunched next day at an expensive restaurant which I felt sure that the living

Laploshka would never have entered on his own account, and I hoped that the dead Laploshka would observe the same barriers. I was not mistaken, but as I came out I found him miserably studying the bill of fare stuck up on the portals. Then he slowly made his way over to a milk-hall. For the first time in my experience I missed the charm and gaiety of Vienna life.

After that, in Paris or London or wherever I happened to be, I continued to see a good deal of Laploshka. If I had a seat in a box at a theatre I was always conscious of his eyes furtively watching me from the dim recesses of the gallery. As I turned into my club on a rainy afternoon I would see him taking inadequate shelter in a doorway opposite. Even if I indulged in the modest luxury of a penny chair in the Park he generally confronted me from one of the free benches, never staring at me, but always elaborately conscious of my presence. My friends began to comment on my changed looks, and advised me to leave off heaps of things. I should have liked to have left off Laploshka.

On a certain Sunday—it was probably Easter, for the crush was worse than ever—I was again wedged into the crowd listening to the music in the fashionable Paris church, and again the collection-bag was buffeting its way across the human sea. An English lady behind me was making ineffectual efforts to convey a coin into the still distant bag, so I took the money at her request and helped it forward to its destination. It was a two-franc piece. A swift inspiration came to me, and I merely dropped my own sou into the bag and slid the silver coin into my pocket. I had withdrawn Laploshka's two francs from the poor, who should never have had that legacy. As I backed away from the crowd I heard a woman's voice say, "I don't believe he put my money in the bag. There are swarms of people in Paris like that!" But my mind was lighter than it had been for a long time.

The delicate mission of bestowing the retrieved sum on the deserving rich still confronted me. Again I trusted to the inspiration of accident, and again fortune favoured me. A shower drove me, two days later, into one of the historic churches on the left bank of the Seine, and there I found, peering at the old wood-carvings, the Baron R., one of the wealthiest and most shabbily dressed men in Paris. It

was now or never. Putting a strong American inflection into the French which I usually talked with an unmistakable British accent, I catechized the Baron as to the date of the church's building, its dimensions, and other details which an American tourist would be certain to want to know. Having acquired such information as the Baron was able to impart on short notice, I solemnly placed the two-franc piece in his hand, with the hearty assurance that it was "pour vous," and turned to go. The Baron was slightly taken aback, but accepted the situation with a good grace. Walking over to a small box fixed in the wall, he dropped Laploshka's two francs into the slot. Over the box was the inscription, "Pour les pauvres de M. le Curé."

That evening, at the crowded corner by the Café de la Paix, I caught a fleeting glimpse of Laploshka. He smiled, slightly raised his hat, and vanished. I never saw him again. After all, the money had been *given* to the deserving rich, and the soul of Laploshka was at peace.

"NO TROUBLE AT ALL"

Ludwig Bemelmans

THE WORLD IS FULL OF MAÎTRES D'HÔTEL, MANY OF WHOM ARE able, well-informed men. But only one in a hundred thousand is blessed with that rarest, most priceless of qualities so generously evident in Gabriel, the Maître of the Cocofinger Palace Hotel in New York.

We see this peculiar talent in his profile, behind the ear, under "Detail and Executive Ability." It is the faculty of "Anticipation," an astral clairvoyance with which to sense catastrophe, anywhere in the wide realm of his authority. Not only to feel it ahead, but to prepare for it and minimize the effect thereof.

One more look and it is evident to anyone why, with such talents, Gabriel has come up, up, up, from the position of third piccolo at the humble "King Wenceslaus" in Przemysl, through the pantries and over the red carpets of Madame Sacher's, the Negresco, Shepheard's, the Meurice, Claridge's, up to the golden doors of the restaurant of the hotel of hotels—the Cocofinger Palace Hotel in New York.

Gabriel smokes Dimitrinos, he has ten dozen shirts, Lobb makes his boots, he is driven in a Minerva, thinks in French, his hats come from Habig in Vienna, and both Noel Coward and Cole Porter have asked him who builds his fine tail-coats.

To his many subordinates, he speaks through his assistant, one Hector de Malherbes, who at one time worked for Max Reinhardt. (This temperamental aesthetic experience has fitted Malherbes most admirably for his present position.) Between the Maître and Malherbes is perfect, wordless understanding.

Never was proof positive of Gabriel's great talents and of the mute

felicity of Malherbes more clearly demonstrated than on the night and day of February the twenty-fifth, 1937.

On that Thursday at three-fifteen in the afternoon, when the last luncheon guest had left, Gabriel leaned on his desk with its seven drawers, one for each day of the week, and nodded gently to Malherbes. Malherbes bent down to the drawer *Jeudi*—because it was Thursday—and took from it a salmon-colored folder with a sulphur label, on which was written, "Birthday Party, February 25, 1937, Mrs. George Washington Kelly."

Gabriel carried the folder up to his room, Malherbes bowed and left. In his room, Gabriel took off his fine tail-coat, which was rounded from much bowing, hung it up, sat on his bed, and carefully unfolded the bills that five-, ten-, and one-dollar patrons had pressed into his hand. He added them up and entered into a little crimson book, "February 25, *Déjeuner,* $56." Then he took off his boots, leaned back into the pillows, stretched his toes in the sheer, black Sulka silk socks, and opened the salmon-colored folder.

Madame George Washington Kelly was a difficult and exacting client.

The Italian waiters called her *bestia,* the French *canaille,* and the Germans *die alte Sau*. She had a desperate countenance, partly concealed by a veil; behind this, her face shone the color of indigo. Her skin had the texture of volcanic rock seen from the air, with dirty snow swept into the crevices.

She dressed with complete immunity to fashion, except for the Beaux Arts Ball. On the night of that elaborate *affaire,* she had come with her friend, the "Spirit of the Midnight Sun," and together they had engaged the rooms and made the preliminary plans for this birthday party, of which Malherbes had said to Gabriel in *sotto voce* French, "It is not a birthday party—it is a centennial celebration." Gabriel had stared him into silence.

After many more visits and consultations with architects, stage designers, and florists, Madame had decided to build, at one end of the ballroom, a replica of her Miami retreat, "O Sole Mio," in its original noble dimensions. This was to be set among hibiscus, poinciana, and orange trees in bloom, surrounded by forty-foot royal palm

trees and fronted by wide terraces. Cutting through the center of the room, from the terraces on the north to a magnificent flight of stairs on the south, ran the lagoon, filled with real water, and in this water was to float the genuine gondola which Mr. George Washington Kelly had brought as a souvenir from Venice and taken all the way to Miami. The stairs on the north end rose to a balcony; from there, a birthday cake was to be carried down, placed on the gondola, and rowed across to Sole Mio, where Mrs. Kelly's own darkies would bring it to her table to be cut.

The gondola was in Miami, also the royal palms, also the four white-haired darkies, brothers named Morandus. The Fire Department had sent a captain to study the position of the hydrants and windows, to connect a pumping-truck, and to fill the lagoon, which, it was estimated, would take fourteen hours.

To do all this properly, the complete entertaining facilities of the hotel had been rented for the three days preceding the party and for an additional two following it, to clear away the debris.

Since Monday morning, the house was filled with drafts from open doors and windows, tall ladders, and empty smilax crates. Careless carpenters, careless stage-hands, careless plumbers and florists, ruined the peace and the carpets of the hotel with hammering, riveting, and soldering together the two-hundred-foot tank. Following on the heels of the plumbers came the painters, who painted the sides of the lagoon emerald-green and a pattern of underwater scenery on its bottom. An eminent artist from Coral Gables supervised this.

The menu for this party was dictated by Madame herself, without benefit of Gabriel's advice. It was in the tradition of her entertainments and composed itself—at twelve dollars a cover for four hundred guests—of the following: *Caviar aux Blinis, Bortsch, Homard Sole Mio, Faisan Miami, Purée de Marrons, Pommes Soufflées, Salade Georges et Marthe, Bombe Washington, Café.*

For the one thousand five hundred additional guests for supper, she had chosen an equally unfortunate repast. This, at five dollars a cover, consisted of *Velouté Marthe aux Croûtons, Poussin en Cocotte Washington, Nouilles Polonaise, Petits Pois Parisienne, Bombe Sole Mio aux Fraises Cardinal, Gâteaux Georges, Café.*

Breakfast was to be served from four o'clock on, at one dollar and fifty cents per person. Provision was also made for eighty musicians' suppers, suppers for chauffeurs, maids, the secretaries at the door, and the announcer and detectives, at one dollar per person.

Cocktails were to be served during the reception: a fantastic, violent drink of Madame's own invention, named "High Diddle," the secret formula for which Madame fortunately gave to no one. Closely guarded, her trusty darkies—the Morandi—were to mix this, bringing most of the ingredients themselves.

After Gabriel had read the papers and made several notes, he rose, looked into a mirror, and took a loose smoking-jacket from his closet. He slipped on a pair of white gloves and walked below. Malherbes was waiting for him. It was six o'clock.

Gabriel nodded, and his assistant followed him with a silver pencil and a morocco portfolio.

They walked through the kitchen, where the cooks fished red lobsters out of steaming casseroles and chopped them in half. From there they went on to the cellar—here, men broke open cases of *cordon rouge* 1921, at eleven dollars a bottle, put them away in tubs, and stood them on top of one another. From here, they walked up to the ballroom proper. The tables, seating eight guests each, were set to the left and right of the lagoon. Sole Mio was finished, and, on the lower terraces in front of it—as indicated on the plan—was the crescent-shaped table, facing the room. Here, Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly and their son, George Washington Kelly, Jr., as well as their most intimate friends, were to sit.

Two painters were busy pouring and stirring fifty gallons of turquoise ink into the lagoon, to give it the precise color of the waters in Miami. The Coral Gables artist had left with them a sample of that shade on a piece of water-color paper, and, from time to time, they compared this and then added more ink. Up on the balcony of Sole Mio, two electricians were focusing spot-lights across the room, up to the magenta curtain on the other side.

From the street could be heard the last *"Poooommmph,"* *"Puuuuuuumph,"* *"Poomph"* of the Fire Department pumping-truck. The lagoon was filled.

Gabriel, walking into the hall, saw the last of twenty royal palms—in tubs, with their leaves carefully bandaged—being carried upstairs, and below from the street appeared the neck of the Venetian gondola.

The great Maître nodded to Malherbes. Malherbes ran down to the door and told the men: "Watch out for the paint, you." Later on, in the office, Malherbes made certain that a gondolier had been engaged. Yes, he had. He was to report at the ballroom in costume, with a knowledge of how to row a gondola and ability to sing "*O Sole Mio.*"

Gabriel went back to his room, lit a cigarette, and rested in his bath for half an hour. Then he dressed.

As on every evening, so now he received the dinner guests of the hotel at the door of the restaurant.

Madame George Washington Kelly's party over in the ballroom was in the able hands of his third assistant, Monsieur Rudi, a withered, one-time stable-boy of Prince Esterházy.

At regular intervals, a courier crossed from the ballroom and whispered to Malherbes, "The guests are arriving." Then again, "The cocktails are being passed." After this, "The guests are entering the ballroom." Then, "Madame George Washington Kelly is very pleased," and on to "The guests are sitting down," and "The soup is being served." These bulletins were translated into French by Malherbes and whispered on to Gabriel, who nodded.

Dinner was almost over in the restaurant when Gabriel went into a little side room, where, on a table behind a screen, a plain meal was prepared for him. It consisted of some cold pheasant, cut from the bones, field salad with lemon dressing, and a plain compote of black cherries cooked without sugar. In ice under the table was his favorite wine, an elegant, slim bottle of Steinberger Kabinett, Preussische Staatsdomäne, 1921.

In the middle of his meal, before he had touched the great wine, Gabriel rose abruptly and quickly walked across the restaurant. Malherbes, who had eaten out in the second little room, swallowed quickly and followed him. Almost running, they crossed the entrance-hall of the ballroom and went up the staircase, to the third palm.

Gabriel stopped and beside him, as always, stopped Hector de

Malherbes. The dessert had just been served, the remnants of the *Bombe Washington* were being carried from the room by the waiters, and, as set forth in the sheet of instructions, the lights were lowered.

Two heralds sounded the *Aida* theme as a command to silence and attention.

The heavy magenta curtains sailed back, and high above the audience appeared the birthday cake. It was magnificent, of generous proportions, and truly beautiful. The masterpiece of Brillat Bonafou, *Chef Pâtissier* of the Cocofinger Palace Hotel, twice the winner of the Médaille d'Or de la Société Culinaire de Paris, Founder and President of the Institut des Chefs Pâtissiers de France. In weeks of patient, sensitive, loving labor, he had built a monument of sugar, tier upon tier, ten feet high, of raisin and almond cake. Of classic simplicity, yet covered with innumerable ornaments that depicted scenes from a happy sporting life. Up and down the sides of the cake, dozens of cherubim were busy carrying ribbons; these—Bordeaux and emerald —represented the racing colors of the G. W. K. stables.

But the most wonderful part of the wonderful cake was its top. There, complete in all details, stood a miniature replica of O Sole Mio, correct as to palms, orange trees, the lagoon, the gondola. Under the portico, an inch high, smiling, hand in hand stood Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly: Madame with a bouquet of roses, Monsieur with his ever-present cigar, an Hoyo de Monterrey, at the end of which was a microscopic tuft of cotton.

That was, however, not all. Over the miniature Sole Mio hovered a brace of doves. In their beaks, most artfully held, were electric wires, so arranged that flashing on and off they spelled first "George" and then "Martha." "George" in green, "Martha" in red. Five lady midgets, dressed as the Quintuplets, carried the cake downstairs in the light of the amber spot-lights.

The Hawaiians played "Happy Birthday to You, Happy Birthday to You." Everyone sang, and all eyes were moist.

The gondolier started to punt down the lagoon to receive the cake.

At that moment, with all eyes upon them, one of the Quintuplets, Yvonne, stepped on an olive pit, and turned her ankle. The cake

trembled, swayed, and fell into the lagoon, taking the midgets with it. *"Ffsssssss-hss,"* went the electric wires.

But where was Gabriel?

He stood under the royal palm and nodded quietly to Malherbes. Malherbes lifted one finger and looked up at the man with the spotlight.

The amber light left the lagoon and raced up the stairs. Out came the trumpeters again and sounded the *Aida* theme, the curtain swung open once more, again the Hawaiians played "Happy Birthday to You, Happy Birthday to You."

As if the last dreadful minutes had never been on the watches of this world, there appeared to the unbelieving eyes of Monsieur and Madame George Washington Kelly and their guests and friends—THE CAKE again, unharmed, made with equal devotion, again the work of Brillat Bonafou, identically perfect and complete, with the scenes of the happy life, the cherubim, cigar and smoke, lagoon and gondola, doves, lights flashing the names in green and red, and carried on the shoulders of a new set of Quintuplets.

The miserable first set of midgets swam to the shore of the lagoon, scrambled out, and tried to leave the ballroom in the shade of the tables.

Gabriel hissed *"Imbéciles!"* to Malherbes. Malherbes hissed *"Imbéciles!"* down to the midgets.

The new cake was rowed across, besung, carried to the table, cut, and served. Not until then did the great maître d'hôtel leave the protecting shadow of the royal palm. Now he walked quietly, unseen, to his room, for, in spite of possessing every talent, and besides the gift of "Anticipation," Gabriel was a very modest man.

WELSH INCIDENT

Robert Graves

"BUT THAT WAS NOTHING TO WHAT THINGS CAME OUT
From the sea-caves of Criccieth yonder."
"What were they? Mermaids, dragons, ghosts?"
"Nothing at all of any things like that."
"What were they then?"
"All sorts of queer things,
Things never seen or heard or written about,
Various, extravagant, utterly peculiar,
Things. O solid enough they seemed to touch,
Had anyone dared it. Marvellous creation,
All strangest shapes, sizes and sizelessnesses,
All new, each perfectly unlike his neighbor,
Though all came moving slowly out together."
"Describe just one of them."
"I am unable."
"What were their colours?"
"Mostly nameless colours,
Colours you'd like to see; but one was blue
Or perhaps more like yellow, but not greenish.
Some had no color."
"Tell me, had they legs?"
"Not a leg or foot among them that I saw."
"But did these things come out in any order?
What o'clock was it? What was the day of the week?
Who else was present? What was the weather?"
"I was coming to that. It was half-past three
On Easter Tuesday last, the sun was shining,

The Harlech Silver Band played *Marchog Jesu*
On thirty-seven shimmering instruments,
Collecting for Carnarvon's (Fever) Hospital Fund.
The populations of Pwlheli, Criccieth,
Portmadoc, Borth, Tremadoc, Penrhyndeudraeth,
Were all assembled. Criccieth's mayor addressed them
First in good Welsh and then in fluent English,
Twisting his fingers in his chain of office,
Welcoming the things. They came out on the sand,
Not keeping time to the band, moving seaward
Silently, at a snail's pace. But, at last
The most odd indescribable thing of all
Which hardly one man there could see for strangeness
Did something recognizably a something."
"Well, what?"
"It made a noise."
"A frightening noise?"
"No, no."
"A musical noise? A scuffling noise?"
"No, a loud belch, so resonant and rumbling
It robbed the hospital of five hundred pounds."
"What did the mayor do?"
"I was coming to that."

THE ANGRY STREET: A BAD DREAM

G. K. Chesterton

I CANNOT REMEMBER WHETHER THIS TALE IS TRUE OR NOT. IF I read it through very carefully I have a suspicion that I should come to the conclusion that it is not. But, unfortunately, I cannot read it through very carefully, because, you see, it is not written yet. The image and idea of it clung to me through a great part of my boyhood; I may have dreamt it before I could talk; or told it to myself before I could read; or read it before I could remember. On the whole, however, I am certain that I did not read it, for children have very clear memories about things like that; and of the books of which I was really fond I can still remember, not only the shape and bulk and binding, but even the position of the printed words on many of the pages. On the whole, I incline to the opinion that it happened to me before I was born.

At any rate, let us tell the story now with all the advantages of the atmosphere that has clung to it. You may suppose me, for the sake of argument, sitting at lunch in one of those quick-lunch restaurants in the City where men take their food so fast that it has none of the quality of food, and take their half-hour's vacation so fast that it has none of the qualities of leisure; to hurry through one's leisure is the most unbusiness-like of actions. They all wore tall shiny hats as if they could not lose an instant even to hang them on a peg, and they all had one eye a little off, hypnotised by the huge eye of the clock. In short, they were the slaves of the modern bondage, you could hear their fetters clanking. Each was, in fact, bound by a chain; the heaviest chain ever tied to a man—it is called a watch-chain.

Now, among these there entered and sat down opposite to me a

man who almost immediately opened an uninterrupted monologue. He was like all the other men in dress, yet he was startlingly opposite to them all in manner. He wore a high shiny hat and a long frock coat, but he wore them as such solemn things were meant to be worn; he wore the silk hat as if it were a mitre, and the frock coat as if it were the ephod of a high priest. He not only hung his hat up on the peg, but he seemed (such was his stateliness) almost to ask permission of the hat for doing so, and to apologise to the peg for making use of it. When he had sat down on a wooden chair with the air of one considering its feelings and given a sort of slight stoop or bow to the wooden table itself, as if it were an altar, I could not help some comment springing to my lips. For the man was a big, sanguine-faced, prosperous-looking man, and yet he treated everything with a care that almost amounted to nervousness.

For the sake of saying something to express my interest I said, "This furniture is fairly solid; but, of course, people do treat it much too carelessly."

As I looked up doubtfully my eye caught his, and was fixed as his was fixed in an apocalyptic stare. I had thought him ordinary as he entered, save for his strange, cautious manner; but if the other people had seen him then they would have screamed and emptied the room. They did not see him, and they went on making a clatter with their forks, and a murmur with their conversation. But the man's face was the face of a maniac.

"Did you mean anything particular by that remark?" he asked at last, and the blood crawled back slowly into his face.

"Nothing whatever," I answered. "One does not mean anything here; it spoils people's digestions."

He limped back and wiped his broad forehead with a big handkerchief; and yet there seemed to be a sort of regret in his relief.

"I thought perhaps," he said in a low voice, "that another of them had gone wrong."

"If you mean another digestion gone wrong," I said, "I never heard of one here that went right. This is the heart of the Empire, and the other organs are in an equally bad way."

"No, I mean another street gone wrong," and he said heavily and

quietly, "but as I suppose that doesn't explain much to you, I think I shall have to tell you the story. I do so with all the less responsibility, because I know you won't believe it. For forty years of my life I invariably left my office, which is in Leadenhall Street, at half-past five in the afternoon, taking with me an umbrella in the right hand and a bag in the left hand. For forty years two months and four days I passed out of the side office door, walked down the street on the left-hand side, took the first turning to the left and the third to the right, from where I bought an evening paper, followed the road on the right-hand side round two obtuse angles, and came out just outside a Metropolitan station, where I took a train home. For forty years two months and four days I fulfilled this course by accumulated habit: it was not a long street that I traversed, and it took me about four and a half minutes to do it. After forty years two months and four days, on the fifth day I went out in the same manner, with my umbrella in the right hand and my bag in the left, and I began to notice that walking along the familiar street tired me somewhat more than usual. At first I thought I must be breathless and out of condition; though this, again, seemed unnatural, as my habits had always been like clockwork. But after a little while I became convinced that the road was distinctly on a more steep incline than I had known previously; I was positively panting uphill. Owing to this no doubt the corner of the street seemed further off than usual; and when I turned it I was convinced that I had turned down the wrong one. For now the street shot up quite a steep slant, such as one only sees in the hilly parts of London, and in this part there were no hills at all. Yet it was not the wrong street; the name written on it was the same; the shuttered shops were the same; the lampposts and the whole look of the perspective was the same; only it was tilted upwards like a lid. Forgetting any trouble about breathlessness or fatigue I ran furiously forward, and reached the second of my accustomed turnings, which ought to bring me almost within sight of the station. And as I turned that corner I nearly fell on the pavement. For now the street went up straight in front of my face like a steep staircase or the side of a pyramid. There was not for miles round that place so much as a slope like that of Ludgate Hill. And this was a slope like that of the Matter-

horn. The whole street had lifted itself like a single wave, and yet every speck and detail of it was the same, and I saw in the high distance, as at the top of an Alpine pass, picked out in pink letters the name over my paper shop.

"I ran on and on blindly now, passing all the shops, and coming to a part of the road where there was a long grey row of private houses. I had, I know not why, an irrational feeling that I was on a long iron bridge in empty space. An impulse seized me, and I pulled up the iron trap of a coal-hole. Looking down through it I saw empty space and the stairs.

"When I looked up again a man was standing in his front garden, having apparently come out of his house; he was leaning over the railings and gazing at me. We were all alone on that nightmare road; his face was in shadow; his dress was dark and ordinary; but when I saw him standing so perfectly still I knew somehow that he was not of this world. And the stars behind his head were larger and fiercer than ought to be endured by the eyes of men.

" 'If you are a kind angel,' I said, 'or a wise devil, or have anything in common with mankind, tell me what is this street possessed of devils.'

"After a long silence he said, 'What do you say that it is?'

" 'It is Bumpton Street, of course,' I snapped. 'It goes to Oldgate Station.'

" 'Yes,' he admitted gravely; 'it goes there sometimes. Just now, however, it is going to heaven.'

" 'To heaven?' I said. 'Why?'

" 'It is going to heaven for justice,' he replied. 'You must have treated it badly. Remember always that there is one thing that cannot be endured by anybody or anything. That one unendurable thing is to be overworked and also neglected. For instance, you can overwork women—everybody does. But you can't neglect women—I defy you to. At the same time, you can neglect tramps and gypsies and all the apparent refuse of the State so long as you do not overwork it. But no beast of the field, no horse, no dog can endure long to be asked to do more than his work and yet have less than his honour. It is the same with streets. You have worked this street to death, and yet

you have never remembered its existence. If you had had a healthy democracy, even of pagans, they would have hung this street with garlands and given it the name of a god. Then it would have gone quietly. But at last the street has grown tired of your tireless insolence; and it is bucking and rearing its head to heaven. Have you never sat on a bucking horse?'

"I looked at the long grey street, and for a moment it seemed to me to be exactly like the long grey neck of a horse flung up to heaven. But in a moment my sanity returned, and I said, 'But this is all nonsense. Streets go to the place they have to go to. A street must always go to its end.'

" 'Why do you think so of a street?' he asked, standing very still.

" 'Because I have always seen it do the same thing,' I replied, in reasonable anger. 'Day after day, year after year, it has always gone to Oldgate Station; day after . . .'

"I stopped, for he had flung up his head with the fury of the road in revolt.

" 'And you?' he cried terribly. 'What do you think the road thinks of you? Does the road think you are alive? Are you alive? Day after day, year after year, *you* have gone to Oldgate Station. . . .' Since then I have respected the things called inanimate."

And bowing slightly to the mustard-pot, the man in the restaurant withdrew.

ARTIST UNKNOWN

Heywood Broun

THE RAGGED MAN EASED HIMSELF OVER TO THE FAT CUSTOMER WHO sat alone in a far corner of the bar.

"Charlie, the barkeep, tells me you're a newspaperman," he began in a wheedling way.

"So what?"

"I was just wondering whether you'd buy a fellow a couple of drinks if he told you a story that maybe you could write up for a paper or something."

"Let's hear the story."

"Oh," said the ragged man who by this time had eased himself into a chair, "I couldn't do that unless you bought me one of the drinks right now to get started on."

"Bring him a whiskey," called the fat reporter without much enthusiasm.

The interloper reached eagerly for the drink when it was set before him. It was a thin hand with long tapering fingers. It was a fine hand but that might have passed unnoticed because it trembled so violently. The drink being done, the man with a story began, "I used to be an etcher and a drypoint man."

"You mean you were an artist?"

"I guess that's what you'd call it. And I was a good one. I studied in Paris and in Rome before I came here and in those days I only got drunk once and so often. Nobody in particular knew anything about me, but take it from me I was good. If you're a lefthanded pitcher somebody'll discover you, but there's nobody scouting around for etchers. Maybe that's why I got drunk. And this time I was good and drunk. It started on Easter Sunday and finally it was Monday

morning and somehow or other I was in a cell in the West Forty-seventh Street police station with a cut over my left eye. When I woke up, the sun was streaming into that first cell. It only gets the light early in the morning.

"I should have had the shakes and the jitters but, for some reason, I felt fine. There was an energy in me. Sometime during the night I'd dreamed of a picture. The whole thing was complete in my mind. All I had to do was to find a surface and set it down. In my pocket there was an etcher's needle. I looked at the wall of the cell. It was steel and just recently they'd put a coat of dark green paint on it. The surface was soft but not gummy. It was all right. Something like wax. The steel underneath was bright like silver. If you know anything about etching you understand that you don't try to cut into the metal with your needle. That's left for the acid.

"With the bright metal underneath and the dark paint my fine lines showed up sharp and clear. I never worked so fast or intently in my life. I did the crucifixion.

"You wouldn't understand about composition, I suppose, but the idea was this. Although there was a lot of detail—Roman soldiers and servants of the High Priest and all that and not skimped at all—the emphasis went on two faces. You wouldn't be interested in the technical details, but it's as simple as this. Everything in the composition led the eye to the Man on the cross and his mother Mary who watched afar off. And I made the face of Jesus serene, exalted. There was no suggestion of agony in his expression. Already he felt the surge of resurrection. It was his mother's face which mirrored the agony. It was as if the nails pierced her hands and feet and as if she bore Him again. Do you get what I'm driving at?"

The fat man nodded slowly.

"I worked fast and full of fever but I hadn't quite finished when I heard a cop coming down the hall to take us off to court. I slipped the etching tool into my pocket and the cop didn't even come into the cell. He simply called, 'Get a move on, bum, the wagon's waiting.' In court the Magistrate said, 'Learn to hold your liquor like a gentleman,' and turned me loose a free man.

"By now I did have the jitters and it was almost a week before I

thought of the picture again. Then I tried to do it in the regular way on a zinc plate. It was no good. Something was gone. I destroyed the plate. In the last six months I've tried a dozen times, copper as well as zinc. No go any time. I can't get what I put on the wall of that cell Easter Monday morning.

"And then one day about a month ago I picked up an evening paper and saw what I guess you call a feature story—a two column head. It said, MIRACLE IN WEST 47TH ST. POLICE STATION. And the story went on to say that for a long time the cops have been wondering about a marvelous picture scratched in the paint of cell No. 1. According to this newspaper story, there's no record of anybody having been in the cell the night they think the picture must have been made. Of course, the truth is that it may have been there for weeks before any cop noticed it. Lots of people scratch things on the walls of cells. All sorts of things, but not like my picture. And the newspaper story goes on to say that several great artists have looked at the picture in cell No. 1 and that they all say it's a work of genius. And then, to nail down the miracle theory, the police say that the cell has a curious influence on prisoners. They put the worst drunks in there and in the morning they come out sane, sober and exalted."

The reporter interrupted. "Why don't you go down to the station and explain that you did the picture and get the credit? After all they've got your name on the blotter and in the police record."

"Who would believe me? And it isn't my name. I can't even remember what name I did give or what address. You see this was all of six months ago and at that time I thought I might be disgraced if anybody knew I'd been picked up as drunk and disorderly. It wouldn't matter now."

"Well," said the reporter, "even if you have got the shakes you could draw something like the picture. That would prove you did it. How would you know otherwise?"

"That's too late, too. That feature story has a reproduction of the picture. Anybody could copy that. Anybody can copy that, but drunk or sober I'm the only man who can finish it. My name wouldn't matter. I could sign myself with every one of those last missing lines. Drunk or sober. That was the scheme.

"Two weeks ago I tried it. I would be the first and the worst drunk of the night and they would put me in the cell which brings sanity and exaltation to even the lowest bum. I took no chances. I put what was left of my pride in my pocket and also my etcher's needle. I got myself roaring. And I chose a saloon just around the corner from the West Forty-seventh Street Station. At that I miscalculated the time. It slipped by on me and so, although I was probably the worst drunk in the precinct, I wasn't the first. The sun was already up when I staggered around and lay me down on the steps of the police station. I didn't have long to wait. In a few minutes a couple of cops came swinging down the street heading for the station. They seemed a little surprised to find me there on the steps and one of them clubbed me on the soles of the feet. 'Come along, bum,' he said. 'This is the shortest haul I've ever had in my fifteen years on the force.' They jerked me to my feet and started to rough me up a little and out from the station came a young cop with his face all aglow. 'Boys,' he called out to them, 'let that poor old bum alone.'

" 'What's biting you?" asked the one who clubbed me.

" 'It's like this, Mike,' answered the young cop. 'I'm just after putting a drunk in cell No. 1 and I saw that picture. I never saw it like this before. The sun is shining on those faces. It is a miracle.'

" 'Here,' he said, taking a dollar out of his pocket, 'give me fifty cents, Mike, and let me have what you've got, Tom.'

"It amounted to a dollar and ninety-five cents. The young cop called a taxi from in front of the bail bond office across the street and said to the man, 'Take this poor fellow and drive him around till he sobers up. See that he gets a good breakfast and then turn him loose in God's bright sunshine.'

"And so," said the ragged man, "I remain mute, sodden and inglorious and there's nothing can be done about it."

"Well," said the fat reporter, "you can have that other drink."

A MIRACLE OF ST. SCOTHINUS

WHEN THEREFORE SAINT SCOTHINUS, BY THESE AND OTHER SEVERE chastisements, had purged himself from all molestations and imperfections of lustful desires, as though he followed after the purity of an angel here on earth, then began other corporeal creatures also to obey him and recognize him as an angel of God; wherefore he oftentimes walked dryshod over the sea, without help of boat. Once, while he thus walked on the sea to pass into Britain, he met with the ship that carried St. Barry the Bishop; who, beholding and recognizing this man of God, enquired of him wherefore he thus walked on the sea. To whom Scothin answered that this was a flowery field whereon he walked; and presently, stretching his hand down to the water, he took from the midst of the ocean a handful of vermilion flowers which, in proof of his assertion, he cast into the Bishop's lap. The Bishop for his part, to maintain his own truth, drew a fish from the waters and cast it towards St. Scothin; whereupon, magnifying God in His marvellous works, they departed with blessings one from the other.

(Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ—John Colgan)

THE SAINT

Antonia White

CHILDREN, AS YOU KNOW, ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A SPECIAL power of discerning saints. A great many years ago, when I was a child at the convent school, a number of us were certain that we had divined one in our very midst.

The name of the saint was Mother Lucilla Ryan. She was about thirty years old, very beautiful in a way that was both spiritual and witty, and she was dying of consumption.

We came back from our long summer holidays to find that the consumption, which for months had moved stealthily, almost invisibly, had begun to gallop. It was too late to send her abroad to the Order's sanatorium at Montreux. She was to die here in the community infirmary, among her own friends.

Mother Lucilla had been in direct charge of the Junior School, so that we felt her to be peculiarly our saint. The tiny notes she scribbled us now and then, exquisitely written notes pencilled on scraps of paper torn from an exercise book, we slipped reverently into our missals, convinced that one day they would be sought-after relics. Charlotte, I remember, even went so far as to print on hers "Actual writing of the Blessed Lucilla Ryan." We were amazed at her boldness, but we secretly felt that it would be justified.

I think we were just a little disappointed that Mother Lucilla was dying in her bed and not at the stake. Canonization, we knew, was a long and tedious process, and we wanted quick results. Martyrdom, as everyone knows, is the royal road to sainthood, and we would have trusted Mother Lucilla under any torture. Her bravery, indeed, was almost legendary. Some of the Senior School could remember how she had caught her finger in the see-saw one day during recreation.

Without so much as a grimace, she had folded her wounded hand in her sleeve and stood for the rest of the hour, directing games as usual, with that odd, delicate smile of hers. Not until she had marshalled the children back indoors did anyone know that the top half of one finger had been torn right away.

It can never be an easy task to succeed a saint, especially in the critical eyes of twenty small girls, but few people could have failed more conspicuously than poor Mother MacDowell. There was nothing to appeal to the most charitable imagination about our new mistress. To begin with, she was very plain; small and stocky, with a red, hard-bitten face and thick, refracting glasses. Through these amazing glasses, her small, dull eyes appeared enormous, like the eyes of an insect. Somehow or other we knew that her father had gone blind and that her parents had made her spend an hour every day alone in the dark, so that if she too were to go blind she would be less helpless. Had we heard such a story about Mother Lucilla, it would be one more legend of her saintly patience. But it was part of the general unfortunateness of Mother MacDowell that everything that happened to her should seem dull, common, and even rather ridiculous. The very tasks she was given by the community seemed to be chosen to display her at her worst. Besides looking after us, she was mistress of needlework for the whole school, though, even with her glasses, she could hardly see to thread a needle. Her red hands, speckled with pricks, looked clumsier than ever, moving stiffly and painfully over the gauzy linen we were embroidering for altar cloths. Everything about her was unromantic. Her habit was the shabbiest in the convent. Her rosary was broken in three places and mended with wire. She suffered from titanic colds that made her look plainer than ever. And, to crown all, her Christian name was Keziah.

We were prepared to receive her with a cold dislike, but there was something about Mother MacDowell's attitude to our adored Mother Lucilla that ripened the dislike into hostility. I don't mean that she ever said anything uncharitable about Mother Lucilla or that she did not encourage us to pray for her. But the sight of any extravagant devotion, and, above all, any mention of the word "saint," roused her to unwonted anger.

The four o'clock recreation, when we did not play games, but sat about with our mistress, munching thick slices of bread and jam, was always a time for discussion. I am afraid it was also a favourite time for baiting Mother MacDowell. One afternoon, as we sat round her under the plane-tree on the dusty, stony, Junior School playground, Charlotte said, raising innocent eyes:

"Mother MacDowell, do you think Mother Lucilla is a saint?"

"It is not for us to say who are saints and who are not. That is for God to declare, through the mouth of the Church," said Mother MacDowell piously.

"But don't you think Mother Lucilla's awfully holy?" persisted Charlotte, who had been a great favourite of Mother Lucilla's, if saints can be said to have favourites.

"Only God can know that. We all need infinite mercy. No doubt we shall all have a great many surprises at the Last Day."

We looked at each other. The five-minute bell rang.

"Come along, Charlotte, eat your bread and jam. You haven't even begun it," said Mother MacDowell sharply.

"I don't want it," said Charlotte self-consciously.

"Don't be absurd, child. Be thankful to the dear Lord who sent it to you and eat up your good food."

"But—Mother—" Charlotte wriggled.

"Well, child?"

"I wanted to do a penance for Mother Lucilla. You said we all needed prayers. So I thought I'd give up my *goûter* for her."

We gave Charlotte admiring glances. None of us had thought of doing that.

"God does not want penances of that sort," said Mother MacDowell very decidedly. "He would far rather that, instead of showing off like that, you made an act of humility and ate your *goûter* like the others. That would be a real penance."

Charlotte turned crimson and began to eat her bread in small, martyred bites. Although we could not resist a faint pang of pleasure in seeing her scored off, the general feeling was that Mother MacDowell had showed a very mean spirit. A week later, Mother Lucilla died. As a great privilege, we were allowed to see her as she lay

among the lilies in the Lady Chapel that had once been a ballroom and that still had gilt garlands of leaves and little violins on the walls. We filed round the bier on tiptoe, in our black veils and gloves, passing from hand to hand the heavy silver *asperges* and clumsily sprinkling drops of holy water on Mother Lucilla's black habit, that had become sculptured and unreal like a statue's robe. Not one of us doubted, as we looked at her lying there, pale as wax, and still smiling as if she had just been told some holy secret, that we were looking at a saint.

The morning she was buried they dressed us in the white serge uniforms that we wore only on big feast days. Carrying candles that burnt with a faint, nearly invisible flame in the May sunlight, the whole school passed in long ranks under the alley of limes that led to the nuns' cemetery. At the graveside we formed a hollow square, with the younger ones in the centre. Mother Lucilla's four tall brothers, who were all officers in the Irish Guards, carried the coffin; the little boys from the Poor School, transformed into a choir with white surplices, chirped the *De Profundis* like so many sparrows. We peered with respectful curiosity into the hollow grave. It was lined with spruce boughs that had a solemn, unforgettable smell. Father Kelly was praying, in his rich voice that sounded out of doors, that all the angels might come to meet her at the doors of heaven; the four tall brothers were paying out the bands of the deal coffin that looked like a soldier's, when the wonderful thing happened. As the nuns intoned the Amen, a white butterfly flew up out of the grave, hung for a minute so that we could all see it, then spiralled away, with a flight as purposeful as a bird's, right up into the blue air.

We looked round curiously. Some of the nuns were gazing up after the butterfly. Mother MacDowell, I noticed, was not one of these. Her red face was bowed and impassive, though the sun danced furiously in her spectacles. But Reverend Mother, who had been weeping a little, lifted her head, and looking straight at the Junior School, gave us a smile that was positively triumphant. Almost giddy with excitement and happiness, we smiled back. It was a Sign, if ever there was one.

We were rather subdued for the rest of the day. Even poor Mother MacDowell did not find us quite so impossible as usual. At tea-time

recreation we gathered round her in quite a friendly way, while the conversation turned quite naturally on saints. But today we were careful to mention no names.

Charlotte, sitting astride a branch of the plane-tree, bent down to ask, very politely:

"How long does it take for a saint to get canonized?"

"Many years, my dear child—centuries sometimes."

"Like the English martyrs," put in Laura. "They've only just been done, haven't they, Mother?"

There was a murmur of disappointment. Then someone had a bright thought.

"But what about the Blessed Marie Madeleine Perot?" said a voice falling over itself with excitement. "She's not just Blessed, she's Saint now, and I know a girl whose grandmother was at the Sacred Heart when Mother Perot was Mistress-General, and the grandmother's still alive."

We sighed with relief.

"But it's awfully difficult, isn't it, Mother?" said Laura the pessimist. "There's the Devil's Advocate, and they've got to prove major miracles worked by direct intercession and all that, haven't they?"

Mother MacDowell gave a small, dour smile at this—very different from the angelic smile of Mother Lucilla.

"It's not the miracles that matter so much, my dear. They're only outward signs. There have been big saints who worked no miracles and little saints who worked many. No, what matters is that the person should have attained heroic sanctity on this earth."

Heroic sanctity? It sounded very difficult indeed. We were quiet for a minute, knitting our brows. Then one by one we remembered Mother Lucilla's severed finger. If that was not heroic sanctity, what was? But suddenly our thoughts were turned violently back to earth. There was a noise of breaking wood, a shrill scream and a crash. Charlotte had fallen off her perch in the plane-tree and was lying on the stones. We drew back, frightened. Mother MacDowell hesitated for a second before she advanced and picked Charlotte up. Then she sat down with Charlotte on her lap while the rest of us stood in a gaping circle. Charlotte's knee bled in streams; Mother MacDowell's

habit was already wet and shining. But it was at the nun's face and not at Charlotte's cut knee that we were looking. For Mother MacDowell had turned from red to a dreadful greenish white. We knew what it was—she was one of those people who cannot bear the sight of blood. But there was no pity in us that day; we all remembered Mother Lucilla, who never flinched at the sight of blood, not even her own. But to do justice to Mother MacDowell, she managed to control herself. Her lips were trembling, she could not speak, but she produced her coarse white handkerchief as big as a table napkin, and began to wipe away the dirt from the cut knee. Finally, having roughly bandaged Charlotte, who behaved with a stoicism worthy of Mother Lucilla herself, she told off four of us to take our wounded friend to the infirmary. We waited in interested silence while the infirmary sister unwound the handkerchief. The bleeding had entirely stopped. The sister examined the leg carefully; then she began to laugh. "Why, you little sillies, there's not even a cut. Run along, Charlotte. There's nothing the matter with you—nothing except a dirty knee, that is."

It was perfectly true. There were specks of brown gravel on Charlotte's knee and that was all. There was not even a spot of blood on the handkerchief.

But when the five of us were in the garden again, Charlotte beckoned us round her, with an air of great solemnity.

"Swear you won't tell—or, rather, don't swear—promise, because it's something holy."

We promised eagerly.

"Well, you know there was a cut on my knee—you all saw how it bled. And it hurt awfully."

We nodded.

"Well, when Mother MacDowell began to wipe it with her handkerchief, there was suddenly an awful pain in it, as if it had been burnt or something—and then I just knew the cut wasn't there any more."

"But, Charlotte," I gasped, "if that really happened—it was a—"

She seized my hand.

"I know," she said feverishly, "it was—a miracle."

We stared at her with awe-struck admiration.

But Laura, the rationalist, said:

"Who worked it then? Someone's got to work a miracle. Did you pray to anyone?"

"Well—not exactly. But I had my rosary—the one that touched Her—in my pocket."

It was quite enough for us. Mother Lucilla was as good as canonized in our eyes.

"Promise me not to tell yet," implored Charlotte.

We promised. And we certainly kept the letter of our promise. But back on the playground, someone asked Mother MacDowell in an off-hand kind of way:

"How big does a major miracle have to be? Would it be a major miracle if a broken arm got set by itself? Or if an awfully deep cut suddenly healed up of its own accord?"

But Mother MacDowell turned fiery red and snapped out: "That is enough talk about miracles, children. You are all thoroughly overexcited. You will talk French at supper and go to bed half an hour earlier if this goes on."

We hastily quitted the subject of miracles. Just as we were forming into file to go back to the house, one of the Senior School came running towards Mother MacDowell. She stopped, fumbled in her pocket, and produced a rosary.

"I found this in the Junior School benches, Mother. Does it belong to any of your children?"

The rosary was of the kind rich parents give their children for First Communion presents; carved amethyst beads threaded on a gold chain. Mother MacDowell held it up by the tip of her fingers; had it been my secular object one would have said she held it disdainfully.

"And whose is this?" she asked: "I seem to have seen—"

But Charlotte was already skipping forward to claim her property.

I suppose it must be thirty or forty years since it all happened. Laura is a Carmelite nun, and Charlotte, who married a millionaire, and a Protestant at that, is a grandmother. I might even have forgotten all about it if I had not read in my *Universe* yesterday that the Canonization of the Blessed Keziah MacDowell had just been ratified by the Holy See.

THE SILENCE OF GOD

Osbert Sitwell

ONE NIGHT UPON THE SOUTHERN SEA
In helpless calm we lay,
Waiting for day,
Waiting for day.

As goldripe fruit fall from a tree
A comet fell; no other sight,
But in the ocean tracks of light
Trembled—then passed away,
Away.

No sound broke on our waiting ears,
Though instinct whispered wayward fears
Of things we cannot tell—
Of things the sea could tell.

No wisp of wind, no watery sound
Reached us; as if high on the ground
We stayed. A sense of fever fell
Upon each mind,
Each soul and mind.

Until our eyes, that ever sought
The cloying empty darkness, find
Another shape—or is it wrought
Of terror!—on the deep
The endless deep.

All dark it lay. No light shone out;
And though we cried across, no shout
Came back to us. As if in sleep
The black bulk lay so still,
So still.

No sign came back; no answering cry
Cleft the immense monotony
That swathed us like a funeral pall,
In folds of menace; almost shrill
The silence seemed,
And we so small.

Swiftly a boat was lowered down;
The rowlocks creaked; our track shone white
Behind us like God's frown,
God's frown.

We clambered up that great ship's height;
There was no light; there was no sound;
Nor was there any being found
Upon that ship,
That ship.

We groped our way along. God knows
How long the rats had been alone
With dust and rust! Yet flight was shown
To have been instant, in the grip
Of some force stronger than its foes—Its human foes.

* * * * *

Then sudden from the dark there thrilled
The distant dying of a song
That hung like haze upon the sea, and filled
Each soul with joy and terror strong,
With joy and terror strong.

Upon the sombre air were spent
These notes, as from a hidden place
Where all time and all love lay pent
In lingering embrace—
In lingering embrace.

Deep in our hearts we felt the call;
We knew that if our fate should send
That song again, we must leave all
And follow to the end,
The end.

A MIRACLE OF ST. GOAR

BEHOLD, THE MAN OF GOD ENTERED INTO THE PALACE WHERE THE Bishop sat; and looked about forthwith for a place where his disciple might stand, and where he might hang or hide his own cape. Seeing therefore in a corner of the chamber, how a sunbeam slid through a little window, he or his servant took this for an oaken pole; so that he hanged up his cape thereon and bade his attendant stand there. Which when Bishop Rusticus and his clergy saw, he said: "See ye now what he will do! This case is not of God; if it had been, he would not have eaten or drunken so early, for the saints of old entered through almsgiving and fasting into the kingdom of Heaven, and became friends of God. Now therefore I know not what this case may be. He eateth and drinketh at dawn, he milketh wild beasts, he hangeth his cape on a sunbeam. Let him come near and render account, whether he do this for God's sake or for the Devil's."

Then they enquired of the man of God, who answered and said: "God of all justice and might, Thou knowest that I nowise consent to the Devil's part, nor desire to consent; nor know I that my cape hangeth on a sunbeam, for methought it was an oaken perch. Moreover, it was by no witchcraft that I milked those beasts; but God ordained them for me at that very hour, that He might show His marvels to these unbelieving folk whom thou hast sent to me. In that I ate or drank at dawn, the Lord Who seeth all hearts knoweth that I did this not for gluttony but for charity's sake." (St. Goar was triumphantly acquitted; and the same miracle is related of two later saints—St. Aicaire and Pope Celestine V of the Gran Rifuto.)

(Acta Sanctorum Bolland)

BUILDING THE CHURCH

J. M. Synge

LONG AGO WE USED ALL TO BE PAGANS, AND THE SAINTS USED TO be coming to teach us about God and the creation of the world. The people on the middle island were the last to keep a hold on the fire-worshipping, or whatever it was they had in those days, but in the long run a saint got in among them and they began listening to him, though they would often say in the evening they believed, and then say the morning after that, they did not believe. In the end the saint gained them over and they began building a church, and the saint had tools that were in use with them for working with the stones. When the church was half-way up the people held a kind of meeting one night among themselves, when the saint was asleep in his bed, to see if they did really believe and no mistake in it.

The leading man got up, and this is what he said: that they should go down and throw their tools over the cliff, for if there was such a man as God, and if the saint was as well known to Him as he said, then he would be as well able to bring up the tools out of the sea as they were to throw them in.

They went then and threw their tools over the cliff.

When the saint came down to the church in the morning the workmen were all sitting on the stones and no work doing.

'For what cause are you idle?' asked the saint.

'We have no tools,' said the men, and then they told him the story of what they had done.

He kneeled down and prayed God that the tools might come up out of the sea, and after that he prayed that no other people might ever be as great fools as the people on the middle island, and that God might preserve their dark minds of folly to them till the end of the world. And that is why no man out of that island can tell you a whole story without stammering, or bring any work to end without a fault in it.

PRIVATE EDWARD ROMANO

William March

I WAS OUT ON OBSERVATION POST NEAR HILL 44 AND IT WAS RAINING. There was no wind and the rain fell straight down. To the north there were flashes, like heat lightning, along the horizon, and the low growling of distant batteries. As I crouched in the trench, wet to the skin and shivering with cold, I thought: "It's quiet here tonight, but up to the north terrible things are happening: There, at this instant, men are being torn to pieces, or stabbed to death with bayonets."

A Very light went up suddenly, to break in the sky with a faint kiss, and against its flare I saw the intricate intrenchments of rusting barbed wire. I saw, too, the slow rain, gleaming like a crystal against the light, and falling in dead, unslanted lines to the field. I lay huddled and trembling in the shallow trench, my rifle pressed against my body. . . . The rain was washing up bodies of men buried hastily; there was an odor of decay in the air. . . .

I saw a man walking toward me, upright and unafraid. His feet were bare and his beautiful hair was long. I raised my rifle to kill him, but when I saw it was Christ, I lowered it again. "Would you have hurt me?" he asked sadly. I said yes, and began to curse: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to let this go on!—You ought to be ashamed! . . ."

But he lifted his arms to the sodden field, to the tangled wire, to the charred trees like teeth in a fleshless jaw. "Tell me what to do," he said. "Tell me what to do, if you know! . . ." It was then that I began to cry, and Christ cried, too, our tears flowing with the slow rain.

At twelve o'clock the relief came. It was Ollie Teclaw, and I wanted to tell him what I had seen, but I knew that he would only laugh at me.

BLESSED PATRICK OF THE BELLS

Lady Gregory

THERE WERE MANY GREAT SAINTS AMONG THE GAEL BUT PATRICK was the bush among them all. It was beyond the sea he was born, and his mother was a sister of Saint Martin of Tours; and he dreamed in Rome and walked all Ireland barefoot. It was in his young youth he was brought from France to Ireland as a slave, and he was set to serve four households, and he did his work so well that every one of the households thought him to be servant to itself alone; and it was by an angel the ashes used to be cleared away from the hearth for him.

HE GETS HIS FREEDOM

He was sent out after a while minding swine and he went through great hardships; but Victor the angel used to come to visit him and to teach him the order of prayer. And he had no way to buy his freedom, but one time a wild boar came rooting in the field, and brought up a lump of gold; and he brought it to a tinker and the tinker said 'It is nothing but solder, give it here to me.' But then he brought it to a smith, and the smith told him it was gold, and with that gold he bought his freedom. And from that time the smiths have been lucky, taking money every day and never without work; but as for the tinkers, every man's face is against them and their face is against every man, and they get no ease or rest, but are travelling the world ever and always.

THE MAN AND WOMAN THAT WERE ALWAYS YOUNG

After that he went out to sea with foreigners and he went back to his own country, and his people asked him to stop there with them.

But he would not; for always in his sleep he could see the island of the Gael, and he could hear the singing of the children of the Wood of Fochlad. He went over the sea of Icht then, and he fasted in the islands of the Torrian sea, and then he went to learn from Germanus, and after that again to Rome. And then he and his people went out to sea, nine in all, and they came to an island where they saw a new house, and a young man and a young woman in it; and they saw a withered old hag by the door of the house. 'What happened this old woman?' said Patrick. 'It is great her weakness is.' 'She is my own grandchild, old as she is,' said the young man. 'What way did that happen?' said Patrick. 'It is not hard to say that' said the young man; 'For we are here from the time of Christ' he said 'and He came to visit us when He was here among men, and we made a feast for Him and He blessed our house and He blessed ourselves, but the blessing did not reach to our children. And this is the way we will be, without age coming upon us, to the Judgement. And it is a long time your coming is foretold to us' he said 'and it is the will of God for you to go and to preach in the country of the Gael; and Christ left a token with us, a bent staff to be given to you.'

PATRICK AND CASCORACH THE MUSICIAN

One time the King of Ulster went up with Caoilte to a great liss that was called Foradh-na-Feinne, the Resting-place of the Fianna. And when they were there they saw coming towards them a young man that was wearing a beautiful green cloak having in it a silver brooch; a shirt of yellow silk next his skin he had; a coat of soft satin, and a harp from his neck. 'Where do you come from and who are you yourself?' said the King. 'I come from the South from the Hill of Bodb Dearg son of the Dagda' said he; 'and I am Cascorach, son of Cainchen that is poet to the Tuatha de Danaan and I am the makings of a poet myself. And it is what I am come for now' he said 'to get true knowledge and the stories of the Fianna and their great deeds from Caoilte son of Ronan.' With that he took his harp and made music for them till he had put them all into their sleep. 'Well Caoilte my soul' he said then 'what answer will you give me?' 'I will give you all you are asking' said Caoilte 'if you have skill and

understanding to learn all the Fianna did of arms and of bravery. And it was a great fighting-man used to be in this place' he said 'that was Finn, son of Cumhal, and it is great riches and great wages you would have got from him for your music; although this day the place is empty.' And he made this lament: 'The Resting-place of the Fianna is bare to-night where Finn of the naked sword used to be; through the death of the king that was without gloom, wide Almhuin is deserted;

'The high company are not living; Finn the very prince is not alive; no armies to be seen, no captains with the King of the Fianna.

'They are all gone, the people of Finn, they that used to be going from valley to valley; it is a pity the life I have now, to be left after Diarmuid and Conan, after Goll son of Morna from the plain.

'It is the truth I am telling you; all that I say is true; it is great our losses were there beyond. They are gone, the armies and the hundreds; it is a pity I myself not to have found death; they are all gone now; they used to be together from border to border.'

Then Caoilte brought to mind the loss of the heroes and of the great companies he used to be going among, and he cried miserably, sorrowfully, till all his breast was wet with him. He set out after that and Cascorach with him and they went up by hills and rocks to the top of green-grassed Slieve Fuad, to the rowan tree of the Meadow of the Two Stags and to the place where the men of Ulster left their chariots after the last battle of the War for the Bull of Cuailgne. And Patrick was there before him, having with him three times fifty bishops and three times fifty priests and three times fifty deacons and three times fifty singers of psalms. And they sat down there, and Patrick kept his Hours with praising the Maker of the world. Then he gave a welcome to Caoilte. 'Well, my soul' he said 'who is that well-looking dark-eyebrowed curly-headed young man that is with you, having a harp with him? He is Cascorach son of the musician of the Tuatha De Danaan, that is come to find news and knowledge of the Fianna from me.' 'It is a good road he has chosen' said Patrick. 'And O Caoilte' he said 'it is great good you yourself have waited for, the time of belief and of saints and of holiness, and to be in friendship with the King of heaven and earth. And play to us now Cascorach' he

said 'till we hear your music and your skill.' 'I will do that' said Cascorach; 'and I was never better pleased, holy Clerk to do it for any man than for yourself.' He took his harp then and readied it, and played a strain of music, and the clerks had never heard the like of that music for sweetness, unless it might be the praises of the King of heaven sung according to the Rule. And they all fell into their sleep listening to the continuous music of the Sidhe. And when Cascorach had made an end of playing, he asked a reward of Patrick. 'What reward are you asking, my soul?' said Patrick. 'Heaven for myself' said he 'for that is the reward is best; and good luck to go with my art and with all that will follow it after me.' 'I give you heaven' said Patrick, 'and I give this to your art, it to be one of the three arts by which a man can find profit to the last in Ireland. And however great the grudgingness a man of your art may meet with, let him but make his music, and no one will begrudge him anything. And that they may have all happiness' he said, 'so long as they are not slothful in their trade.' After that Cascorach put back his harp in its covering. 'That was good music you gave us' said Brogan the scribe. 'It was good indeed' said Patrick; 'and but for a twang of the music of the Sidhe that was in it, I never heard anything nearer to the music of heaven.' 'If there is music in heaven why should it not be on earth?' said Brogan. 'And so it is not right to banish it away.' 'I do not say we should banish it' said Patrick, 'but only that we should not hold to it out of measure.'

HOW CAEDMON LEARNED TO SING

Bede

IN THE MONASTERY OF THE ABBESS HILD THERE WAS A CERTAIN brother made notable by a grace of God specially given, for that he was wont to make songs fit for religion and godliness; insomuch that, whatsoever of the divine writings he learned by them that expounded them, he set it forth after a little time with poetical language, put together with great sweetness and pricking of the heart, in his own, that is to say, the English tongue. With whose songs the minds of many men were oft inflamed to the contempt of the world and desire of the heavenly life . . . But he himself learned the art of singing without being taught of men nor of men's help; but he received the art of singing freely by the aid of God. And therefore he could never make any fond or vain poem, but only such as belong to religion befitted his religious mouth. For as long time as he was settled in secular life, until he was well stricken in age, he had at no time learned any songs. And so it was that sometimes at the beer-drinking, when the company was set to be merry and had agreed that each man should sing in its course, he, when he saw the harp to be coming near him, would rise up at midst of supper and going out get him back to his own house.

And as he did so on a certain time, and leaving the house of feasting had gone out to the stable of the beasts which had been appointed him to look to that night, and there at the fitting hour had bestowed his limbs to rest, there stood by him a certain man in a dream and bade him God speed, and calling him by his name said to him: "Caedmon, sing me something!" Whereupon he answering said: "I know not how to sing; for that too is the matter why I came out from the table to this place apart, because I could not sing." "But

yet," quoth he again that spake with him, "thou hast to sing to me." "What," quoth he, "should I sing?" Whereupon the other said: "Sing the beginning of the creatures!" At which answer he began to sing forthwith in praise of God the Creator verses of which he had never heard before . . . Now on rising from slumber he remembered still all the things that he had sung in his sleep, and did by and by join thereto in the same measure more words of the song worthy of God.

And coming on the morrow to the town reeve under whom he was, he shewed unto him what gift he had received; and being brought to the abbess, he was commanded in the presence of many learned men to tell his dream and rehearse the song, that it might by the judgment of them all be tried what or whence was the thing which he reported. And it seemed to them all that a heavenly grace was granted him of the Lord. And they recited unto him the process of a holy story or lesson, bidding him, if he could, to turn the same into metre and verse. Whereupon he undertaking so to do went his way, and on the morrow came again and brought the same which they had required of him, made in very good verse. Wherefore by and by the abbess embracing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to forsake the secular habit and take upon him the monastical vow, and when he had so done she placed him in the company of the brethren and gave commandment for him to be instructed in the regular course of holy history. But he by thinking again with himself upon all that he could hear and learn, and chewing thereon as a clean beast cheweth the cud, would turn it into a very sweet song; and by melodiously singing the same again would make his teachers to become in their turn his hearers . . . For he was a man very devout and humbly obedient to the discipline of the rules; but very zealously and fervently inflamed against them that would do otherwise: wherefore too he closed his life with a goodly end.

Translation by J. E. King, based on the version of Thomas Stapleton (1565).—LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY.)

KING O'TOOLE AND ST. KEVIN

A Legend of Glendalough

Samuel Lover

> By that lake, whose gloomy shore
> Skylark never warbles o'er,
> Where the cliff hangs high and steep,
> Young Saint Kevin stole to sleep.

WHO HAS NOT READ OF ST. KEVIN, CELEBRATED AS HE HAS BEEN BY Moore in the melodies of his native land, with whose wild and impassioned music he has so intimately entwined his name? Through him, in the beautiful ballad whence the epigraph of this story is quoted, the world already knows that the skylark, through the intervention of the saint, never startles the morning with its joyous note in the lonely valley of Glendalough. In the same ballad, the unhappy passion which the saint inspired, and the "unholy blue" eyes of Kathleen, and the melancholy fate of the heroine by the saint's being "unused to the melting mood," are also celebrated; as well as the superstitious *finale* of the legend, in the spectral appearance of the lovelorn maiden

> And her ghost was seen to glide
> Gently o'er the fatal tide.

Thus has Moore given, within the limits of a ballad, the spirit of two legends of Glendalough, which otherwise the reader might have been put to the trouble of reaching after a more roundabout fashion. But luckily for those coming after him, one legend he has left to be

> —touched by a hand more unworthy—

and instead of a lyrical essence, the raw material in prose is offered,

nearly *verbatim* as it was furnished to me by that celebrated guide and *bore,* Joe Irwin, who traces his descent in a direct line from the old Irish kings, and warns the public in general that "there's a power of them spalpeens sthravaigin' about, sthrivin' to put their *comether* upon the quol'ty, (quality) and callin' themselves Irwin (knowin', the thieves o' the world, how his name had gone far and near, as the rale guide), for to deceave dacent people; but never to b'lieve the likes—for it was only mulvatherin people they wor." For my part, I promised never to put faith in any but himself; and the old rogue's self-love being satisfied, we set out to explore the wonders of Glendalough. On arriving at a small ruin, situated on the southeastern side of the lake, my guide assumed an air of importance, and led me into the ivy-covered remains, through a small square doorway, whose simple structure gave evidence of its early date; a lintel of stone lay across two upright supporters after the fashion of such remains in Ireland.

"This, sir," said my guide, putting himself in an attitude, "is the chapel of King O'Toole—av coorse y' iv often heerd o' King O'Toole, your honour?"

"Never," said I.

"Musha, thin, do you tell me so?" said he; "by gor, I thought all the world, far and near, heerd o' King O'Toole—well! well!! but the darkness of mankind is ontellible. Well, sir, you must know as you didn't hear it afore, that there was wanst a king, called King O'Toole, who was a fine ould king in the ould ancient times, long ago; and it was him that owned the Churches in the airly days."

"Surely," said I, "the Churches were not in King O'Toole's time?"

"Oh, by no manes, your honour—throth, it's yourself that's right enough there; but you know the place is called 'The Churches,' bekase they wor built *afther* by Saint Kavin, and wint by the name o' the Churches iver more; and, therefore, av coorse, the place bein' so called, I say that the king owned the Churches—and why not, sir, seein' 'twas his birthright, time out o' mind, beyant the flood? Well, the king, you see, was the right sort—he was the *rale* boy, and loved sport as he loved his life, and huntin' in partic'lar; and from the risin' o' the sun, up he got, ard away he wint over the mountains beyant

afther the deer: and the fine times them wor; for the deer was as plinty thin, aye throth, far plintyer than the sheep is now; and that's the way it was with the king, from the crow o' the cock to the song o' the redbreast.

"In this counthry, sir," added he, speaking parenthetically in an undertone, "we think it onlooky to kill the redbreast, for the robin is God's own bird."

Then, elevating his voice to its former pitch, he proceeded:

"Well, it was all mighty good, as long as the king had his health; but, you see, in coorse o' time, the king grewn ould, by raison he was stiff in his limbs, and when he got sthricken in years, his heart failed him, and he was lost intirely for want o' divarshin, bekase he couldn't go a-huntin' no longer; and, by dad, the poor king was obleeged at last for to get a goose to divart him."

Here an involuntary smile was produced by this regal mode of recreation, "the royal game of goose."

"Oh, you may laugh, if you like," said he, half affronted, "but it's thruth I'm tellin' you; and the way the goose divarted him was this-a-way: you see, the goose used for to swim acrass the lake, and go down divin' for throut (and not finer throut in all Ireland, than the same throut), and cotch fish on a Friday for the king, and flew every other day round about the lake divartin' the poor king, that you'd think he'd break his sides laughin' at the frolicksome tricks av his goose; so, in coorse o' time, the goose was the greatest pet in the counthry, and the biggest rogue, and divarted the king to no end, and the poor king was as happy as the day was long. So that's the way it was; and all went on mighty well, antil, by dad, the goose got sthricken in years, as well as the king, and grewn stiff in the limbs, like her masther, and couldn't divart him no longer; and then it was that the poor king was lost complate, and didn't know what in the wide world to do, seein' he was gone out of all divarshin, by raison that the goose was no more in the flower of her blume.

"Well, the king was nigh hand broken-hearted, and melancholy intirely, and was walkin' one mornin' by the edge of the lake, lamentin' his cruel fate, an' thinkin' o' drownin' himself, that could get no divarshin in life, when all of a suddint, turnin' round the corner

beyant, who should he meet but a mighty dacent young man comin' up to him.

"'God save you,' says the king (for the king was a civil-spoken gintleman, by all accounts), 'God save you,' says he to the young man.

"'God save you kindly,' says the young man to him back again; God save you,' says he, 'King O'Toole.'

"'Thrue for you,' says the king, 'I am King O'Toole,' say he, 'prince and plennypennytinchery o' these parts,' says he; 'but how kem ye to know that?' says he.

"'Oh, never mind,' says Saint Kavin.

"For you see," said old Joe, in his undertone again, and looking very knowingly, "it *was* Saint Kavin, sure enough—the saint himself in disguise, and nobody else. 'Oh, never mind,' says he, 'I know more than that,' says he, 'nor twice that.'

"'And who are you?' said the king, 'that makes so bowld—who are you, at all at all?'

"'Oh, never you mind,' says Saint Kavin, 'whom I am; you'll know more o' me before we part, King O'Toole,' says he.

"'I'll be proud o' the knowledge o' your acquaintance, sir,' says the king, mighty p'lite.

"'Troth, you may say that,' says Saint Kavin. 'And now, may I make bowld to ax, how is your goose, King O'Toole?' says he.

"'Blur-an-agers, how kem you to know about my goose?' says the king.

"'Oh, no matther; I was given to understand it,' says Saint Kavin.

"'Oh, that's a folly to talk,' says the king; 'bekase myself and my goose is private frinds,' says he, 'and no one could tell you,' says he, 'barrin' the fairies.'

"'Oh, thin, it wasn't the fairies,' says Saint Kavin; 'for I'd have you to know,' says he, 'that I don't keep the likes o' sitch company.'

"'You might do worse then, my gay fellow,' says the king; 'for it's *they* could show you a crock o' money as aisy as kiss hand; and that's not to be sneezed at,' says the king, 'by a poor man,' says he.

"'Maybe I've a betther way of making money myself,' says the saint.

" 'By gor,' says the king, 'barrin' you're a coiner,' says he, 'that's impossible!'

" 'I'd scorn to be the like, my lord!' says Saint Kavin, mighty high, 'I'd scorn to be the like,' says he.

" 'Then, what are you?' says the king, 'that makes money so aisy, by your own account?'

" 'I'm an honest man,' says Saint Kavin.

" 'Well, honest man,' says the king, 'and how is it you make your money so aisy?'

" 'By makin' ould things as good as new,' says Saint Kavin.

" 'Is it a tinker you are?' says the king.

" 'No,' says the saint; 'I'm no tinker by thrade, King O'Toole; I've a betther thrade than a tinker,' says he. 'What would you say,' says he, 'if I made your ould goose as good as new?'

"My dear, at the word o' making his goose as good as new, you'd think the poor ould king's eyes was ready to jump out iv his head. 'And,' says he, 'troth thin I'd give you more money nor you could count,' says he, 'if you did the like; and I'd be behoulden to you into the bargain.'

" 'I scorn your dirty money,' says Saint Kavin.

" 'Faith then, I'm thinkin' a thrifle o' change would do you no harm,' says the king, lookin' up sly at the old *caubeen* that Saint Kavin had on him.

" 'I have a vow agin it,' says the saint; 'and I am book swoin,' says he, 'never to have goold, silver, or brass in my company.'

" 'Barrin' the thrifle you can't help,' says the king, mighty *'cute*, and looking him straight in the face.

" 'You just hot it,' says Saint Kavin; 'but though I can't take money,' says he, 'I could take a few acres o' land, if you'd give them to me.'

" 'With all the veins o' my heart,' says the king, 'if you can do what you say.'

" 'Thry me!' says Saint Kavin. 'Call down your goose here,' says he, 'and I'll see what I can do for her.'

"With that, the king whistled, and down kem the poor goose, all as one as a hound, waddlin' up to the poor ould cripple, her masther,

and as like him as two *pays*. The minute the saint clapt his eyes an the goose, 'I'll do the job for you,' says he, 'King O'Toole!'

" 'By *Jaminee*,' says King O'Toole, 'if you do, but I'll say you're the cleverest fellow in the sivin parishes.'

" 'Oh, by dad,' says Saint Kavin, 'you must say more nor that—my horn's not so soft all out,' says he, 'as to repair your ould goose for nothin'; what'll you gi' me, if I do the job for you?—that's the chat,' says Saint Kavin.

" 'I'll give you whatever you ax,' says the king; 'isn't that fair?'

" 'Divil a fairer,' says the saint; 'that's the way to do business. Now,' says he, 'this is the bargain I'll make with you, King O'Toole: will you gi' me all the ground the goose flies over, the first offer, afther I make her as good as new?'

" 'I will,' says the king.

" 'You won't go back o' your word?' says Saint Kavin.

" 'Honour bright!' says King O'Toole, howldin' out his fist."

Here old Joe, after applying his hand to his mouth, and making a sharp, blowing sound (something like "*thp*"), extended it to illustrate the action.

" 'Honour bright,' says Saint Kavin, back again, 'it's a bargain,' says he. 'Come here!' says he to the poor ould goose, 'come here, you unfort'nate ould cripple,' says he, 'and it's *I* that 'ill make you the sportin' bird.'

"With that, my dear, he tuk up the goose by the two wings—'criss o' my crass an you,' says he, markin' her to grace with the blessed sign at the same minute—and throwin' her up in the air. 'Whew!' says he, jist givin' her a blast to help her; and with that, my jewel, she tuk to her heels, flyin' like one o' the aigles themselves, and cuttin' as many capers as a swallow before a shower of rain. Away she wint down there, right forninst you, along the side o' the clift, and flew over Saint Kavin's bed (that is where Saint Kavin's bed is *now*, but was not *thin*, by raison it wasn't made, but was conthrived afther by Saint Kavin himself, that the women might lave him alone), and on with her undher Lugduff, and round the ind av the lake there, far beyant where you see the watherfall (though indeed it's no watherfall at all now, but only a poor dhribble iv a thing; but if you seen it in the

winther, it id do your heart good, and it roarin' like mad, and as white as the dhriven snow, and rowlin' down the big rocks before it, all as one as childher playin' marbles)—and on with her thin right over the lead mines o' Luganure (that is where the lead mines is *now*, but was not *thin*, by raison they worn't discovered, *but was all goold in Saint Kavin's time*). Well, over the ind o' Luganure she flew, stout and studdy, and round the other ind av the *little* lake, by the Churches (that is, *av coorse*, where the Churches is *now*, but was not *thin*, by raison they wor not built, but aftherwards by Saint Kavin), and over the big hill here over your head, where you see the big clift—(and that clift in the mountain was made by *Fan Ma Cool* where he cut it acrass with a big swoord, that he got made a-purpose by a blacksmith out o' Rathdrum, a cousin av his own, for to fight a joyant [giant] that darr'd him and the Curragh o' Kildare; and he thried the swoord first an the mountain, and cut it down into a gap, as is plain to this day; and faith, sure enough, it's the same sauce he sarv'd the joyant, soon and suddent, and chopped him in two like a pratie, for the glory of his sowl and ould Ireland)—well, down she flew, over the clift, and fluttherin' over the wood there at Poulanass (where I showed you the putry watherfall—and by the same token, last Thursday was a twelve-month sence, a young lady, Miss Rafferty by name, fell into the same watherfall, and was nigh hand drownded—and indeed would be to this day, but for a young man that jumped in afther her; indeed a smart slip iv a young man he was—he was out o' Francis-street, I hear, and coorted her sence, and they wor married, I'm given to undherstand—and indeed a purty couple they wor). Well—as I said—afther flutterin' over the wood a little bit, to *plaze* herself, the goose flew down, and lit at the fut o' the king, as fresh as a daisy, afther flyin' roun' his dominions, just as if she hadn't flew three perch.

"Well, my dear, it was a beautiful sight to see the king standin' with his mouth open, lookin' at his poor ould goose flyin' as light as a lark, and betther nor ever she was: and when she lit at his fut, he patted her an the head, and '*mavourneen,*' says he, 'but you are the *darlint* o' the world.'

"'And what do you say to me,' says Saint Kavin, 'for makin' her the like?'

" 'By gor,' says the king, 'I say nothin' bates the art o' man, barrin' the bees.'

" 'And do you say no more nor that?' says Saint Kavin.

" 'And that I'm behoulden to you,' says the king.

" 'But will you gi'e me all the ground the goose flewn over?' says Saint Kavin.

" 'I will,' says King O'Toole, 'and you're welkim to it,' says he, 'though it's the last acre I have to give.'

" 'But you'll keep your word thrue? says the saint.

" 'As thrue as the sun,' says the king.

" 'It's well for you,' says Saint Kavin, mighty sharp, 'it's well for you, King O'Toole, that you said that word,' says he, 'for if you didn't say that word, *the divil receave the bit o' your goose id ever fly agin,*' says Saint Kavin.

"Oh, you needn't laugh," says old Joe, half offended at detecting the trace of a suppressed smile; "you needn't laugh, for it's thruth I'm telling you.

"Well, whin the king was as good as his word, Saint Kavin was *plazed* with him, and thin it was that he made himself known to the king. 'And,' says he, 'King O'Toole, you're a dacent man,' says he; 'for I only kem here to *thry you*. You don't know me,' says he, 'bekase I'm disguised.'

" 'Troth, then, you're right enough,' says the king, 'I didn't perceave it,' says he; 'for indeed I never seen the sign o' sper'ts an you.'

" 'Oh! that's not what I mane,' says Saint Kavin; 'I mane I'm deceavin' you all out, and that I'm not myself at all.'

" 'Musha! thin,' says the king, 'if you're not yourself, who are you?'

" 'I'm Saint Kavin,' said the saint, blessin' himself.

" 'Oh, Queen iv Heaven!' says the king, makin' the sign o' the crass betune his eyes, and fallin' down on his knees before the saint. 'Is it the great Saint Kavin,' says he, 'that I've been discoorsin' all this time without knowin' it,' says he, 'all as one as if he was a lump iv a *gossoon?*—and so you're a saint?' says the king.

" 'I am,' says Saint Kavin.

"'By gor, I thought I was only talking to a dacent boy,' says the king.

"'Well, you know the differ now,' says the saint. 'I'm Saint Kavin,' says he, 'the greatest of all the saints.'

"For Saint Kavin, you must know, sir," added Joe, treating me to another parenthesis, "Saint Kavin is counted the greatest of all the saints, bekase he went to school with the prophet Jeremiah.

"Well, my dear, that's the way that the place kem, all at wanst, into the hands of Saint Kavin; for the goose flewn round every individyial acre o' King O'Toole's property you see, *bein' let into the saycret* by Saint Kavin, who was mighty *'cute;* and so, when he *done* the ould king out iv his property for the glory of God, he was *plazed* with him, and he and the king was the best o' frinds iver more afther (for the poor ould king was *doatin'*, you see), and the king had his goose as good as new, to divart him as long as he lived: and the saint supported him afther he kem into his property, as I tould you, antil the day iv his death—and that was soon afther; for the poor goose thought he was ketchin' a throut one Friday; but, my jewel, it was a mistake he made—and instead of a throut, it was a thievin' horse-eel; and, by gor, instead iv the goose killin' a throut for the king's supper, —by dad, the eel killed the king's goose—and small blame to him; but he didn't ate her, bekase he darn't ate what Saint Kavin laid his blessed hands on.

"Howsumdever, the king never recovered the loss iv his goose, though he had her stuffed (I don't mane stuffed with praties and inyans, but as a curiosity), and presarved in a glass-case for his own divarshin; and the poor king died on the next Michaelmas-day, which was remarkable.—*Throth, it's thruth I'm tellin' you*—and when he was gone, Saint Kavin gev him an illigant wake and a beautiful berrin'; and more betoken, he *said mass for his sowl and tuk care av his goose.*"

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES

A Pantoum in Prose

H. G. Wells

IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE GIFT WAS INNATE. FOR MY OWN PART, I think it came to him suddenly. Indeed, until he was thirty he was a skeptic, and did not believe in miraculous powers. And here, since it is the most convenient place, I must mention that he was a little man, and had eyes of a hot brown, very erect red hair, a mustache with ends that he twisted up, and freckles. His name was George McWhirter Fotheringay—not the sort of name by any means to lead to any expectation of miracles—and he was clerk at Gomshott's. He was greatly addicted to assertive argument. It was while he was asserting the impossibility of miracles that he had his first intimation of his extraordinary powers. This particular argument was being held in the bar of the Long Dragon, and Toddy Beamish was conducting the opposition by a monotonous but effective "So *you* say," that drove Mr. Fotheringay to the very limit of his patience.

There were present, besides these two, a very dusty cyclist, landlord Cox, and Miss Maybridge, the perfectly respectable and rather portly barmaid of the Dragon. Miss Maybridge was standing with her back to Mr. Fotheringay, washing glasses; the others were watching him, more or less amused by the present ineffectiveness of the assertive method. Goaded by the Torres Vedras tactics of Mr. Beamish, Mr. Fotheringay determined to make an unusual rhetorical effort. "Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature done by power of Will, something what couldn't happen without being specially willed."

"So *you* say," said Mr. Beamish, repulsing him.

Mr. Fotheringay appealed to the cyclist, who had hitherto been a silent auditor, and received his assent—given with a hesitating cough and a glance at Mr. Beamish. The landlord would express no opinion, and Mr. Fotheringay, returning to Mr. Beamish, received the unexpected concession of a qualified assent to his definition of a miracle.

"For instance," said Mr. Fotheringay, greatly encouraged. "Here would be a miracle. That lamp, in the natural course of nature, couldn't burn like that upsy-down, could it, Beamish?"

"*You* say it couldn't," said Beamish.

"And you?" said Fotheringay. "You don't mean to say—eh?"

"No," said Beamish reluctantly. "No, it couldn't."

"Very well," said Fotheringay. "Then here comes some one, as it might be me, along here, and stands as it might be here, and says to that lamp, as I might do, collecting all my will—'Turn upsy-down without breaking, and go on burning steady,'——Hullo!"

It was enough to make any one say "Hullo!" The impossible, the incredible, was visible to them all. The lamp hung inverted in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down. It was as solid, as indisputable as ever a lamp was, the prosaic common lamp of the Long Dragon bar.

Mr. Fotheringay stood with an extended forefinger and the knitted brows of one anticipating a catastrophic smash. The cyclist, who was sitting next the lamp, ducked and jumped across the bar. Everybody jumped more or less. Miss Maybridge turned and screamed. For nearly three seconds the lamp remained still. A faint cry of mental distress came from Mr. Fotheringay. "I can't keep it up," he said, "any longer." He staggered back, and the inverted lamp suddenly flared, fell against the corner of the bar, bounced aside, smashed upon the floor and went out.

It was lucky it had a metal receiver, or the whole place would have been in a blaze. Mr. Cox was the first to speak, and his remark, shorn of needless excrescences, was to the effect that Fotheringay was a fool. Fotheringay was beyond disputing even so fundamental a proposition as that! He was astonished beyond measure at the thing that had occurred. The subsequent conversation threw absolutely no

light on the matter so far as Fotheringay was concerned; the general opinion not only followed Mr. Cox very closely but very vehemently. Every one accused Fotheringay of a silly trick, and presented him to himself as a foolish destroyer of comfort and security. His mind was in a tornado of perplexity, he was himself inclined to agree with them, and he made a remarkably ineffectual opposition to the proposal of his departure.

He went home flushed and heated, coat-collar crumpled, eyes smarting and ears red. He watched each of the ten street lamps nervously as he passed it. It was only when he found himself alone in his little bedroom in Church Row that he was able to grapple seriously with his memories of the occurrence, and ask, "What on earth happened?"

He had removed his coat and boots, and was sitting on the bed with his hands in his pockets repeating the text of his defense for the seventeenth time, "*I* didn't want the confounded thing to upset," when it occurred to him that at the precise moment he had said the commanding words he had inadvertently willed the thing he said, and that when he had seen the lamp in the air he had felt that it depended on him to maintain it there without being clear how this was done. He had not a particularly complex mind, or he might have stuck for a time at that "inadvertently willed," embracing, as it does, the abstrusest problems of voluntary action; but as it was, the idea came to him with a quite acceptable haziness. And from that, following, as I must admit, no clear logical path, he came to the test of experiment.

He pointed resolutely to his candle and collected his mind, though he felt he did a foolish thing. "Be raised up," he said. But in a second that feeling vanished. The candle was raised, hung in the air one giddy moment and as Mr. Fotheringay gasped, fell with a smash on his toilet-table, leaving him in darkness save for the expiring glow of its wick.

For a time Mr. Fotheringay sat in the darkness, perfectly still. "It did happen, after all," he said. "And 'ow I'm to explain it I *don't* know." He sighed heavily, and began feeling in his pockets for a match. He could find none, and he rose and groped about the toilet-

table. "I wish I had a match," he said. He resorted to his coat, and there were none there, and then it dawned upon him that miracles were possible even with matches. He extended a hand and scowled at it in the dark. "Let there be a match in that hand," he said. He felt some light object fall across his palm, and his fingers closed upon a match.

After several ineffectual attempts to light this he discovered it was a safety-match. He threw it down, and then it occurred to him that he might have willed it lighted. He did, and perceived it burning in the midst of his toilet-table mat. He caught it up hastily, and it went out. His perception of possibilities enlarged, and he felt for and replaced the candle in its candlestick. "Here! *you* be lighted," said Mr. Fotheringay, and forthwith the candle was flaring, and he saw a little black hole in the toilet-cover, with a wisp of smoke rising from it. For a time he stared from this to the little flame and back, and then looked up and met his own gaze in the looking-glass. By this help he communed with himself in silence for a time.

"How about miracles now?" said Mr. Fotheringay at last, addressing his reflection.

The subsequent meditations of Mr. Fotheringay were of a severe but confused description. So far as he could see, it was case of pure willing with him. The nature of his first experience disinclined him for any further experiments except of the most cautious type. But he lifted a sheet of paper, and turned a glass of water pink and then green, and he created a snail, which he miraculously annihilated, and got himself a miraculous new tooth-brush. Somewhere in the small hours he had reached the fact that his will-power must be of a particularly rare and pungent quality, a fact of which he had certainly had inklings before, but no certain assurance. The scare and perplexity of his first discovery was now qualified by pride in this evidence of singularity and by vague intimations of advantage. He became aware that the church clock was striking one, and as it did not occur to him that his daily duties at Gomshott's might be miraculously dispensed with, he resumed undressing, in order to get to bed without further delay. As he struggled to get his shirt over his head, he was struck with a brilliant idea. "Let me be in bed," he said, and

found himself so. "Undressed," he stipulated; and, finding the sheets cold, added hastily, "and in my nightshirt—no, in a nice soft woolen nightshirt. Ah!" he said with immense enjoyment. "And now let me be comfortably asleep. . . ."

He awoke at his usual hour and was pensive all through breakfast-time, wondering whether his overnight experience might not be a particularly vivid dream. At length his mind turned again to cautious experiments. For instance, he had three eggs for breakfast; two his landlady had supplied, good, but shoppy, and one was a delicious fresh goose-egg, laid, cooked and served by his extraordinary will. He hurried off to Gomshott's in a state of profound but carefully concealed excitement, and only remembered the shell of the third egg when his landlady spoke of it that night. All day he could do no work because of this astonishingly new self-knowledge, but this caused him no inconvenience, because he made up for it miraculously in his last ten minutes.

As the day wore on his state of mind passed from wonder to elation, albeit the circumstances of his dismissal from the Long Dragon were still disagreeable to recall, and a garbled account of the matter that had reached his colleagues led to some badinage. It was evident he must be careful how he lifted frangible articles, but in other ways his gift promised more and more as he turned it over in his mind. He intended among other things to increase his personal property by unostentatious acts of creation. He called into existence a pair of very splendid diamond studs, and hastily annihilated them again as young Gomshott came across the counting-house to his desk. He was afraid young Gomshott might wonder how he had come by them. He saw quite clearly the gift required caution and watchfulness in its exercise, but so far as he could judge the difficulties attending its mastery would be no greater than those he had already faced in the study of cycling. It was that analogy, perhaps, quite as much as the feeling that he would be unwelcome in the Long Dragon, that drove him out after supper into the lane beyond the gas works, to rehearse a few miracles in private.

There was possibly a certain want of originality in his attempts, for apart from his will-power Mr. Fotheringay was not a very excep-

tional man. The miracle of Moses' rod came to his mind, but the night was dark and unfavorable to the proper control of large miraculous snakes. Then he recollected the story of *Tannhäuser* that he had read on the back of the Philharmonic program. That seemed to him singularly attractive and harmless. He stuck his walking-stick—a very nice Poona-penang-lawyer—into the turf that edged the footpath, and commanded the dry wood to blossom. The air was immediately full of the scent of roses, and by means of a match he saw for himself that this beautiful miracle was indeed accomplished. His satisfaction was ended by advancing footsteps. Afraid of a premature discovery of his powers, he addressed the blossoming stick hastily: "Go back." What he meant was "Change back"; but of course he was confused. The stick receded at a considerable velocity, and incontinently came a cry of anger and a bad word from the approaching person. "Who are you throwing brambles at, you fool?" cried a voice. "That got me on the shin."

"I'm sorry, old chap," said Mr. Fotheringay, and then realizing the awkward nature of the explanation, caught nervously at his mustache. He saw Winch, one of the three Immering constables, advancing.

"What d'yer mean by it?" asked the constable. "Hullo! It's you, is it? The gent that broke the lamp at the Long Dragon!"

"I don't mean anything by it," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Nothing at all."

"What d'yer do it for then?"

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Bother, indeed! D'yer know that stick hurt? What d'yer do it for, eh?"

For the moment Mr. Fotheringay could not think what he had done it for. His silence seemed to irritate Mr. Winch. "You've been assaulting the police, young man, this time. That's what *you* done."

"Look here, Mr. Winch," said Mr. Fotheringay, annoyed and confused, "I'm very sorry. The fact is——"

"Well?"

He could think of no way but the truth. "I was working a

miracle." He tried to speak in an offhand way, but try as he would he couldn't.

"Working a——! 'Ere don't you talk rot. Working a miracle, indeed! Miracle! Well, that's downright funny! Why, you's the chap that don't believe in miracles. . . . Fact is, this is another of your silly conjuring tricks—that's what this is. Now, I tell you——"

But Mr. Fotheringay never heard what Mr. Winch was going to tell him. He realized he had given himself away, flung his valuable secret to all the winds of heaven. A violent gust of irritation swept him to action. He turned on the constable swiftly and fiercely. "Here," he said, "I've had enough of this, I have! I'll show you a silly conjuring trick, I will! Go to Hades! Go, now!"

He was alone!

Mr. Fotheringay performed no more miracles that night, nor did he trouble to see what had become of his flowering stick. He returned to the town, scared and very quiet, and went to his bedroom. "Lord!" he said, "it's a powerful gift—an extremely powerful gift. I didn't hardly mean as much as that. Not really. . . . I wonder what Hades is like?"

He sat on the bed taking off his boots. Struck by a happy thought he transferred the constable to San Francisco, and without any more interference with normal causation went soberly to bed. In the night he dreamed of the anger of Winch.

The next day Mr. Fotheringay heard two interesting items of news. Some one had planted a most beautiful climbing rose against the elder Mr. Gomshott's private house in the Lullaborough Road, and the river as far as Rawling's Mill was to be dragged for Constable Winch.

Mr. Fotheringay was abstracted and thoughtful all that day, and performed no miracles except certain provisions for Winch and the miracle of completing his day's work with punctual perfection in spite of all the bee-swarm of thoughts that hummed through his mind. And the extraordinary abstractions and meekness of his manner was remarked by several people, and made a matter for jesting. For the most part he was thinking of Winch.

On Sunday evening he went to chapel, and oddly enough, Mr.

Maydig, who took a certain interest in occult matters, preached about "things that are not lawful." Mr. Fotheringay was not a regular chapel goer, but the system of assertive skepticism, to which I have already alluded, was now very much shaken. The tenor of the sermon threw an entirely new light on these novel gifts, and he suddenly decided to consult Mr. Maydig immediately after the service. So soon as that was determined, he found himself wondering why he had not done so before.

Mr. Maydig, a lean excitable man with quite remarkably long wrists and neck, was gratified at a request for a private conversation from a young man whose carelessness in religious matters was a subject for general remark in the town. After a few necessary delays, he conducted him to the study of the Manse, which was contiguous to the chapel, seated him comfortably, and standing in front of a cheerful fire—his legs threw a Rhodian arch of shadow on the opposite wall—requested Mr. Fotheringay to state his business.

At first Mr. Fotheringay was a little abashed, and found some difficulty in opening the matter. "You will scarcely believe me, Mr. Maydig, I am afraid"—and so forth for some time. He tried a question at last, and asked Mr. Maydig his opinion of miracles.

Mr. Maydig was still saying "Well" in extremely judicial tone, when Mr. Fotheringay interrupted again: "You don't believe, I suppose that some common sort of person—like myself, for instance—as it might be sitting here now, might have some sort of twist inside him that made him able to do things by his will."

"It's possible," said Mr. Maydig. "Something of the sort, perhaps, is possible."

"If I might make free with something here, I think I might show you by a sort of experiment," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Now that tobacco-jar on the table, for instance. What I want to know is whether what I am going to do with it is a miracle or not. Just half a minute, Mr. Maydig, please."

He knitted his brows, pointed to the tobacco-jar and said: "Be a bowl of vi'lets."

The tobacco-jar did as it was ordered.

Mr. Maydig started violently at the change, and stood looking

from the thaumaturgist to the bowl of flowers. He said nothing. Presently he ventured to lean over the table and smell the violets; they were fresh-picked and very fine ones. Then he stared at Mr. Fotheringay again.

"How did you do that?" he asked.

Mr. Fotheringay pulled his mustache. "Just hold it—and there you are. Is that a miracle, or is it black art, or what is it? And what do you think's the matter with me? That's what I want to ask."

"It's a most extraordinary occurrence."

"And this day last week I knew no more that I could do things like that than you did. It came quite sudden. It's something odd about my will, I suppose, and that's as far as I can see."

"Is *that*—the only thing. Could you do other things besides that?"

"Lord, yes!" said Mr. Fotheringay. "Just anything." He thought, and suddenly recalled a conjuring entertainment he had seen. "Here!" He pointed. "Change into a bowl of fish—no, not that—change into a glass bowl full of water with goldfish swimming in it. That's better! You see that, Mr. Maydig?"

"It's astonishing. It's incredible. You are either a most extraordinary . . . But no——"

"I could change it into anything," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Just anything. Here! be a pigeon, will you?"

In another moment a blue pigeon was fluttering round the room and making Mr. Maydig duck every time it came near him. "Stop there, will you," said Mr. Fotheringay; and the pigeon hung motionless in the air. "I could change it back to a bowl of flowers," he said, and after replacing the pigeon on the table worked that miracle. "I expect you will want your pipe in a bit," he said, and restored the tobacco-jar.

Mr. Maydig had followed all these later changes in a sort of ejaculatory silence. He stared at Mr. Fotheringay and, in a very gingerly manner, picked up the tobacco-jar, examined it, replaced it on the table. "*Well!*" was the only expression of his feelings.

"Now, after that it's easier to explain what I came about," said Fotheringay; and proceeded to a lengthy and involved narrative of his strange experiences, beginning with the affair of the lamp in

the Long Dragon and complicated by persistent allusions to Winch. As he went on, the transient pride Mr. Maydig's consternation had caused passed away; he became the very ordinary Mr. Fotheringay of every-day intercourse again. Mr. Maydig listened intently, the tobacco-jar in his hand, and his bearing changed also with the course of the narrative. Presently, while Mr. Fotheringay was dealing with the miracle of the third egg, the minister interrupted with a fluttering extended hand——

"It is possible," he said. "It is credible. It is amazing, of course, but it reconciles a number of difficulties. The power to work miracles is a gift—a peculiar quality like genius or second sight—hitherto it has come very rarely and to exceptional people. But in this case . . . I have always wondered at the miracles of Mahomet, and at Yogi's miracles, and the miracles of Madame Blavatsky. But, of course! Yes, it is simply a gift! It carries out so beautifully the arguments of that great thinker"—Mr. Maydig's voice sank—"his Grace the Duke of Argyll. Here we plumb some profounder law—deeper than the ordinary laws of nature. Yes—yes. Go on. Go on!"

Mr. Fotheringay proceeded to tell of his misadventure with Winch, and Mr. Maydig, no longer overawed or scared, began to jerk his limbs about and interject astonishment. "It's this what troubled me most," proceeded Mr. Fotheringay; "it's this I'm most mijitly in want of advice for; of course he's at San Francisco—wherever San Francisco may be—but of course it's awkward for both of us, as you'll see, Mr. Maydig. I don't see how he can understand what has happened, and I dare say he's scared and exasperated something tremendous, and trying to get at me. I dare say he keeps on starting off to come here. I send him back, by a miracle, every few hours, when I think of it. And of course, that's a thing he won't be able to understand, and it's bound to annoy him; and, of course, if he takes a ticket every time it will cost him a lot of money. I done the best I could for him, but of course it's difficult for him to put himself in my place. I thought afterward that his clothes might have got scorched, you know—if Hades is all it's supposed to be—before I shifted him. In that case I suppose they'd have locked him up in San Francisco. Of course I willed him a new suit of clothes on him

directly I thought of it. But, you see, I'm already in a deuce of a tangle——"

Mr. Maydig looked serious. "I see you are in a tangle. Yes, it's a difficult position. How you are to end it . . ." He became diffuse and inconclusive.

"However, we'll leave Winch for a little and discuss the larger question. I don't think this is a case of the black art or anything of the sort. I don't think there is any taint of criminality about it at all, Mr. Fotheringay—none whatever, unless you are suppressing material facts. No, it's miracles—pure miracles—miracles, if I may say so, of the very highest class."

He began to pace the hearthrug and gesticulate, while Mr. Fotheringay sat with his arm on the table and his head on his arm, looking worried. "I don't see how I'm to manage about Winch," he said.

"A gift of working miracles—apparently a very powerful gift," said Mr. Maydig, "will find a way about Winch—never fear. My dear Sir, you are a most important man—a man of the most astonishing possibilities. As evidence, for example! And in other ways, the things you may do . . ."

"Yes, *I've* thought of a thing or two," said Mr. Fotheringay. "But —some of the things came a bit twisty. You saw that fish at first? Wrong sort of bowl and wrong sort of fish. And I thought I'd ask some one."

"A proper course," said Mr. Maydig, "a very proper course—altogether the proper course." He stopped and looked at Mr. Fotheringay. "It's practically an unlimited gift. Let us test your powers, for instance. If they really *are* . . . if they really are all they seem to be."

And so, incredible as it may seem, in the study of the little house behind the Congregational Chapel, on the evening of Sunday, November 10, 1896, Mr. Fotheringay, egged on and inspired by Mr. Maydig, began to work miracles. The reader's attention is specially and definitely called to the date. He will object, probably has already objected, that certain points in this story are improbable, that if any things of the sort already described had indeed occurred, they

would have been in all the papers a year ago. The details immediately following he will find particularly hard to accept, because among other things they involve the conclusion that he or she, the reader in question, must have been killed in a violent unprecedented manner more than a year ago. Now a miracle is nothing if not improbable, and as a matter of fact the reader *was* killed in a violent and unprecedented manner a year ago. In the subsequent course of this story that will become perfectly clear and credible, as every right-minded and reasonable reader will admit. But this is not the place for the end of the story, being but little beyond the hither side of the middle. And at first the miracles worked by Mr. Fotheringay were timid little miracles—little things with the cups and parlor fitments, as feeble as the miracles of theosophists, and feeble as they were, they were received with awe by his collaborator. He would have preferred to settle the Winch business out of hand, but Mr. Maydig would not let him. But after they had worked a dozen of these domestic trivialities, their sense of power grew, their imagination began to show signs of stimulation, and their ambition enlarged. Their first larger enterprise was due to hunger and the negligence of Mrs. Minchin, Mr. Maydig's housekeeper. The meal to which the minister conducted Mr. Fotheringay was certainly ill-laid and uninviting as refreshment for two industrious miracle-workers; but they were seated, and Mr. Maydig was descanting in sorrow rather than in anger upon his housekeeper's shortcomings, before it occurred to Mr. Fotheringay that an opportunity lay before him. "Don't you think, Mr. Maydig," he said, "if it isn't a liberty, I——"

"My dear Mr. Fotheringay! Of course! No—I didn't think."

Mr. Fotheringay waved his hand. "What shall we have?" he said, in a large inclusive spirit, and at Mr. Maydig's order, revised the supper very thoroughly. "As for me," he said, eying Mr. Maydig's selection, "I am always particularly fond of a tankard of stout and a nice Welsh rarebit, and I'll order that. I ain't much given to Burgundy," and forthwith stout and Welsh rarebit promptly appeared at his command. They sat long at their supper, talking like equals, as Mr. Fotheringay presently perceived with a glow of surprise and gratification, of all the miracles they would presently do. "And by the way,

Mr. Maydig," said Mr. Fotheringay, "I might perhaps be able to help you—in a domestic way."

"Don't quite follow," said Mr. Maydig, pouring out a glass of miraculous old Burgundy.

Mr. Fotheringay helped himself to a second Welsh rarebit out of vacancy, and took a mouthful. "I was thinking," he said, "I might be able (*chum, chum*) to work (*chum, chum*) a miracle with Mrs. Minchin (*chum, chum*)—make her a better woman."

Mr. Maydig put down the glass and looked doubtful. "She's—She strongly objects to interference, you know, Mr. Fotheringay. And—as a matter of fact—it's well past eleven and she's probably in bed and asleep. Do you think, on the whole——"

Mr. Fotheringay considered these objections. "I don't see that it shouldn't be done in her sleep."

For a time Mr. Maydig opposed the idea, and then he yielded. Mr. Fotheringay issued his orders, and a little less at their ease, perhaps, the two gentlemen proceeded with their repast. Mr. Maydig was enlarging on the changes he might expect in his housekeeper next day, with an optimism that seemed even to Mr. Fotheringay's super senses a little forced and hectic, when a series of confused noises from up-stairs began. Their eyes exchanged interrogations, and Mr. Maydig left the room hastily. Mr. Fotheringay heard him calling up to his housekeeper and then his footsteps going softly up to her.

In a minute or so the minister returned, his step light, his face radiant. "Wonderful!" he said, "and touching! Most touching!"

He began pacing the hearthrug. "A repentance—a most touching repentance—through the crack of the door. Poor woman! A most wonderful change! She had got up. She must have got up at once. She had got up out of her sleep to smash a private bottle of brandy in her box. And to confess it too! . . . But this gives us—it opens—a most amazing vista of possibilities. If we can work this miraculous change in *her* . . ."

"The thing's unlimited seemingly," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And about Mr. Winch——"

"Altogether unlimited." And from the hearthrug Mr. Maydig,

waving the Winch difficulty aside, unfolded a series of wonderful proposals—proposals he invented as he went along.

Now what those proposals were does not concern the essentials of this story. Suffice it that they were designed in a spirit of infinite benevolence, the sort of benevolence that used to be called post-prandial. Suffice it, too, that the problem of Winch remained unsolved. Nor is it necessary to describe how far that series got to its fulfilment. There were astonishing changes. The small hours found Mr. Maydig and Mr. Fotheringay careering across the chilly market-square under the still moon, in a sort of ecstasy of thaumaturgy, Mr. Maydig all flap and gesture. Mr. Fotheringay short and bristling, and no longer abashed at his greatness. They had reformed every drunkard in the Parliamentary division, changed all the beer and alcohol to water (Mr. Maydig had overruled Mr. Fotheringay on this point), they had, further, greatly improved the railway communication of the place, drained Flinder's swamp, improved the soil of One Tree Hill, and cured the Vicar's wart. And they were going to see what could be done with the injured pier at South Bridge. "The place," gasped Mr. Maydig, "won't be the same place to-morrow. How surprised and thankful every one will be!" And just at that moment the church clock struck three.

"I say," said Mr. Fotheringay, "that's three o'clock! I must be getting back. I've got to be at business by eight. And besides, Mrs. Wimms——"

"We're only beginning," said Mr. Maydig, full of the sweetness of unlimited power. "We're only beginning. Think of all the good we're doing. When people wake——"

"But——" said Mr. Fotheringay.

Mr. Maydig gripped his arm suddenly. His eyes were bright and wild. "My dear chap," he said, "there's no hurry. Look"—he pointed to the moon at the zenith—"Joshua!"

"Joshua?" said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Joshua," said Mr. Maydig. "Why not? Stop it."

Mr. Fotheringay looked at the moon.

"That's a bit tall," he said after a pause.

"Why not?" said Mr. Maydig. "Of course it doesn't stop. You

stop the rotation of the earth, you know. Time stops. It isn't as if we were doing harm."

"H'm!" said Mr. Fotheringay. "Well." He sighed. "I'll try. Here——"

He buttoned up his jacket and addressed himself to the habitable globe, with as good an assumption of confidence as lay in his power. "Jest stop rotating will you," said Mr. Fotheringay.

Incontinently he was flying head over heels through the air at the rate of dozens of miles a minute. In spite of the innumerable circles he was describing per second, he thought; for thought is wonderful—sometimes as sluggish as flowing pitch, sometimes as instantaneous as light. He thought in a second, and willed. "Let me come down safe and sound. Whatever else happens, let me down safe and sound."

He willed it only just in time, for his clothes, heated by his rapid flight through the air, were already beginning to singe. He came down with a forcible, but by no means injurious bump in what appeared to be a mound of fresh-turned earth. A large mass of metal and masonry, extraordinarily like the clock-tower in the middle of the market-square, hit the earth near him, ricochetted over him, and flew into stonework, bricks and masonry, like a bursting bomb. A hurtling cow hit one of the larger blocks and smashed like an egg. There was a crash that made all the most violent crashes of his past life seem like the sound of falling dust and this was followed by a descending series of lesser crashes. A vast wind roared throughout earth and heaven, so that he could scarcely lift his head to look. For a while he was too breathless and astonished even to see where he was or what had happened. And his first movement was to feel his head and reassure himself that his streaming hair was still his own.

"Lord!" gasped Mr. Fotheringay, scarce able to speak for the gale, "I've had a squeak! What's gone wrong? Storms and thunder. And only a minute ago a fine night. It's Maydig set me on to this sort of thing. *What* a wind! If I go on fooling in this way I'm bound to have a thundering accident! . . . Where's Maydig? . . . What a confounded mess everything's in!"

He looked about him so far as his flapping jacket would permit. The appearance of things was really extremely strange. "The sky's

all right anyhow," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And that's about all that is all right. And even there it looks like a terrific gale coming up. But there's the moon overhead. Just as it was just now. Bright as midday. But as for the rest—— Where's the village? Where's—where's anything? And what on earth set this wind a-blowing? *I* didn't order no wind."

Mr. Fotheringay struggled to get to his feet in vain, and after one failure, remained on all fours, holding on. He surveyed the moonlit world to leeward, with the tails of his jacket streaming over his head. "There's something seriously wrong," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And what it is—goodness knows."

Far and wide nothing was visible in the white glare through the haze of dust that drove before a screaming gale but tumbled masses of earth and heaps of inchoate ruins, no trees, no houses, no familiar shapes, only a wilderness of disorder vanishing at last into the darkness beneath the whirling columns and streamers, the lightnings and thunderings of a swiftly rising storm. Near him in the livid glare was something that might once have been an elm tree, a smashed mass of splinters, shivered from boughs to base, and further a twisted mass of iron girders—only too evidently the viaduct—rose out of the piled confusion.

You see, when Mr. Fotheringay had arrested the rotation of the solid globe, he had made no stipulation concerning the trifling movables upon its surface. And the earth spins so fast that the surface at its equator is traveling at rather more than a thousand miles an hour, and Mr. Maydig, and Mr. Fotheringay, and everybody and everything had been jerked violently forward at about nine miles per second—that is to say, much more violently than if they had been fired out of a cannon. And every human being, every living creature, every house, and every tree—all the world as we know it—had been so jerked and smashed and utterly destroyed. That was all.

These things Mr. Fotheringay did not, of course, fully appreciate. But he perceived that his miracle had miscarried, and with that a great disgust of miracles came upon him. He was in darkness now, for the clouds had swept together and blotted out his momentary glimpse of the moon, and the air was full of fitful struggling tortured

wraith of hail. A great roaring of wind and waters filled earth and sky, and peering under his hand through the dust and sleet to windward, he saw by the play of the lightnings a vast wall of water pouring toward him.

"Maydig!" screamed Mr. Fotheringay's feeble voice amid the elemental uproar. "Here!—Maydig!"

"Stop!" cried Mr. Fotheringay to the advancing water. "Oh, for-goodness' sake, *stop!*"

"Just a moment," said Mr. Fotheringay to the lightnings and thunder. "Stop jest a moment while I collect my thoughts. . . . And now what shall I do?" he said. "What *shall* I do? Lord! I wish Maydig was about."

"I know," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And for goodness' sake let's have it right *this* time."

He remained on all fours, leaning against the wind, very intent to have everything right.

"Ah!" he said. "Let nothing what I'm going to order happen until I say 'Off' . . . Lord! I wish I'd thought of that before!"

He lifted his little voice against the whirlwind, shouting louder and louder in the vain desire to hear himself speak. "Now then—here goes! Mind about that what I said just now. In the first place, when all I've got to say is done, let me lose my miraculous power, let my will become just like anybody else's will, and all these dangerous miracles be stopped. I don't like them. I'd rather I didn't work 'em. Ever so much. That's the first thing. And the second is—let me be back just before the blessed lamp turned up. It's a big job, but it's the last. Have you got it? No more miracles, everything as it was—me back in the Long Dragon just before I drank my half-pint. That's it! Yes."

He dug his fingers into the mold, closed his eyes, and said, "Off!"

Everything became perfectly still. He perceived that he was standing erect.

"So *you* say," said a voice.

He opened his eyes. He was in the bar of the Long Dragon, arguing about miracles with Toddy Beamish. He had a vague sense of some great thing forgotten that instantaneously passed. You see, except

for the loss of his miraculous powers, everything was back as it had been; his mind and memory therefore were now just as they had been at the time when this story began. So that he knew absolutely nothing of all that is told here, knows nothing of all that is told here to this day. And among other things, of course, he still did not believe in miracles.

"I tell you that miracles, properly speaking, can't possibly happen," he said, "whatever you like to hold. And I'm prepared to prove it up to the hilt."

"That's what *you* think," said Toddy Beamish, and "Prove it if you can."

"Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature done by power of Will. . . ."

A SHEPHERD AND A SHEPHERDESS

Elizabeth Goudge

MISS ADA GILLESPIE WAS CONSIDERED BY HER FRIENDS TO BE A most fortunate woman. At the age of fifty-five she had excellent health, her own teeth, hardly a thread of grey in her crisp brown hair, a comfortable little income and freedom to go where she would and do what she liked. Friends who had to earn their livings, or who were tied by the leg to a husband and four or five children, said, "Well, Ada, you *are* lucky," and sighed enviously. Miss Gillespie supposed she was, and when congratulated upon her good fortune she would stifle a yawn and incline her head in polite agreement.

She had not always been congratulated. In the past she had been pitied, and had even indulged in orgies of delicious self-pity herself. She had been the only girl in a large family of brothers and had spent thirty-five years in darning their socks, nursing them through the measles, packing and unpacking their trunks, and then, as they went out to India and sent home their children to her care, again darning socks, ministering to the measles, packing and unpacking, spanking and hugging, filling Christmas stockings, dyeing boiled eggs pink on Easter Sunday, and then, again, more socks and a final outbreak of the measles complicated by whooping cough. On top of all this there had been elderly parents to look after, housekeeping to do, servants to manage and gardeners to egg on to reluctant labour.

"Poor Ada!" her friends would murmur, "you're so terribly tied!" And Miss Gillespie, who adored being tied, would smile bravely and lap up their pity like a kitten cream. "You hardly ever have a holiday," they would mourn, and Miss Gillespie, always bored stiff by holidays, would brace her shoulders and tell them pluckily how fortunate she was that she kept her health without. "You're so brave,"

they said, and Miss Gillespie, her eyes sparkling with delight, would go down the village to tell the butcher what she thought of him.

And now, so gradually that she hardly noticed it, everything had come to an end. The children she had bathed and spanked were now bathing and spanking their own children, the parents who had taken up so much of her time had died, leaving her with an aching void in her heart, and the old home that she had laboured for was sold. She was tied no longer, she was free to take a holiday for as long as she liked, and there was now nothing in all the world to challenge her pluck.

She would, she determined, go to Bournemouth and enjoy herself. She chose Bournemouth because it was the middle of winter and she had so often, during past winters in her Cumberland home, looked at pictures of the sunshine of Bournemouth and envied the untied women who went there in January. She would, she told herself, do everything in the most luxurious way possible. She had never known luxury and the taste of it now, at last, in her fifty-fifth year, would surely be heaven. If she liked Bournemouth she would perhaps settle there for good.

So she engaged rooms at a most expensive boarding house and travelled south first class, a thing she had never done in all her life. Sitting bolt upright in a corner of the comfortable carriage, clothed in tailor-made tweeds, with a hard felt hat on her head, and her feet in stout boots, she felt slightly ridiculous and much too hot, and didn't enjoy the journey quite so much as she had expected.

The first few days in the expensive boarding house were more successful. Although she was as strong as a horse she was, perhaps, just a little tired after the business of selling up the old home, and she enjoyed being called with early morning tea and not getting up until she wanted to. It was nice, too, to eat meals that one had had no responsibility for and not to have to think on Monday morning which room's turn it was for clean sheets. It was especially delightful to be able to have as many hot baths as one wanted, for the boiler in the old home had been more often burst than not, and when it wasn't burst there had always been lots of dirty little nephews and nieces to take the first bloom off the very limited supply of hot water.

So for some days Miss Gillespie rested and ate, and bathed and put on weight, and when she wasn't doing any of these things she strolled along in the sun by the sea and listened to the really excellent concerts that Bournemouth provided for its winter visitors.

But at the end of a week, when she was thoroughly rested, Miss Gillespie became slightly bored and began to take stock of the other people in the boarding house. The care of others had been her life's work and now, from long habit, she could never come into close contact with any human being without immediately wanting to bathe it, nurse it, spank it or darn its socks.

There were two children at the boarding house and Miss Gillespie noticed that they were never quite clean behind the ears, yet when she suggested to their idle mother, very politely of course, that she should bathe them the suggestion was not well received.

Then there was an old lady who suffered very much from indigestion and used to describe her symptoms to Miss Gillespie every morning from ten o'clock until eleven-thirty, when she had a glass of milk and felt better. So Miss Gillespie personally interviewed the manageress and saw to it that when next the boarders were enjoying roast duck and a chocolate soufflé the old lady should have steamed sole and a sago pudding; and the old lady made herself exceedingly unpleasant and refused to speak to Miss Gillespie for three days. Miss Gillespie was very hurt for when, in old days, she had rearranged her dear old mother's diet for her her mother had always smiled sweetly, eaten what was put before her and said nothing. . . . The fact that she said a good deal, afterwards, to her old husband in the privacy of their bedroom, was of course unknown to Miss Gillespie.

So what with one thing and another things got a little strained at the boarding house and Miss Gillespie came to the conclusion that she did not like Bournemouth and could not possibly settle there. She decided to pay a round of visits, for it had always been a grief to her that she saw so little of her friends. Lots of elderly, unattached women, she had heard, practically lived at their friends' houses and were very happy. She thought that she might do the same. Her friends were all genuinely devoted to her, for her courage and industry had been admirable all her life long, and they were very pleased

indeed to see her come and even more pleased to see her go. It was during these visits that the remark about her luck was so often made to Miss Gillespie, and Miss Gillespie, stifling a yawn, would incline her head politely. She did not really enjoy the visits and decided that to spend her life paying them would be more than she could stand. Her fingers were always itching to put her friends' mismanaged houses and businesses to rights and politeness forbade her to do more than give good, but resented, advice.

So she gave up visiting and went to a London hotel, for she had an idea that she might settle in London. She had longed all her life to have an opportunity of seeing all the new plays and reading the newest novels, but in the wilds of Cumberland there were no theatres and she had had no time for reading. She had been obliged to be content with Shakespeare and Jane Austen propped up against the flour bin and herself reading a page or two while she made the cakes.

But now her chance had come and for a whole fortnight she went in for an orgy of modern literature and the modern drama, emerging at the end of it suffering from an acute attack of mental nausea. Unguided by anyone who understood her tastes she had chosen her books and plays unwisely and what she saw and read shocked her to the core. The immorality of it horrified her. If in her thirty-five years' seclusion from it the world had become like this then she did not think that her new-found freedom to come back to it was a thing to be thankful for. Better, she thought, a clean prison than a tainted freedom.

Going out one afternoon on a shopping expedition, her last before she left London, she felt more miserable than she had felt for years. No one needed her any more and the world in which she had expected to enjoy herself was not to her taste. Looking about her as she walked down the Strand it seemed to her that there was no beauty anywhere. When she had been young there had been a charm in the jingle of the hansoms and the clip-clop of the horses' hoofs, but in this roar of motor traffic she could not find anything but ugliness. Glancing at the faces of the passers-by she could not find in them, either, any beauty. If the faces were not definitely evil then they were sad, and if they were not sad they were bored, and all of them

were marred by the unbecoming hurry which possessed their owners. Miss Gillespie was aware that her mind was clouded by the books she had read lately and that, therefore, her eyes were blind to beauty that must be there, but nevertheless she realized very strongly that she was out of touch with this new London and would never be able to acclimatize herself to it. . . . It was no good thinking of settling in London.

Coming rather desolately to anchor at a street corner, Miss Gillespie wondered where in the world she *was* to settle. She hadn't cared for Bournemouth, she hadn't cared for visiting her friends and now she didn't care for London. Standing there in the middle of all the hurry and roar she thought longingly of the wilds of Cumberland, but it would be no good her going back there with her parents dead and no work to do; she would die of boredom and heartache.

Then with a little sigh and a mental shake she abandoned her problem and turned her attention to the matter in hand. To-morrow she was going up to Scotland to visit her brother James and his wife Elaine, whom she detested, and she must get a present for Elaine, whose birthday it was the day after to-morrow. Elaine was childless, wealthy and artistic. She painted pictures that caused Miss Gillespie to settle her pince-nez more firmly on the bridge of her nose and say in a loud voice, "What's that meant to be, Elaine? A blasted heath? . . . What? . . . Oh, a bowl of carnations? Very pretty, my dear, very pretty indeed." Also she wore rather soiled Liberty silk dresses in the morning, what time Miss Gillespie was attired in a short tweed skirt, a scrupulously clean shirt blouse, and boots; and she affected beautiful Persian rugs lying on highly polished floors upon which Miss Gillespie, stepping in her boots, invariably skated from end to end of the drawing-room, landing finally in a sitting posture under the window, which was filled with stained glass designed by Elaine. . . . Not even the hope of one day smashing the glass as she fell could reconcile Miss Gillespie to Elaine's artistic temperament.

What in the world could she get for Elaine? She would have liked to have taken her a packet of Lux, or a good stout Axminster carpet, but she doubted if either of these would be appreciated. She supposed that she had better go to an antique shop and get a cracked piece of

china, or a tattered length of brocade, or a picture so darkened by time that its subject was a matter for conjecture only. She didn't know much about antiques but she had noticed that Elaine always went into raptures over anything that seemed to Miss Gillespie to be fit for nothing but the dustbin, and that if she purchased on that principle she would be sure to please.

So she turned away from the busy thoroughfares and went rooting about in little back streets until she found a dingy antique shop whose windows had not been cleaned for months. Wrinkling her Roman nose in distaste she opened the door and went in. Just inside was one of those doormats which ring a bell when you step on them, but though Miss Gillespie stepped upon it very firmly indeed with her twelve stone no one answered the summons and she found herself quite alone in the shop. This pleased her, as it enabled her to have a good look round in peace and quiet. She took a large silk handkerchief out of the pocket of her tweed coat, removed her pince-nez, polished them and replaced them. . . . Then she prowled round.

There was the usual assortment of rubbish with every now and then something beautiful buried beneath it. Miss Gillespie poked with her umbrella at shabby rugs, looked at herself with distaste in little oval mirrors with green, cracked glass in them, fingered bits of Chinese embroidery and outstared the rudely staring Toby jugs. Then at last she gave a sudden start and stopped quite still, gazing at a china Shepherd and Shepherdess who stood side by side on a dusty shelf.

Miss Gillespie, though her sense of beauty was not quite the same as Elaine's, was not devoid of it. Anything fresh and strong, anything clean and dainty, appealed to her tremendously. The sight of her Cumberland hills on a clear winter's day, when their outline was strong and clean against the sky and the sun touched the turf to yellow and the bracken to blood red, had always made her feel glad that she was alive, and the sight of a clean child in a clean pinafore had never failed to bring a delighted smile to her lips. . . . So now she stood entranced before the Shepherd and Shepherdess.

They were the daintiest creatures that she had ever seen, and they had about them an indescribable freshness that almost made Miss

Gillespie smell the clean smell of wet grass and feel the cool, soft wind that blesses the world in April. They had but that moment come, it seemed, from tending their lambs on the hillside and the sound of their pipes was only that moment stilled.

The little lady had a buttercup-yellow skirt, sprigged with forget-me-nots, and a tight, dark-blue bodice. She had a yellow straw hat tied with blue ribbon and under it her innocent, pointed face was tinted like apple blossom. In her hand was a garlanded shepherd's crook and on her feet were slippers as dainty as Cinderella's own. The little man wore a full-skirted green coat with a scarlet waistcoat and a three-cornered hat on powdered hair. He carried pipes like the pipes of Pan and was bowing very gallantly to the lady, as though he thanked her for her courtesy in listening to the music.

For just a moment Miss Gillespie, who liked fitness in all things, thought that perhaps their garb was unsuitable for keeping sheep on the hills, but then she remembered that in Arcadia there is never a bite in the wind, and the showers are no more than silver clouds whose passing refreshes without marring grass and flowers and silken petticoats.

She gazed and gazed and quite suddenly she knew that she must buy this Shepherd and this Shepherdess. She could not, she simply could not, leave them there to become cracked and neglected and coated with grime. Already, though they had evidently not been here very long, there was a thin veil of dust dimming their bright colours and a smut had settled on the tip-tilted nose of the dainty lady. Whether Elaine would really like them Miss Gillespie neither knew nor cared, she only knew that they must be taken away from here into the sunlight.

Returning to the doormat Miss Gillespie stood upon it with great determination while the bell rang and rang. For a while nothing happened, so she lifted her booted feet in the air one by one and brought them down hard on the mat, while the bell went into one apoplectic fit after another. At the sixth fit there was a shuffling at the back of the shop and a spectacled old man with a red nose and a bleary eye came ambling into her line of vision.

"He's been drinking," thought Miss Gillespie, and wondered if

she would have time before to-morrow to get into touch with the secretary of the local temperance association. Deciding against this, however, she pointed her umbrella at the Shepherd and Shepherdess. "I'll take those," she said.

The old man, muttering to himself, went hunting distractedly round the shop for non-existent paper and string, while Miss Gillespie still stood upon the mat, ringing the bell and making impatient noises in her throat.

Finally, the old man being apparently in his dotage and her patience giving out, she dived into her capacious leather bag, unwrapped the pair of corsets she had just bought at Dickins and Jones, and gave him the paper and string. He wrapped it round the Shepherd and Shepherdess and gave them to her, blinking his bleary eyes as he did so and wheezing hoarsely, "Ten pounds."

Miss Gillespie jumped as though she had been shot. Although she had a nice, comfortable little income it was not sufficiently comfortable to justify her in spending ten pounds on china ornaments, and to spend ten pounds on Elaine, whom she disliked, was simply ridiculous. But if she hesitated it was only for a moment. In her hands she held the courtesy of the little man and the innocence of the little lady, a courtesy and innocence that seemed to her rare in this modern world that she hated, and she could not let them go. Setting her parcel down for a moment she fumbled in her leather bag, fished up her treasury note case from under the corsets, and counted out ten pounds.

Miss Gillespie was a very practical woman and seldom, if ever, did anything silly, like losing a train or packing the key of her trunk at the bottom of it, but the following morning she was very silly indeed. London had tired and bewildered her, a fact that perhaps accounted for her unwonted stupidity, for stupid she undoubtedly was, and had been ever since she bought the Shepherd and Shepherdess.

Anyhow, after paying her hotel bill and her taxi to the station, planting her ample form in front of the ticket office and demanding a ticket to Edinburgh in a loud voice, she suddenly discovered that she had not got enough money to pay for it. . . . The ten pounds had eaten a larger hole in her finances than she had realized.

The ticket office clerk smiled broadly, and rather rudely, and she withdrew from his presence feeling embarrassed for the first time in her life. . . . Now what was she to do? . . . Obviously she must wire to James, drive to the bank and get some more money and then catch the next train. But she discovered that she did not want to do this. Without giving herself time to think she marched to the telegraph office and wrote out a wire in her firm, black handwriting. "Unable to come," it lied. "Writing. Love. Ada."

Then she put her heavy luggage in the cloakroom, went to the ladies' waiting room and sat down, wondering what had made her behave like this. "Any excuse to get out of staying with Elaine," said her conscience. "And you don't want to give her the Shepherd and Shepherdess."

Smiling broadly Miss Gillespie admitted that it was so. . . . Well, she had got out of staying with Elaine, but what was she to do now? . . . Raising her eyes to the opposite wall her keen gaze encountered one of those delightful pictures of scenery, half poster and half woodcut, that nowadays brighten the desolation of waiting rooms. A dark blue hill shouldered its way up into a primrose-coloured sky and down below it was the spring green of beech woods. On just such a hill, thought Miss Gillespie, would her Shepherd and Shepherdess like to tend their sheep, and in the shade of the beeches they could rest and sing their songs. She got up and looked at the picture close to. Below it was written, "The Cotswolds."

The words sent a little thrill through her. She had never been there but she had always understood there were high hills there, and grey stone houses, and clean winds such as she loved. Grasping in her hand the leather bag that contained the Shepherd and Shepherdess rolled up in her nightgown she took a taxi to Paddington station, strode to the ticket office and fastened a firm eye upon the young man within.

"A third class ticket to the Cotswolds," she said.

"Where to in the Cotswolds?" asked the young man, and his lips curled.

"I'm quite indifferent," said Miss Gillespie.

He looked at her as though he thought she'd just escaped from somewhere and gave her a ticket to Cirencester.

She caught a train at once and got there late in the afternoon. Getting out she stood on the platform and looked about her. Yes, it was nice, but it was not, somehow, just what she wanted. . . . Something seemed driving her further on. . . . She found a little local train just on the point of starting and got into it, with no ticket and not an idea of where she was going.

The train started and she sat back in her corner, the only occupant of the carriage, and smiled idiotically. She was aware that she, the practical, strong-minded Ada Gillespie, was behaving like a complete imbecile. Ever since she had bought her Shepherd and Shepherdess she had been feeling gay, carefree, irresponsible and eighteen years of age. . . . It was extraordinarily refreshing.

She took the little figures out of her bag and looked at them. . . . Darlings! . . . She was so glad that she was not giving them to her sister-in-law, but she must remember to buy Elaine a one-and-six-penny bottle of lavender water at the first opportunity.

Then, with a great wrench, she turned her mind to practical affairs. She must get out somewhere, she supposed, and find some place to put up at while she wired for more money. Really, mad as this was it was rather fun. She, in common with all humanity, had always felt the lure of country stations and had resisted with effort the temptation to get out at one of them, when she was bound for somewhere else, and explore its neighbouring charms. Now she would be able to pick and choose her station and just walk out into the blue.

The train went grinding on through the heavenly country, the hills dark and brooding against the evening sky and the woods and fields flushed with the dawning of spring. Each little station seemed more fascinating than the last, with snowdrops growing in the flower borders, blackbirds singing in the lilac bushes and charming, fresh-faced porters trundling milk-cans about in the most engaging manner; yet none of them seemed to Miss Gillespie to be quite the station of her dreams.

She had been travelling for perhaps three-quarters of an hour, and was even dozing a little, when the train stopped again with a very pronounced rattle and jolt. She opened her eyes sharply and saw a minute platform with moss growing in the crannies, a line of purple

and golden crocuses, a porter with ginger whiskers, and behind them a stretch of country even lovelier than the country that had backed the other stations.

Miss Gillespie did not hesitate for a moment. Gripping her bag in one hand and her umbrella in the other she thrust her head out of the window and shouted, "Porter!"

He of the ginger whiskers hurried towards her, assisted her to alight with a courtesy equal to that of the little Shepherd himself, seemed quite unsurprised by the fact that she had no ticket beyond Cirencester and did not know the name of the station where she was getting out at, conducted her outside into the road and then stood waiting to see how he could be of further service to her.

Miss Gillespie explained that she wanted to find cheap, very cheap, lodgings, and he pointed to an attractive lane running steeply up an even more attractive hill. Over the top of the hill, he said, was the village, and Mrs. Dobbin at the Post Office would, he knew, be ready to oblige.

Miss Gillespie thanked him and set off. Her heavy luggage was still in the London cloakroom and she had nothing to carry but her light leather bag and her umbrella. She liked the lane, though its steepness winded her, for it had primroses in its ditches and its hedges contained pussy willows puffing themselves out into pussy softness.

But her liking for the lane was nothing to her liking for what she saw when she got to the top of the hill. In front of her the ground fell steeply away into another valley, rising again to a further hill covered with beech trees. The valley and the slope below her were dotted with grey Cotswold cottages, the most delightful cottages in the world, each one apparently not built by man at all but a part of the earth itself. Each had its own garden, gay with spring flowers, and the smoke from the chimneys went straight up into the still air, as though the sun and the clouds of heaven and the fire and the smoke of earth were linked together by fine, tenuous cords.

But there was something even better than this. To Miss Gillespie's right, at the very crest of the hill, a tiny Cotswold Manor House stood in a tangled garden. It was built of grey stone and seemed, like the cottages, to be part of the earth itself. Its windows looked north,

south, east and west and beheld the whole glory of heaven with the glory of earth beneath. The gate into the moss-grown drive was broken at the hinges and propped open with a stone, the garden was full of weeds and a big placard that leaned drunkenly over the wall said, "For Sale."

"Whoever is selling that house," said Miss Gillespie forcibly, "is a fool."

And at this moment two most unpleasant gentlemen, with bowler hats on the back of their heads and red noses in the front, came down the drive and out through the gate. They had pencils stuck behind their ears and were telling each other what they thought of each other in loud cockney voices.

"What's happening here?" demanded Miss Gillespie.

"There's bin an auction, ma'am," said one of them. "A sale of furniture and effects. But you're too late, ma'am. It's over and the stuff gone."

"Has the house been bought?" asked Miss Gillespie.

"No, ma'am," said the smaller of the two, gloomily. "No central 'eating."

"How much is asked for it?" demanded Miss Gillespie.

"Two thousand five hundred pounds."

"I'll buy it," she said.

Now Miss Gillespie was normally a very sensible woman and would not have dreamed of taking up capital to buy a house she could not afford without first inquiring into the condition of the drains, but ever since she bought the Arcadian Shepherd and Shepherdess she had been totally irresponsible.

Now she strode through the gate and up the drive, followed by the two auctioneers, whose mouths had fallen open and whose bowlers had been pushed further back than ever that they might scratch their perplexed heads in comfort.

Half-way up the drive they met an old scarecrow of a man coming down it. He looked blear-eyed and wretched and was shambling along as though it was too much trouble even to pick his feet up properly.

"Who are you?" demanded Miss Gillespie.

The old man stopped a moment and raised miserable eyes to her face, but said nothing.

"He was the gardener, ma'am," volunteered one of the auctioneers. "He's discharged, of course."

"Have you been here long?" asked Miss Gillespie.

The old scarecrow, after a preliminary rumbling in his throat, produced a croaking reply. "Forty year, m'm."

"And now you're turned out?"

"Yes, m'm."

He made no complaint, he was too far gone in desolation for that; he merely stood stock still waiting indifferently until she had finished with him. Miss Gillespie looked at him. She saw that he was far too old and dilapidated to be capable of much work. He probably had nothing in front of him now but that final humiliation of the poor, the workhouse.

"I'm going to buy this house," she informed him. "I like to do my own gardening but I shall require assistance. I will take you on for the rest of your life at two pound a week."

And at that she turned and left him, with his old mouth falling open and his battered old hat, like those of the auctioneers, creeping further and further down the back of his bewildered head as he scratched it.

Miss Gillespie, motioning to the auctioneers to wait outside for her, walked firmly up the steps of her house and into its cool, spacious hall. Here she stood, her booted feet planted well apart, and sniffed. One sniff was sufficient to tell her that the house contained defective drains, dry-rot and no water laid on upstairs. Then she walked on down the hall, opened a door on the right and went in.

It was the drawing-room. It was panelled in white and it had an Adams mantelpiece. Its windows looked over the woods and hills of Arcadia towards the sunset.

In the centre of the room stood a middle-aged woman in a black dress with a purple silk apron. She had been crying, for her eyelids were red, and her hands, Miss Gillespie noticed, were so swollen with rheumatism that they must be nearly useless.

"Who are you?" asked Miss Gillespie.

The woman seemed too stupefied by grief to be astonished at Miss Gillespie's entrance and she answered dully, "I was the housekeeper here, ma'am."

"Been here long?"

"Thirty years. . . . And my daughter, my widow daughter, was with me as housemaid. . . . And her ladyship let the children bide with us."

"How many children?"

"Five. . . . We don't seem to know what to do now."

"Did her ladyship own this house?"

"Yes, ma'am. Lady Carroll. She died very sudden-like and her nephew's sold the place."

The last sentence was spoken vindictively and Miss Gillespie could see the whole situation. . . . A woman clinging to her home when she could no longer afford to keep it up, and then dying suddenly without leaving provision for her old servants. . . . The nephew, no doubt, could do nothing else but sell.

"Well," she said briskly, "I'm going to buy this house and I want servants who will love it as much as I do myself. I will re-engage you and your daughter. . . . And the children, of course, shall live with you as before."

The woman didn't seem to be able to say anything. Her mouth kept opening and shutting as though she were a fish, and her hands trembled. Miss Gillespie, who hated any display of emotion, was afraid she was going to break down and hastily went on talking.

"And so the furniture has gone?" she said.

"Yes, ma'am. The china and silver and the best bits of the furniture were sold weeks ago, and they auctioned the rest to-day, all but my own few things." And then she did break down. "Oh, ma'am," she sobbed, "it can't be true, what you say!"

"Perfectly true," snapped Miss Gillespie, terribly embarrassed, and patting her shoulder clumsily. "Now for heaven's sake go and make yourself a cup of tea. . . . And you can make me one too. . . . Strong, mind, with two lumps of sugar."

The woman went and Miss Gillespie was left alone to realize the situation in all its grimness. She was going to buy a house she couldn't

afford. It was in a bad state of repair. The garden was a wilderness. She had taken upon herself the care of elderly and ailing servants and five young children. Before her stretched a period of struggle and poverty. She would have no holidays and no freedom. She would be absolutely tied. She would be, again, all that she had been so much pitied for being in the past. . . . Miss Gillespie threw up her head and the light of battle was in her eyes. She had not felt so happy since the old hard-worked days in Cumberland.

And then, with a thrill of pleasure, she suddenly remembered her Shepherd and Shepherdess. Eagerly she opened her bag and took them out from between the folds of her viyella nightdress. She put them on the Adams mantelpiece, with the looking-glass behind them reflecting their charms and in front of them the windows with their view over Arcadian hills, and instantly she had that sense of delight that comes when beautiful things are in their right setting.

The door opened and the housekeeper came in with Miss Gillespie's tea. At the sight of the Shepherd and Shepherdess she came, as she said afterwards, "all over queer." Her eyes bulged and the tea slopped over into the saucer.

"My good woman," said Miss Gillespie sharply, "what in the world is the matter?"

"The Shepherd and Shepherdess!" she gasped.

"Well, what about them?"

"That's where they've always stood!"

THE CASE OF PROMETHEUS

Max Beerbohm

MR. RICHARD MITCHELL, THAN WHOM NO TRAVELLER IS HELD to be more reliable and (if I may say so) more prosaic, returned to this country at the close of last year, after a long tour through Asiatic Russia. In the paper which he read lately before the Royal Geographical Society he reported a most curious and most important discovery. It seems that, in surveying the eastern side of Mount Caucasus, he espied through his telescope what appeared to be a naked figure on a rock near the mountain's summit. When he reached the little village of Tzeva in the valley, he told what he had seen to his innkeeper, who crossed himself repeatedly and was silent. Pressed by Mr. Mitchell to say if he knew anything of the figure, the man said that it must have been the *putchki velkotsin* (white captive); more he could not, or would not, communicate. Mr. Mitchell learnt from other peasants that the figure had been there for many years: indeed, they thought, ever since God made the world. He offered money to any one who would make an ascent with him—it seemed hopeless, at that time of year, that any man could without help gain so high an altitude—but the peasants, one and all, refused his offer with every manifestation of superstitious awe. Mr. Mitchell then decided that he would try the ascent alone, and, next day, he set forth. He reached the spot whence he had first seen the figure, and, after trying various paths, managed at length to reach a point some three hundred feet below the summit. Beyond this point the ground was utterly impassable. "The sun was low in the west," says Mr. Mitchell, "but I could see clearly what was indeed a naked man chained by the wrists and ankles to an upstanding rock. I noticed that his body was covered with scars, but at first I was not sure whether he was alive or dead.

I shouted and waved my knapsack in the air. The captive turned his head in my direction, thus enabling me to get a full view of his face, which was that of a young man, though horribly drawn, emaciated, and rigid with exposure. His hair hung down over his shoulders like a mantle, and it was weighted with long icicles. I shouted again. The captive uttered a faint moan. I could see the tears stream down his cheeks, freezing as they fell. He seemed to be trying to speak, but at that moment my attention was distracted to an enormous golden eagle—larger than any I have ever seen—which had appeared in the sky and was wheeling slowly over the summit. In a few moments the creature swooped suddenly down and began tearing at the wretched man's body. The sight sickened me so that I had to turn my head away, cursing my impotence to interfere. When I looked again, the bird was already soaring high in the air. In the failing light I could see that the captive had fainted and that blood was flowing from a long wound in his side." Night was falling, and after a desperate and fruitless effort to reach the summit, Mr. Mitchell felt that he himself must either perish of exposure or re-descend the mountain. So agitated was he by what had passed that it was some hours before he realised, suddenly, that he had seen Prometheus. At Truoff, two days later, he communicated with the military governor of the province, whose only reply was to send him with an escort across the frontier.

That this story is fiction, no one who knows Mr. Mitchell's record could possibly aver. That Mr. Mitchell was a prey to one of those illusions which do sometimes beset men on very high altitudes, is an equally untenable theory—as Mr. Mitchell himself said in the course of his lecture, he is "an old mountaineer and had seen nothing unusual on the Himalayas." The only question is whether the captive on the mountain is really (as Mr. Mitchell declares, and as I myself am persuaded) to be identified with Prometheus. It is known that Prometheus, by order of Jupiter, was chained to the summit of this mountain; that his punishment was to last for thirty thousand years; that on every day of all those years he was to be preyed upon by Jupiter's own bird. So far, so good. But Professor Thorsby, in a letter to the *Times,* points out that Hercules is generally believed to have

rescued Prometheus thirty years after sentence was passed. Now, this belief rests on very dubious authority. In the works of Diodorus there is no reference to any such rescue, and Sidonius Strabo himself, in the *Quaestiones Olympianae*, expressly states that no such rescue occurred. At the very time when, according to Hesiod, Hercules was seen in the region of Mount Caucasus, he was actually in Central Lydia, a slave at the court of Omphale, that frivolous Queen. And inasmuch as, during that period—and, indeed, during the rest of his mortal life—he was expiating his sins against the gods, and carefully qualifying for Olympus, it is in the highest degree improbable that he would have thrown away his chance of apotheosis by rescuing from divine wrath the very man who was of all men most hateful to Jupiter. Indeed, this rescue is, I think, a myth: one of those many exploits which have been vaguely attributed to Hercules, as are conquests to Don Juan and *mots* to Sheridan. That Prometheus was still Vinctus in the days of Sulla, I shall anon suggest. That he is Vinctus to this day—and none, not even Professor Thorsby, denies that Mr. Mitchell has made out a good *prima facie* case to that effect—is a most surprising and shocking matter for our reflection. Since the middle ages, many philosophers have dwelt on the possibility that the gods of Greece and Rome are not dead. From time to time strange tales have come to us, as that Vulcan was a smith in Verona, Venus was a courtesan in Cyprus itself, and some one suspiciously like Apollo had been seen herding sheep in Picardy. But since Prometheus has been seen in durance on Mount Caucasus it would seem that the gods, so far from trailing a menial existence on this earth, are actually still potent in Olympus. It is not my intention to foreshadow here the wide-reaching influence which Mr. Mitchell's discovery is bound to exercise on the future of mankind. Modern faith and modern thought will have to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Already the bishops and the savants are in a flutter, and the librarian of the Athenæum tells me that the demand for *Lemprière* is quite unprecedented. But what most immediately concerns and moves me is the knowledge that a man is still suffering daily torture for an offence committed in the earliest age of the world's history, for an offence of which, moreover, he may not even have been guilty. At Rome,

Demetrius Apollophanes, the sophist whom Sulla brought over from Samothrace, wrote a long treatise to show that Prometheus could not possibly have stolen fire from Olympus, that his trial had been, in fact, arbitrary, vindictive, and farcical, and that he ought to be released forthwith. For this treatise, which raised a storm of popular indignation, Demetrius was arraigned *de impietate in deos*. His friends out of Court sought to prove that the real thief had been, not Prometheus, but Mercury, Jupiter's spy and pander, who had stolen the fire either to gratify a whim of Dryope, or else, as some preferred to think, merely from that naughty impulse which had made him rob Mars of his sword, Apollo of his arrows, and Venus of her girdle. It was further alleged that Jupiter, unwilling to punish a valuable servant who knew much to his discredit, had fastened on Prometheus as a kind of scape-goat. However, when the Sophist appeared in the Forum to stand his trial, public feeling was all for the prosecution. Every one felt that the honour of Olympus would be compromised by an acquittal. The judges declared that the Prometheus affair was *res judicata,* and the defendant's advocate was strictly forbidden even to mention it, though the priests of Jupiter and the priests of Mercury all came down to the Court and swore that Prometheus was guilty, and Demetrius now and again swore by all his literary works—which are not, I believe, extant—that Prometheus was innocent. The whole trial, indeed (if we can trust the fragments of Eutropius, which is its only record), seems to have been rather inconclusive. I refer to it merely with a view to showing that the guilt of Prometheus is not such a certainty as it is sometimes thought to be. If Prometheus was wrongly convicted, no miscarriage of justice was ever more hideous to contemplate. If he was convicted rightly, the sentence passed on him was quite unduly severe. If he was indeed guilty, if it is indeed to his light fingers that we mortals owe our possession of fire, ought we not to regard him as one of our greatest benefactors—a man to whose fate we cannot decently be indifferent? Fire is the element which, in its flight upward, typifies all that is noblest in man's nature, even as water is the symbol of man's weakness and inconstancy. Fire is the sacred element. Water, which cleanses, can corrupt also. Fire cleanses. It alone has power to refine and purge truly. Without it we

walk in darkness and die in cold. And he, the son of Iapetus, by whom, perhaps, we were made partakers of this Olympian treasure, is still chained to the rock, facing the terror of an old torment eternally renewed. Every evening, as the sun is setting, the eagle wheels over Mount Caucasus. Lower and lower it wheels, while he who is its deathless prey shivers in his chains, and gazes up to it with terror in his eyes, and in a faint voice cries out for pity from those who are always pitiless. The eagle hovers down. It pauses on spread wings, and Prometheus sees near to him the staring yellow eyes, the talons, the beak that will anon be ripping its familiar meal from his torn flesh.

Enough of words! Prometheus must be rescued, and that without more delay. It is I who shall rescue him. To leave him in his present position were a disgrace, not merely to Russia, but to the whole civilised world. These words have been written amidst the preparations for my departure. From Paris I shall travel straight through Europe, and, once my foot is on Mount Caucasus, I shall not rest till I have reached the summit. Mr. Mitchell declares that summit to be inaccessible till mid-summer. I shall find means to reach it now, nevertheless. I shall hail the captive with words of good cheer—χαῖρε, Ἰαπετιονίδη!—and with my gun I shall shoot the eagle as it hovers over him at sunset, and with a file I shall free him of the rusty fetters that bind him to the rock. Dodging any thunderbolts that may be hurled at me, I shall pick up the shot eagle, and shall lead Prometheus gently down the mountain-side. When we reach the inn in the valley, I shall provide him with the tweed suit which I have ordered for him and am taking with me, the fur coat, the dressing-case whose fittings are marked Π. We shall be in London, if all go well, in time for the latter part of the season. I am sure Prometheus will be much lionised. But even if he be not the success that I anticipate, I shall, at least, have done my duty, and the bird of Jupiter, stuffed, under a glass case, will be always an ornament to my study and a pleasant souvenir of my trip.

THE ROAD FROM COLONUS

E. M. Forster

I

FOR NO VERY INTELLIGIBLE REASON, MR. LUCAS HAD HURRIED AHEAD of his party. He was perhaps reaching the age at which independence becomes valuable, because it is so soon to be lost. Tired of attention and consideration, he liked breaking away from the younger members, to ride by himself, and to dismount unassisted. Perhaps he also relished that more subtle pleasure of being kept waiting for lunch, and of telling the others on their arrival that it was of no consequence.

So, with childish impatience, he battered the animal's sides with his heels, and made the muleteer bang it with a thick stick and prick it with a sharp one, and jolted down the hill sides through clumps of flowering shrubs and stretches of anemones and asphodel, till he heard the sound of running water, and came in sight of the group of plane trees where they were to have their meal.

Even in England those trees would have been remarkable, so huge were they, so interlaced, so magnificently clothed in quivering green. And here in Greece they were unique, the one cool spot in that hard brilliant landscape, already scorched by the heat of an April sun. In their midst was hidden a tiny Khan or country inn, a frail mud building with a broad wooden balcony in which sat an old woman spinning, while a small brown pig, eating orange peel, stood beside her. On the wet earth below squatted two children, playing some primaeval game with their fingers; and their mother, none too clean either, was messing with some rice inside. As Mrs. Forman would have said, it was all very Greek, and the fastidious Mr. Lucas felt thankful that they were bringing their own food with them, and should eat it in the open air.

Still, he was glad to be there—the muleteer had helped him off—and glad that Mrs. Forman was not there to forestall his opinions—glad even that he should not see Ethel for quite half an hour. Ethel was his youngest daughter, still unmarried. She was unselfish and affectionate, and it was generally understood that she was to devote her life to her father, and be the comfort of his old age. Mrs. Forman always referred to her as Antigone, and Mr. Lucas tried to settle down to the role of Oedipus, which seemed the only one that public opinion allowed him.

He had this in common with Oedipus, that he was growing old. Even to himself it had become obvious. He had lost interest in other people's affairs, and seldom attended when they spoke to him. He was fond of talking himself but often forgot what he was going to say, and even when he succeeded, it seldom seemed worth the effort. His phrases and gestures had become stiff and set, his anecdotes, once so successful, fell flat, his silence was as meaningless as his speech. Yet he had led a healthy, active life, had worked steadily, made money, educated his children. There was nothing and no one to blame: he was simply growing old.

At the present moment, here he was in Greece, and one of the dreams of his life was realized. Forty years ago he had caught the fever of Hellenism, and all his life he had felt that could he but visit that land, he would not have lived in vain. But Athens had been dusty, Delphi wet, Thermopylae flat, and he had listened with amazement and cynicism to the rapturous exclamations of his companions. Greece was like England: it was a man who was growing old, and it made no difference whether that man looked at the Thames or the Eurotas. It was his last hope of contradicting that logic of experience, and it was failing.

Yet Greece had done something for him, though he did not know it. It had made him discontented, and there are stirrings of life in discontent. He knew that he was not the victim of continual ill-luck. Something great was wrong, and he was pitted against no mediocre or accidental enemy. For the last month a strange desire had possessed him to die fighting.

"Greece is the land for young people," he said to himself as he stood

under the plane trees, "but I will enter into it, I will possess it. Leaves shall be green again, water shall be sweet, the sky shall be blue. They were so forty years ago, and I will win them back. I do mind being old, and I will pretend no longer."

He took two steps forward, and immediately cold waters were gurgling over his ankle.

"Where does the water come from?" he asked himself. "I do not even know that." He remembered that all the hill sides were dry; yet here the road was suddenly covered with flowing streams.

He stopped still in amazement, saying: "Water out of a tree—out of a hollow tree? I never saw nor thought of that before."

For the enormous plane that leant towards the Khan was hollow—it had been burnt out for charcoal—and from its living trunk there gushed an impetuous spring, coating the bark with fern and moss, and flowing over the mule track to create fertile meadows beyond. The simple country folk had paid to beauty and mystery such tribute as they could, for in the rind of the tree a shrine was cut, holding a lamp and a little picture of the Virgin, inheritor of the Naiad's and Dryad's joint abode.

"I never saw anything so marvellous before," said Mr. Lucas. "I could even step inside the trunk and see where the water comes from."

For a moment he hesitated to violate the shrine. Then he remembered with a smile his own thought—"the place shall be mine; I will enter it and possess it"—and leapt almost aggressively on to a stone within.

The water pressed up steadily and noiselessly from the hollow roots and hidden crevices of the plane, forming a wonderful amber pool ere it spilt over the lip of bark on to the earth outside. Mr. Lucas tasted it and it was sweet, and when he looked up the black funnel of the trunk he saw sky which was blue, and some leaves which were green; and he remembered, without smiling, another of his thoughts.

Others had been before him—indeed he had a curious sense of companionship. Little votive offerings to the presiding Power were fastened on to the bark—tiny arms and legs and eyes in tin, grotesque models of the brain or the heart—all tokens of some recovery of strength or wisdom or love. There was no such thing as the solitude of nature,

for the sorrows and joys of humanity had pressed even into the bosom of a tree. He spread out his arms and steadied himself against the soft charred wood, and then slowly leant back, till his body was resting on the trunk behind. His eyes closed, and he had the strange feeling of one who is moving, yet at peace—the feeling of the swimmer, who, after long struggling with chopping seas, finds that after all the tide will sweep him to his goal.

So he lay motionless, conscious only of the stream below his feet, and that all things were a stream, in which he was moving.

He was aroused at last by a shock—the shock of an arrival perhaps, for when he opened his eyes, something unimagined, indefinable, had passed over all things, and made them intelligible and good.

There was meaning in the stoop of the old woman over her work, and in the quick motions of the little pig, and in her diminishing globe of wool. A young man came singing over the streams on a mule, and there was beauty in his pose and sincerity in his greeting. The sun made no accidental patterns upon the spreading roots of the trees, and there was intention in the nodding clumps of asphodel, and in the music of the water. To Mr. Lucas, who, in a brief space of time, had discovered not only Greece, but England and all the world and life, there seemed nothing ludicrous in the desire to hang within the tree another votive offering—a little model of an entire man.

"Why, here's papa, playing at being Merlin."

All unnoticed they had arrived—Ethel, Mrs. Forman, Mr. Graham, and the English-speaking dragoman. Mr. Lucas peered out at them suspiciously. They had suddenly become unfamiliar, and all that they did seemed strained and coarse.

"Allow me to give you a hand," said Mr. Graham, a young man who was always polite to his elders.

Mr. Lucas felt annoyed. "Thank you, I can manage perfectly well by myself," he replied. His foot slipped as he stepped out of the tree, and went into the spring.

"Oh papa, my papa!" said Ethel, "what are you doing? Thank goodness I have got a change for you on the mule."

She tended him carefully, giving him clean socks and dry boots,

and then sat him down on the rug beside the lunch basket, while she went with the others to explore the grove.

They came back in ecstasies, in which Mr. Lucas tried to join. But he found them intolerable. Their enthusiasm was superficial, commonplace, and spasmodic. They had no perception of the coherent beauty that was flowering around them. He tried at least to explain his feelings, and what he said was:

"I am altogether pleased with the appearance of this place. It impresses me very favourably. The trees are fine, remarkably fine for Greece, and there is something very poetic in the spring of clear running water. The people too seem kindly and civil. It is decidedly an attractive place."

Mrs. Forman upbraided him for his tepid praise.

"Oh, it is a place in a thousand!" she cried. "I could live and die here! I really would stop if I had not to be back at Athens! It reminds me of the Colonus of Sophocles."

"Well, *I* must stop," said Ethel. "I positively must."

"Yes, do! You and your father! Antigone and Oedipus. Of course you must stop at Colonus!"

Mr. Lucas was almost breathless with excitement. When he stood within the tree, he had believed that his happiness would be independent of locality. But these few minutes' conversation had undeceived him. He no longer trusted himself to journey through the world, for old thoughts, old wearinesses might be waiting to rejoin him as soon as he left the shade of the planes, and the music of the virgin water. To sleep in the Khan with the gracious, kind-eyed country people, to watch the bats flit about within the globe of shade, and see the moon turn the golden patterns into silver—one such night would place him beyond relapse, and confirm him for ever in the kingdom he had regained. But all his lips could say was: "I should be willing to put in a night here."

"You mean a week, papa! It would be sacrilege to put in less."

"A week then, a week," said his lips, irritated at being corrected, while his heart was leaping with joy. All through lunch he spoke to them no more, but watched the place he should know so well, and the people who would so soon be his companions and friends. The

inmates of the Khan only consisted of an old woman, a middle-aged woman, a young man and two children, and to none of them had he spoken, yet he loved them as he loved everything that moved or breathed or existed beneath the benedictory shade of the planes.

"*En route!*" said the shrill voice of Mrs. Forman. "Ethel! Mr. Graham! The best of things must end."

"To-night," thought Mr. Lucas, "they will light the little lamp by the shrine. And when we all sit together on the balcony, perhaps they will tell me which offerings they put up."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Lucas," said Graham, "but they want to fold up the rug you are sitting on."

Mr. Lucas got up, saying to himself: "Ethel shall go to bed first, and then I will try to tell them about my offering too—for it is a thing I must do. I think they will understand if I am left with them alone."

Ethel touched him on the cheek. "Papa! I've called you three times. All the mules are here."

"Mules? What mules?"

"Our mules. We're all waiting. Oh, Mr. Graham, do help my father on."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Ethel."

"My dearest papa, we must start. You know we have to get to Olympia to-night."

Mr. Lucas in pompous, confident tones replied: "I always did wish, Ethel, that you had a better head for plans. You know perfectly well that we are putting in a week here. It is your own suggestion."

Ethel was startled into impoliteness. "What a perfectly ridiculous idea. You must have known I was joking. Of course I meant I wished we could."

"Ah! if we could only do what we wished!" sighed Mrs. Forman, already seated on her mule.

"Surely," Ethel continued in calmer tones, "you didn't think I meant it."

"Most certainly I did. I have made all my plans on the supposition that we are stopping here, and it will be extremely inconvenient, indeed, impossible for me to start."

He delivered this remark with an air of great conviction, and Mrs. Forman and Mr. Graham had to turn away to hide their smiles.

"I am sorry I spoke so carelessly; it was wrong of me. But, you know, we can't break up our party, and even one night here would make us miss the boat at Patras."

Mrs. Forman, in an aside, called Mr. Graham's attention to the excellent way in which Ethel managed her father.

"I don't mind about the Patras boat. You said that we should stop here, and we are stopping."

It seemed as if the inhabitants of the Khan had divined in some mysterious way that the altercation touched them. The old woman stopped her spinning, while the young man and the two children stood behind Mr. Lucas, as if supporting him.

Neither arguments nor entreaties moved him. He said little, but he was absolutely determined, because for the first time he saw his daily life aright. What need had he to return to England? Who would miss him? His friends were dead or cold. Ethel loved him in a way, but, as was right, she had other interests. His other children he seldom saw. He had only one other relative, his sister Julia, whom he both feared and hated. It was no effort to struggle. He would be a fool as well as a coward if he stirred from the place which brought him happiness and peace.

At last Ethel, to humour him, and not disinclined to air her modern Greek, went into the Khan with the astonished dragoman to look at the rooms. The woman inside received them with loud welcomes, and the young man, when no one was looking, began to lead Mr. Lucas' mule to the stable.

"Drop it, you brigand!" shouted Graham, who always declared that foreigners could understand English if they chose. He was right, for the man obeyed, and they all stood waiting for Ethel's return.

She emerged at last, with close-gathered skirts, followed by the dragoman bearing the little pig, which he had bought at a bargain.

"My dear papa, I will do all I can for you, but stop in that Khan —no."

"Are there—fleas?" asked Mrs. Forman.

Ethel intimated that "fleas" was not the word.

"Well, I am afraid that settles it," said Mrs. Forman, "I know how particular Mr. Lucas is."

"It does not settle it," said Mr. Lucas. "Ethel, you go on. I do not want you. I don't know why I ever consulted you. I shall stop here alone."

"That is absolute nonsense," said Ethel, losing her temper. "How can you be left alone at your age? How would you get your meals or your bath? All your letters are waiting for you at Patras. You'll miss the boat. That means missing the London operas, and upsetting all your engagements for the month. And as if you could travel by yourself!"

"They might knife you," was Mr. Graham's contribution.

The Greeks said nothing; but whenever Mr. Lucas looked their way, they beckoned him towards the Khan. The children would even have drawn him by the coat, and the old woman on the balcony stopped her almost completed spinning, and fixed him with mysterious appealing eyes. As he fought, the issue assumed gigantic proportions, and he believed that he was not merely stopping because he had regained youth or seen beauty or found happiness, but because in that place and with those people a supreme event was awaiting him which would transfigure the face of the world. The moment was so tremendous that he abandoned words and arguments as useless, and rested on the strength of his mighty unrevealed allies: silent men, murmuring water, and whispering trees. For the whole place called with one voice, articulate to him, and his garrulous opponents became every minute more meaningless and absurd. Soon they would be tired and go chattering away into the sun, leaving him to the cool grove and the moonlight and the destiny he foresaw.

Mrs. Forman and the dragoman had indeed already started, amid the piercing screams of the little pig, and the struggle might have gone on indefinitely if Ethel had not called in Mr. Graham.

"Can you help me?" she whispered. "He is absolutely unmanageable."

"I'm no good at arguing—but if I could help you in any other way——" and he looked down complacently at his well-made figure.

Ethel hesitated. Then she said: "Help me in any way you can. After all, it is for his good that we do it."

"Then have his mule led up behind him."

So when Mr. Lucas thought he had gained the day, he suddenly felt himself lifted off the ground, and sat sideways on the saddle, and at the same time the mule started off at a trot. He said nothing, for he had nothing to say, and even his face showed little emotion as he felt the shade pass and heard the sound of the water cease. Mr. Graham was running at his side, hat in hand, apologizing.

"I know I had no business to do it, and I do beg your pardon awfully. But I do hope that some day you too will feel that I was—damn!"

A stone had caught him in the middle of the back. It was thrown by the little boy, who was pursuing them along the mule track. He was followed by his sister, also throwing stones.

Ethel screamed to the dragoman, who was some way ahead with Mrs. Forman, but before he could rejoin them, another adversary appeared. It was the young Greek, who had cut them off in front, and now dashed down at Mr. Lucas' bridle. Fortunately Graham was an expert boxer, and it did not take him a moment to beat down the youth's feeble defence, and to send him sprawling with a bleeding mouth into the asphodel. By this time the dragoman had arrived, the children, alarmed at the fate of their brother, had desisted, and the rescue party, if such it is to be considered, retired in disorder to the trees.

"Little devils!" said Graham, laughing with triumph. "That's the modern Greek all over. Your father meant money if he stopped, and they consider we were taking it out of their pocket."

"Oh, they are terrible—simple savages! I don't know how I shall ever thank you. You've saved my father."

"I only hope you didn't think me brutal."

"No," replied Ethel with a little sigh. "I admire strength."

Meanwhile the cavalcade reformed, and Mr. Lucas, who, as Mrs. Forman said, bore his disappointment wonderfully well, was put comfortably on to his mule. They hurried up the opposite hillside, fearful of another attack, and it was not until they had left the eventful

place far behind that Ethel found an opportunity to speak to her father and ask his pardon for the way she had treated him.

"You seemed so different, dear father, and you quite frightened me. Now I feel that you are your old self again."

He did not answer, and she concluded that he was not unnaturally offended at her behaviour.

By one of those curious tricks of mountain scenery, the place they had left an hour before suddenly reappeared far below them. The Khan was hidden under the green dome, but in the open there still stood three figures, and through the pure air rose up a faint cry of defiance or farewell.

Mr. Lucas stopped irresolutely, and let the reins fall from his hand.

"Come, father dear," said Ethel gently.

He obeyed, and in another moment a spur of the hill hid the dangerous scene for ever.

II

It was breakfast time, but the gas was alight, owing to the fog. Mr. Lucas was in the middle of an account of a bad night he had spent. Ethel, who was to be married in a few weeks, had her arms on the table, listening.

"First the door bell rang, then you came back from the theatre. Then the dog started, and after the dog the cat. And at three in the morning a young hooligan passed by singing. Oh yes: then there was the water gurgling in the pipe above my head."

"I think that was only the bath water running away," said Ethel, looking rather worn.

"Well, there's nothing I dislike more than running water. It's perfectly impossible to sleep in the house. I shall give it up. I shall give notice next quarter. I shall tell the landlord plainly, 'The reason I am giving up the house is this: it is perfectly impossible to sleep in it.' If he says—says—well, what has he got to say?"

"Some more toast, father?"

"Thank you, my dear." He took it, and there was an interval of peace.

But he soon recommenced. "I'm not going to submit to the prac-

tising next door as tamely as they think. I wrote and told them so—didn't I?"

"Yes," said Ethel, who had taken care that the letter should not reach. "I have seen the governess, and she has promised to arrange it differently. And Aunt Julia hates noise. It will sure to be all right."

Her aunt, being the only unattached member of the family, was coming to keep house for her father when she left him. The reference was not a happy one, and Mr. Lucas commenced a series of half articulate sighs, which was only stopped by the arrival of the post.

"Oh, what a parcel!" cried Ethel. "For me! What can it be! Greek stamps. This is most exciting!"

It proved to be some asphodel bulbs, sent by Mrs. Forman from Athens for planting in the conservatory.

"Doesn't it bring it all back? You remember the asphodels, father. And all wrapped up in Greek newspapers. I wonder if I can read them still. I used to be able to, you know."

She rattled on, hoping to conceal the laughter of the children next door—a favourite source of querulousness at breakfast time.

"Listen to me! 'A rural disaster.' Oh, I've hit on something sad. But never mind. 'Last Tuesday at Plataniste, in the province of Messenia, a shocking tragedy occurred. A large tree'—aren't I getting on well?—'blew down in the night and'—wait a minute—oh, dear! 'crushed to death the five occupants of the little Khan there, who had apparently been sitting in the balcony. The bodies of Maria Rhomaides, the aged proprietress, and of her daughter, aged forty-six, were easily recognizable, whereas that of her grandson'—oh, the rest is really too horrid; I wish I had never tried it, and what's more I feel to have heard the name Plataniste before. We didn't stop there, did we, in the spring?"

"We had lunch," said Mr. Lucas, with a faint expression of trouble on his vacant face. "Perhaps it was where the dragoman bought the pig."

"Of course," said Ethel in a nervous voice. "Where the dragoman bought the little pig. How terrible!"

"Very terrible!" said her father, whose attention was wandering

to the noisy children next door. Ethel suddenly started to her feet with genuine interest.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "This is an old paper. It happened not lately but in April—the night of Tuesday the eighteenth—and we—we must have been there in the afternoon."

"So we were," said Mr. Lucas. She put her hand to her heart, scarcely able to speak.

"Father, dear father, I must say it: you wanted to stop there. All those people, those poor half-savage people, tried to keep you, and they're dead. The whole place, it says, is in ruins, and even the stream has changed its course. Father, dear, if it had not been for me, and if Arthur had not helped me, you must have been killed."

Mr. Lucas waved his hand irritably. "It is not a bit of good speaking to the governess, I shall write to the landlord and say, 'The reason I am giving up the house is this: the dog barks, the children next door are intolerable, and I cannot stand the noise of running water.' "

Ethel did not check his babbling. She was aghast at the narrowness of the escape, and for a long time kept silence. At last she said: "Such a marvellous deliverance does make one believe in Providence."

Mr. Lucas, who was still composing his letter to the landlord, did not reply.

MR. VALIANT SUMMONED

John Bunyan

AFTER THIS, IT WAS NOISED ABROAD THAT MR. VALIANT-FOR-TRUTH was taken with a Summons, by the same Post as the other, and had this for a Token that the Summons was true, That his Pitcher was broken at the Fountain. When he understood it, he called for his Friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Fathers, and tho' with great Difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the Trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My Sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage, and my Courage and Skill, to him that can get it. My Marks and Scars I carry with me, to be a Witness for me, that I have fought his Battles who now will be my Rewarder. When the Day that he must go hence, was come, many accompanied him to the River side, into which, as he went, he said, Death, where is thy Sting? And as he went down deeper, he said, Grave, where is thy Victory? So he passed over, and all the Trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Ovid

IN THE PHRYGIAN HILLS AN OAK-TREE STANDS BY THE SIDE OF A linden, both surrounded by a low wall; I have seen the place myself. Not far from this place there is a marsh, once habitable land, now water, haunted by divers and coots. To this place Jupiter came, once upon a time, in mortal guise, and with him Mercury, without his wings or wand. To a thousand homes they came, seeking a place for rest; and a thousand homes were bolted against them. Still, one house did receive them, a little cottage, to be sure, humble, thatched with straw and rushes. A good old woman, Baucis, and her old husband Philemon had been married in that house when they were young, and had grown old there together; they made their poverty light by admitting it, and by bearing it with no mean spirit. It would make no difference if you asked for masters or servants in that house; the two of them were the whole household; the two of them give the orders and obey them.

So when the gods came to this humble home, and ducking their heads, came through the low doorway, the old man set out a bench, and bade them rest their limbs, while over the bench the old wife threw a rough covering. Then she raked aside the warm ashes on the hearth and fanned to life yesterday's fire, feeding it with leaves and dry bark, blowing them to flame with the breath of her old body. Then she took down from the roof some fine-split wood and dry twigs, broke them up and placed them under the small copper kettle. From the well-watered garden her husband had brought in a head of cabbage, which she took and stripped of its outer leaves. In the meantime he took a forked stick and reached down a side of bacon which hung from the black beams, and he cut off a lean strip, and put it to

cook in the boiling water. And they keep the talk going while these preparations are being made.

A mattress of soft sedge-grass was placed on a couch with frame and feet of willow. Over this they threw a spread, usually reserved for holiday occasions, but even this was poor and frayed, a very good match for the willow couch. Here the gods reclined. The old woman, her skirts tucked up, set the table with trembling hands. One of the legs was too short; she used a shell to prop it up and make it even. Then when it was level, she scoured the surface with a handful of green mint. Next she set on the table olives, green ones and ripe ones, and some autumnal wild cherries pickled in the lees of wine; endive, radishes, cottage cheese, and eggs, lightly turned in the warm ashes, all these being served in earthen dishes. After this course, a mixing bowl of the same expensive ware was set on the table, with beechwood cups, coated inside with yellow wax. There was a short wait, and then the steaming victuals were brought from the fire, and wine, none too old, was served, and the final course made ready. This time there were nuts and figs, dried dates, plums and apples in sweet-smelling baskets, purple grapes just picked from the vines, and in the center of the board a comb of clear white honey. And over and beyond all this, were kindly faces, and a good will neither sluggish nor poverty-stricken.

Meanwhile they saw that the wine-bowl, as often as it was drained, kept filling up of its own accord, and that the wine, all by itself, kept brimming up again. The two old folks were frightened and amazed; with upturned hands they prayed, begging pardon, trembling old things, for their scanty fare and meager entertainment. They had one goose, the guardian of their small estate, and now they decided to catch and kill him to please their divine guests. But the goose was swift of wing, and the slow old people almost ran out of breath in trying to catch him. For a long time he kept out of their reach, and finally seemed to flee for refuge to the feet of the gods themselves. Then the gods told them not to kill the goose.

"We are gods," they said, "and this wicked neighborhood shall be punished as it deserves; but you shall be saved and protected. Only leave your house and come with us and go with us to that tall moun-

tain over there." They obeyed, and tottered along, using their staves, up the long mountain slope. They were almost at the summit, within arrow-shot, when they looked back and saw the whole country-side flooded with water, only their own house above the waves. And even while they were wondering at this, and grieving for the fate of their neighbors, their old house, small even for the two of them, turned into a temple. Marble columns took the place of the forked wooden props; the yellow straw turned yellow gold; the gates were richly carved, the ground was floored with marble. Then Jupiter calmly spoke: "O good old man, and wife, worthy of the good husband, tell us what you would like to have." Philemon spoke a few words with Baucis, then turning to the gods, revealed their common decision: "We ask to be priests and to guard your temple; and since our years together have been happy ones, we pray that the same hour may carry us both off; let me never see the tomb of my wife, and let her never see mine."

Their request was granted. As long as they lived, they had charge of the temple. And at last, when they were very old indeed, and happened to be standing in front of the temple, talking of olden times, Baucis saw Philemon putting forth leaves, and likewise Philemon saw Baucis so, and as the tree-top formed over their faces, they had time for one phrase only, "Farewell, my dear!", and the bark closed over and covered their mouths. Even to this day the local peasants point out the two trees standing close together, and growing from one double trunk. Sensible old men (and there was no reason why they should want to fool me) told me this story. And I saw votive garlands hanging from the boughs, and added fresh ones of my own, and hanging them, I made up a verse: "The gods look after the good, and those who cherish are cherished."

(Adapted from the translation by Frank J. Miller.
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THE FAIRY GOOSE

Liam O'Flaherty

AN OLD WOMAN NAMED MARY WIGGINS GOT THREE GOOSE EGGS from a neighbour in order to hatch a clutch of goslings. She put an old clucking hen over the eggs in a wooden box with a straw bed. The hen proved to be a bad sitter. She was continually deserting the eggs, possibly because they were too big. The old woman then kept her shut up in the box. Either through weariness, want of air, or simply through pure devilment, the hen died on the eggs, two days before it was time for the shells to break.

The old woman shed tears of rage, both at the loss of her hen, of which she was particularly fond, and through fear of losing her goslings. She put the eggs near the fire in the kitchen, wrapped up in straw and old clothes. Two days afterwards, one of the eggs broke and a tiny gosling put out its beak. The other two eggs proved not to be fertile. They were thrown away.

The little gosling was a scraggy thing, so small and so delicate that the old woman, out of pity for it, wanted to kill it. But her husband said: "Kill nothing that is born in your house, woman alive. It's against the law of God." "It's a true saying, my honest fellow," said the old woman. "What comes into the world is sent by God. Praised be He."

For a long time it seemed certain that the gosling was on the point of death. It spent all the day on the hearth in the kitchen nestling among the peat ashes, either sleeping or making little tweaky noises. When it was offered food, it stretched out its beak and pecked without rising off its stomach. Gradually, however, it became hardier and went out of doors to sit in the sun, on a flat rock. When it was three months old it was still a yellowish colour with soft down, even though other goslings of that age in the village were already going to the

pond with the flock and able to flap their wings and join in the cackle at evening time, when the setting sun was being saluted. The little gosling was not aware of the other geese, even though it saw them rise on windy days and fly with a great noise from their houses to the pond. It made no effort to become a goose, and at four months of age it still could not stand on one leg.

The old woman came to believe it was a fairy. The village women agreed with her after some dispute. It was decided to tie pink and red ribbons around the gosling's neck and to sprinkle holy water on its wing feathers.

That was done, and then the gosling became sacred in the village. No boy dare throw a stone at it, or pull a feather from its wing, as they were in the habit of doing with geese, in order to get masts for the pieces of cork they floated in the pond as ships. When it began to move about every house gave it dainty things. All the human beings in the village paid more respect to it than they did to one another. The little gosling had contracted a great affection for Mary Wiggins and followed her around everywhere, so that Mary Wiggins also came to have the reputation of being a woman of wisdom. Dreams were brought to her for unravelling. She was asked to set the spell of the Big Periwinkle and to tie the Knot of the Snakes on the sides of sick cows. And when children were ill, the gosling was brought secretly at night and led three times around the house on a thin halter of horse-hair.

When the gosling was a year old it had not yet become a goose. Its down was still slightly yellowish. It did not cackle, but made curious tweaky noises. Instead of stretching out its neck and hissing at strangers, after the manner of a proper goose, it put its head to one side and made funny noises like a duck. It meditated like a hen, was afraid of water and cleansed itself by rolling on the grass. It fed on bread, fish and potatoes. It drank milk and tea. It amused itself by collecting pieces of cloth, nails, small fish-bones and the limpet shells that are thrown in a heap beside dunghills. These pieces of refuse it placed in a pile to the left of Mary Wiggins' door. And when the pile was tall, it made a sort of nest in the middle of it and lay in the nest.

Old Mrs. Wiggins had by now realised that the goose was worth money to her. So she became firmly convinced that the goose was gifted with supernatural powers. She accepted, in return for setting spells a yard of white frieze cloth for unravelling dreams, a pound of sugar for setting the spell of the Big Periwinkle and half a donkey's load of potatoes for tying the Knot of the Snakes on a sick cow's sides. Hitherto a kindly, humorous woman, she took to wearing her shawl in triangular fashion, with the tip of it reaching to her heels. She talked to herself or to her goose as she went along the road. She took long steps like a goose and rolled her eyes occasionally. When she cast a spell she went into an ecstasy during which she made inarticulate sounds, like: "boum, roum, toum, kroum."

Soon it became known all over the countryside that there was a woman of wisdom and a fairy goose in the village, and pilgrims came secretly from afar, at the dead of night, on the first night of the new moon, or when the spring tide had begun to wane.

The men soon began to raise their hats passing old Mary Wiggins' house, for it was understood, owing to the cure of Dara Foddy's cow, that the goose was indeed a good fairy and not a malicious one. Such was the excitement in the village and all over the countryside, that what was kept secret so long at last reached the ears of the parish priest.

The story was brought to him by an old woman from a neighbouring village to that in which the goose lived. Before the arrival of the goose, the other old woman had herself cast spells, not through her own merits but through those of her dead mother, who had a long time ago been the woman of wisdom in the district. The priest mounted his horse as soon as he heard the news and galloped at a break-neck speed towards Mary Wiggins' house, carrying his breviary and his stole. When he arrived in the village, he dismounted at a distance from the house, gave his horse to a boy and put his stole around his neck.

A number of the villagers gathered and some tried to warn Mary Wiggins by whistling at a distance, but conscious that they had all taken part in something forbidden by the sacred laws of orthodox religion they were afraid to run ahead of the priest into the house,

Mary Wiggins and her husband were within, making little ropes of brown horse-hair, which they sold as charms.

Outside the door, perched on her high nest, the little goose was sitting. There were pink and red ribbons around her neck and around her legs there were bands of black tape. She was quite small, a little more than half the size of a normal, healthy goose. But she had an elegant charm of manner, an air of civilisation and a consciousness of great dignity, which had grown out of the respect and love of the villagers.

When she saw the priest approach she began to cackle gently, making the tweaky noise that was peculiar to her. She descended from her perch and waddled towards him, expecting some dainty gift. For everybody who approached her gave her a dainty gift. But instead of stretching out his hand to offer her something and saying, "Beadai, beadai, come here," as was customary, the priest halted and muttered something in a harsh, frightened voice. He became red in the face and he took off his hat.

Then for the first time in her life, the little goose became terrified. She opened her beak, spread her wings and lowered her head. She began to hiss violently. Turning around, she waddled back to her nest, flapping her wings and raising a loud cackle, just like a goose, although she had never been heard to cackle loudly like a goose before. Clambering up to her high nest, she lay there, quite flat, trembling violently.

The bird, never having known fear of human beings, never having been treated with discourtesy, was so violently moved by the extraordinary phenomenon of a man wearing black clothes, scowling at her and muttering, that her animal nature was roused and showed itself with disgusting violence.

The people, watching this scene, were astounded. Some took off their caps and crossed themselves. For some reason, it was made manifest to them that the goose was an evil spirit and not the good fairy which they had supposed her to be. Terrified of the priest's stole and breviary and of his scowling countenance, they were only too eager to attribute the goose's strange hissing and her still stranger cackle to supernatural forces of an evil nature. Some present even

caught a faint rumble of thunder in the east and although it was not noticed at the time, an old woman later asserted that she heard a great cackle of strange geese afar off, raised in answer to the little fairy goose's cackle. "It was," said the old woman, "certainly the whole army of devils offering her help to kill the holy priest."

The priest turned to the people and cried, raising his right hand in a threatening manner,

"I wonder the ground doesn't open up and swallow you all. Idolators!"

"O father, blessed by the hand of God," cried an old woman, the one who later asserted she had heard the devilish cackle afar off. She threw herself on her knees in the road. "Spare us, father."

Old Mrs. Wiggins, having heard the strange noises, rushed out into the yard with her triangular shawl trailing and her black hair loose. She began to make vague, mystic movements with her hands, as had recently become a habit with her. Lost in some sort of ecstasy, she did not see the priest at first. She began to chant something.

"You hag," cried the priest, rushing up the yard towards her, menacingly.

The old woman caught sight of him and screamed. But she faced him boldly.

"Come no farther!" she cried, still in an ecstasy, either affected, or the result of a firm belief in her own mystic powers.

Indeed it is difficult to believe that she was not in earnest, for she used to be a kind, gentle woman.

Her husband rushed out, crying aloud. Seeing the priest, he dropped a piece of rope he had in his hand and fled around the corner of the house.

"Leave my way, you hag!" cried the priest, raising his hand to strike her.

"Stand back!" she cried. "Don't lay a hand on my goose."

"Leave my way," yelled the priest, "or I'll curse you."

"Curse, then," cried the unfortunate woman, "curse."

Instead, the priest gave her a blow under the ear, which felled her smartly. Then he strode up to the goose's nest and seized the goose. The goose, paralysed with terror, was just able to open her beak and

hiss at him. He stripped the ribbons off her neck and tore the tape off her feet. Then he threw her out of the nest. Seizing a spade that stood by the wall, he began to scatter the refuse of which the nest was composed.

The old woman, lying prostrate in the yard, raised her head and began to chant in the traditional fashion, used by women of wisdom.

"I'll call on the winds of the east and of the west, I'll raise the waves of the sea. The lightning will flash in the sky and there'll be great sounds of giants warring in the heavens. Blight will fall on the earth and calves with fishes' tails will be born of cows . . ."

The little goose, making tweaky noises, waddled over to the old woman and tried to hide herself under the long shawl. The people murmured at this, seeing in it fresh signs of devilry.

Then the priest threw down the spade and hauled the old woman to her feet, kicking aside the goose. The old woman, exhausted by her ecstasy and possibly seeking to gain popular support, either went into a faint or feigned one. Her hands and her feet hung limply. Again the people murmured. The priest, becoming embarrassed, put her sitting against the wall. Then he didn't know what to do, for his anger had exhausted his reason. He either became ashamed of having beaten an old woman, or he felt the situation was altogether ridiculous. So he raised his hand and addressed the people in a sorrowful voice.

"Let this be a warning," he said sadly. "This poor woman and . . . all of you, led astray by . . . foolish and . . . Avarice is at the back of this," he cried suddenly in an angry voice, shaking his fist. "This woman had been preying on your credulity, in order to extort money from you by her pretended sorcery. That's all it is. Money is at the back of it. But I give you warning. If I hear another word about this, I'll . . ."

He paused uncertainly, wondering what to threaten the poor people with. Then he added:

"I'll report it to the archbishop of the diocese."

The people raised a loud murmur, asking forgiveness.

"Fear God," he added finally, "and love your neighbours."

Then, throwing a stone angrily at the goose, he strode out of the yard and left the village.

It was then that the people began to curse violently and threaten to burn the old woman's house. The responsible people among them, however, chiefly those who had hitherto paid no respect to the superstition concerning the goose, restrained their violence. Finally, the people went home and Mary Wiggins' husband, who had been hiding in a barn, came and brought his wife indoors. The little goose, uttering cries of amazement, began to collect the rubbish once more, piling it in a heap in order to rebuild her nest.

That night, just after the moon had risen, a band of young men collected, approached Mary Wiggins' house and enticed the goose from her nest, by calling: "Beadai, beadai, come here, come here."

The little goose, delighted that people were again kind and respectful to her, waddled down to the gate, making happy noises.

The youths stoned her to death.

And the little goose never uttered a sound, so terrified and amazed was she at this treatment from people who had formerly loved her and whom she had never injured.

Next morning, when Mary Wiggins discovered the dead carcase of the goose, she went into a fit, during which she cursed the village, the priest and all mankind.

And indeed it appeared that her blasphemous prayer took some effect at least. Although giants did not war in the heavens, and although cows did not give birth to fishes, it is certain that from that day the natives of that village are quarrelsome drunkards, who fear God but do not love one another. And the old woman is again collecting followers from among the wives of the drunkards. These women maintain that the only time in the history of their generation that there was peace and harmony in the village was during the time when the fairy goose was loved by the people.

THE PASSING STRANGE

John Masefield

OUT OF THE EARTH TO REST OR RANGE
Perpetual in perpetual change
The unknown passing through the strange.

Water and saltness held together
To tread the dust and stand the weather
And plough the field and stretch the tether.

To pass the wine cup and be witty,
Water the sands and build the city
Slaughter like devils and have pity,

Be red with rage and pale with lust,
Make beauty come, make peace, make trust,
Water and saltness mixed with dust;

Drive over earth, swim under sea,
Fly in the eagle's secrecy,
Guess where the hidden comets be;

Know all the deathy seeds that still
Queen Helen's beauty, Caesar's will,
And slay them even as they kill,

Fashion an altar for a rood,
Defile a continent with blood,
And watch a brother starve for food;

Love like a madman, shaking, blind
Till self is burnt into a kind
Possession of another mind;

Brood upon beauty till the grace
Of beauty with the holy face
Brings peace into the bitter place;

Probe in the lifeless granites, scan
The stars for hope, for guide, for plan;
Live as a woman or a man;

Fasten to lover or to friend
Until the heart break at the end
The break of death that cannot mend

Then to lie useless, helpless, still
Down in the earth, in dark, to fill
The roots of grass or daffodil.

Down in the earth, in dark, alone,
A mockery of the ghost in bone,
The strangeness, passing the unknown.

Time will go by, that outlasts clocks,
Dawn in the thorp will rouse the cocks
Sunset be glory on the rocks

But it, the thing, will never heed
Even the rootling from the seed
Thrusting to suck it for its need.

Since moons decay and suns decline
How else should end this life of mine?
Water and saltness are not wine.

But in the darkest hour of night
When even the foxes peer for sight
The byre-cock crows; he feels the light.

So, in this water mixed with dust,
The byre-cock spirit crows from trust
That death will change because it must,

For all things change, the darkness changes,
The wandering spirits change their ranges,
The corn is gathered to the granges.

The corn is sown again, it grows;
The stars burn out, the darkness goes.
The rhythms change, they do not close.

They change, and we, who pass like foam,
Like dust blown through the streets of Rome,
Change ever, too; we have no home,

Only a beauty, only a power,
Sad in the fruit, bright in the flower,
Endlessly erring for its hour

But gathering, as we stray, a sense
Of Life, so lovely and intense,
It lingers when we wander hence.

That those who follow feel behind
Their backs, when all before is blind,
Our joy, a rampart to the mind.

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