

THE IMPERIALIST

alone, or family parties, Mrs. Snow would bring five-cent quantities almost without asking, and for very small boys one dish and the requisite number of spoons.) There was discrimination, there was choice, in this matter of treating. A happy excitement accompanied it, which you could read in the way Corydon clapped his soft felt hat on his head as he pocketed the change. To be treated—to ten-cent dishes—three times in the course of the day by the same young man gave matter for private reflection and for public entertainment, expressed in the broad grins of less reckless people. I speak of a soft felt hat, but it might be more than that; it might be a dark green one, with a feather in it; and here was distinction, for such a hat indicated that its owner belonged to the Independent Order of Foresters, who would leave their spring wheat for forty miles round to meet in Elgin, and march in procession, wearing their hats, and dazzlingly scatter upon Main Street. They gave the day its touch of imagination, those green cocked hats; they were lyrical upon the highways; along the prosaic sidewalks by twos and threes they sang together. It is no great thing, a hat of any quality; but a small thing may ring dramatic on the right metal; and in the vivid idea of Lorne Murchison and his sister Advena a Robin Hood walked in every Independent Forester, especially in the procession.