

Perspective

beautiful sediment at the bottom of an enormous bowl. As I reached the Spaniards Road, a sharp shower drove suddenly out of the south-west, and for a few minutes the promise and contrast of the sky were blotted out in swirls of lowering grey. Then I saw that the horizon was slashed with a yellow band, and presently the curtain of rain was rolled up to discover the deeps of clear sky filmed here and there with drifting scarves of white. And with the return of the sun the distances were wrapped in that wonderful veil of atmosphere which sometimes transfigures the Heath, an almost palpable atmosphere that is like thin, clear smoke; that is like the bloom on a September plum. The nearer trees in their dark greens and browns and scorched yellows melted back across the valley into lavender grey, and then into a sweet, warm blue; and yet the depth of the picture right back over the Middlesex hills had the appearance of being an effect rather than the presentation of true distance—I had a sense that all this beauty of line and mass and colour was in some way composed, as if I myself had made something more wonderful than any haphazard work of natural landscape could ever be.

And it may be that the thrill and elation of that feeling made me more susceptible to emotion when at last, and reluctantly, I descended from my point of vantage and made my way along one of the raw brown paths that wind among the silver birches and lead out to the Heath Extension. I know that when I came in sight of the Garden Suburb, grouped about its two churches, I was ready to shout with joy, as if I hailed some great achievement. It seemed to me, then, that these open roads and graceful houses were so infinitely more beautiful than the dying miseries of Gospel Oak. In another mood I might have been critical, but then I