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THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

Enlightened Selfishness is so vast an improvement over the other kind, that it deserves respectful recognition. But, after all, enlightenment tacked on selfishness is only a pair of spectacles that can but slightly improve hopelessly blurred and short vision. If the world wants to see any farther than just in front of its toes, it needs better vision than that. Enlightenment and selfishness can't go far together. They don't match. "The Street Called Straight" is straight and wide, but it isn't straight enough or wide enough for those two. Yet, down that street the world must go, sooner or later, for it is the only thoroughfare that leads anywhere except to swamps or deserts. There is one chart for it and its name is Enlightened Unselfishness.

Enlightened Unselfishness doesn't imply the enthusiastic surrender of purse, watch and laundry to the other fellow. It doesn't even demand that we should turn the other cheek to an individual who has already stung us good and plenty on one. It means simply the realization that all human transactions include at least two parties and that no arrangement can be permanent or even of reasonably long endurance if it is only for the selfish interest of one side or the other.

Enlightened Unselfishness means that "putting something over" on somebody isn't smart but blind stupidity; what is bad for one side to a bargain is bound in the long run to be bad for both. Enlightened Unselfishness knows that Honor is the keystone of every human relation and that magnanimity is not a luxury but a necessary part of the business of life.

"BUY AT HOME"

THE WAIL OF THE SNOW SHOVELLER

(Suggested by the photograph of a Newcastle Home)

Come, Spring, and let they breezes blow

Across the fragrant hills,
And radio from purple slopes,
The litany of rills.

And loose the secret we would learn

From vales where pansies grow,
I'm fed up on this wintry stuff,
This everlasting snow.

From morn to night I'm bucking drifts

With aching back and low,
With wooden shovel on the job

Of humplung up the snow;
And only stop between the humps

To heave a weary sigh,
A puffing silhouette of toil

Marooned against the sky.

he night but brings a short respite

To mock me with her dreams,
The good old summer's here again,

I'm wading in her streams.

And back at Pine Cliff's haunting pools

I watch the rapids sweep;

I hear the tocsin of the reel,
And see the salmon leap.

I wander through the scented woods,

And feel a welcome there

From wispes of sunlight 'neath the trees

And answer with a prayer.

I roam the vespersed silences

Where brooding Nature weaves

Her undertone of lasting peace

Amid the whispering leaves.

And down along the silvery glades

When evening shadows fall

I catch the tom-tit's plaintive song

And near the moose-bird's call.

And then a moan, a torturing shriek!

I wake; Oh cruel blow!

The North wind's holl'ring down the

flue:

"Turn out and shovel snow!"

I rush toward the window's light,

And wipe the frosted pane,

And blast my bulging blooming eyes

The same thing over again.

For where I shovelled yesterday,

A struggling lump of woe,

Packed high and hard by Boreal blasts

There's five feet more snow.

Oh, Sisyphus, your comeback job

Has nothing much on this,

I envy you your rolling stone,

Though far away from bliss

At least your hands and feet are warm

While striving there below.

I'll shove your rock at any time

If you will shovel snow.

How sad and drear the uplands lift

Their brows where birches grow

The everlasting hills beneath

The everlasting snow.

They seem apart from Nature's fold

So alien and alone;

Amid the waste of patchless white

And weary monotone.

But one small speck of cheering hope

Comes hurtling through the glow

The first born of reluctant spring

A solitary crow.

I watch his black wing cleave the blue

And scroll its ambling flight;

Like sable imp from darkened spheres

Doomed to a world of white.

Oh, cruel fate! Why was I placed

In this nivicolous clime,

With naught but wooden shovelling

To pass away the time;

With aching limbs and chilblained feet

And lashed by northern wind;

With Crocker ointment on in front,

And anodyne behind.

I do not seek the comfort now

The Sunday Sermon brings,

Nor want to sit in cushioned pew

And list to heavenly things,

I wouldn't be an angel now;

Just send me down below,

Where there are no wooden shovels

And no shovelling snow.

Newcastle, N. B.,
Mar. 27th, 1923

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