

Two Brief Journeys to Dreamland

By D. W. Higgins, Author of "The Mystic Spring," "The Passing of a Race," etc.

"Your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions."—Joel, ii: 28.



NE meets strange characters in every city, great or small. Men and women in all the walks of life, educated, ignorant, good or vile—you can take your choice out of the multitude that pass like the figures of a panorama or a moving picture film. People whom you meet at the hotels are of every nationality and creed. If they are men who have seen better days, they are almost always cynics, who criticise the characters of their fellow-beings without mercy and call down the direst calamity on mankind. If they are women of the cynical mental trend, they are suspicious upon first acquaintance; but when better known they grow communicative, abusing their sex, narrating their own wrongs with tearful emphasis, and letting you into their deepest heart's secrets. When you run across a chronic cynic you see that while he is willing to talk of the shortcomings of others he seldom tells you much about himself, and you always feel that he is keeping something back. But a woman, once you have won her confidence, keeps nothing from you—not even the skeleton in her closet. I read the other day how the saying, "the skeleton in one's closet," originated. A lady calling on a friend remarked that she appeared to be thoroughly happy. "And yet," replied the other, "you have never seen what I have here." As she spoke she opened a closet door and exposed hanging therein an articulated skeleton.

"That," she said, "is the skeleton of my first love, which my jealous husband compels me to keep there. It is my skeleton in the closet." The phrase is now used to refer to family secrets that are concealed and should not be bared.

I was seated one evening a few weeks ago in the rotunda of a fashionable hotel in this city. Animated groups of well-dressed men and gaily-dressed women promenaded to and fro, or gathered in little knots to discuss the latest political or social gossip, the sweetest thing in hats, or the pretty baby the stork had just brought one of the lady guests. An excellent orchestra discoursed delicious music and added to the charm of the scene. I was much interested in the cheerful picture before me and the sweet strains of the band had a lulling, soothing influence on my nerves. After reclining for a few moments a deliciously drowsy feeling stole over me. I seemed to float in the air and imagined myself a passenger in an aeroplane, gliding swiftly through the atmosphere and gazing interestedly upon receding objects far below. Strange sounds broke on my ear. As we sailed swiftly toward a black cloud from which flashed fitful gleams of lightning, rain and snow and hail fiercely pelted the machine in which I rode and fell on the wide-open wings with a rattling sound that deafened me. "Except myself, there was no sign of life in the strange craft; I seemed to be alone, and I went on and on and up and up! Until earth faded from my vision. Then I grew cold and looked about for warm covering, but there was none. I became impressed with the idea that the machine must have broken from its moorings while I was inspecting it and had carried me away an involuntary passenger bound for the Lord only knew where. And so I found myself aloft in the wide waste of air without a pilot, a rudder or a compass to guide my flight. When I realized that I was alone and that the machine was a derelict I tried to cry out. My lips were as though they had been locked and the key thrown away. I tried to rise, but my limbs refused to act, and I lay as helplessly on the floor of that strange craft as if I had been bound hand and foot and gagged by a midnight robber. Presently a queer sensation crept over me and I seemed to be going down as rapidly as I had ascended. The air grew warmer, the storm ceased and the bright sun forced its way through the clouds and bathed the machine in rays of glory. Next I heard the confused buzz of many voices and then the delicious strains of music reached me. The lock on my mouth suddenly became loosened, my limbs lost their rigidity and as I stretched my legs the machine stopped with a jarring crash, and I found myself lying huddled up on the floor of the hotel corridor. I had been asleep, and dreamed that I was "up in a balloon, sailing round the moon," and in my struggles as a climax had slipped from the sofa to the floor.

A group of ladies and gentlemen and a small girl, attracted by the noise of the fall, surrounded and gazed curiously at me. One of the group was a lady who in an anxious, sympathetic tone, asked:

"I hope, sir, you are not hurt. You fell very heavily."

"Oh! no," I replied, trying to laugh. "I dreamt I was sailing through the atmosphere in an aeroplane and that I fell out."

The group, as they moved away smiled incredulously, and the small girl remarked in an audible whisper to her mother, who was dressed in mourning:

"Perhaps the gentleman has been drinking. Father used to fall that way when he—"

The mother's hand was clapped over the little tell-tale mouth and I heard no more of that lady's skeleton in the closet.

Near the lounge from which I had fallen I observed seated a short, middle-aged man with a pleasant and amused face. He offered

me a cigarette, and after lighting one for himself, said:

"I watched you sleeping. You struggled hard. You must have had a bad dream, for you fell hard. Did you travel far?"

"Something like fifty miles," I replied. "How long did I sleep?"

"About one minute and a half," he said.

"One minute and a half! Why, I went many miles high and battled against the clouds and came back here in that brief period of time. Impossible!"

"Quite possible," the gentleman said. "I once crossed the Atlantic in a dream; staid in London a week and got back to New York before I awoke and found I'd only been gone two minutes!"

"Speaking of dreams," he continued, "I had a queer dream in this Victoria of yours. Some years ago I was a traveler for the big Toronto firm of — & Co. In the discharge of my duties I came here and put up at the famous Driad. I may say that

when at home in Toronto I played the game of politics. I had been an alderman for one term and thirsted for more political preferment and the municipal contest was on.

There was a pretty tough fight raging. But I am a hard hitter and always return as good as I am sent. I was the centre of the conflict and was mauled on the platform and through the press until I became a lighthouse to warn ambitious politicians to keep clear of the rocks on which I had come to grief—for I was beaten, hands down.

"After my defeat, I took to the road again and, as I have said already, put up at the Driad. The first night, before retiring, I went to the bar and put three or four high-balls beneath my vest. So when I had said my prayers I turned out the light, pulled the clothes up to my chin and fell asleep at once.

"It must have been an hour or two later that I began to dream. I thought the fight for municipal preferment was on again and that I was dodging mud in the shape of grave charges hurled against my moral life, and

pelling the stuff back again in great black patches that dripped from the heads to the heels of my enemies. The fight grew hotter and hotter and the worst of the conflict was that some of the bad things they said about me were proved.

"One day—the election was only a few days off—I thought that I sat in my office with my head buried in my hands, thinking how I was to get over the latest charge that had been preferred against me, and wishing I had never entered the contest, when a timid little knock came to the door.

"Here's another of the boys come to collect some more election provender," I said to myself. My bank account was about cleaned out by this time and I was away down in the doleful dumps. 'Come in,' I said in a despairing tone. Whereupon there hurried into the office one of the brightest, daintiest, sweetest little women eyes ever rested on. She was about twenty-two, with fair hair, dazzling white complexion, dancing blue eyes—soft, liquid and laughing. Gad! she was a beauty.

Her every movement was graceful. She was nicely dressed, too, in a close-fitting garment. A coquettish bonnet perched on her lovely head completed the delightful picture. She laughed. A soft, gentle little laugh it was, and she seemed to blush as she said:

"Mr. —, I believe?"

"Yes," I replied, while I gazed spellbound at the lovely creature, and offered her a chair.

"Now, Mr. —, I will tell you what I come for. I want money, or something that represents money, from you."

"Money—from me? Are you, then, a canvasser for votes and are you here to tap me? Why, girl, I'm bled white already. I haven't a bean left. If meals were twenty-five cents I couldn't buy a mouthful and couldn't even buy a Daily Globe for a penny. Oh, let up on me, I cried, and open that door. Do go away!" I begged in pitiful tones. I felt like a bird caught in a snare.

"I tried to rise. She pushed me back into the chair. I was so overwhelmed with surprise that I was too weak to resist and remained seated.

"If you have no money," she said with a frown, "you have diamonds and pearls."

"I wore a large solitaire on my little finger, two pearls in my sleeve-links and a handsome diamond scarf-pin. The whole outfit was worth \$500 or \$600.

"She pointed to the gems as she spoke and said in a menacing tone, 'Give them to me!'

"I am no coward, but there was something about the beautiful young girl that cowed me. A look of determination and desperation stole into her face and murder written in large characters flashed across her blue eyes, which had lost their appealing glance and now glistened and shot from their depths shafts of hate and malignity.

"Hurry up!" she cried impatiently. "I have no time to waste on you."

"Heavens," I thought, "is this my beau ideal of a lovely woman? How changed!"

"Thoroughly frightened, I made another effort to rise. She caught me by the sleeve and pushed me back. Then as she held me down with her left hand, she raised her right. In it gleamed an ivory-handled revolver. Pressing the weapon against my temple, she hissed:

"Move again and you are a dead man!"

As I sat motionless she removed the solitaire from my finger, the links from my cuffs and the pin from my scarf with a deftness that could only have been acquired by practice. I was so overwhelmed with surprise that I could not resist. Then, backing towards the entrance, still pointing the pistol, she left the room, slamming the door after her. As the door closed, I heard an exclamation from the other side. Then the door was shaken violently and the handle was turned. The fastening was a spring lock and could only be released without a key from the inside. And then I saw the cause of the exclamation and the agitation at the door. Between the door and the jam appeared part of the girl's skirt. She was caught in a trap of her own setting.

"I took in the situation in a moment.

"Ah ha!" I cried, "you young fiend, I have you! It's my turn now!"

"My first impulse was to open the door and seize her, but I remembered the pistol and hesitated. I looked about the room and saw a bell button. I rushed to it and pressed it with my finger, and held the finger there, jabbing the button until the night clerk must have imagined the house was afire. Soon I heard hurried footsteps in the hall, then a loud knock at the door.

"What's the matter?" asked a man's voice. "I've been robbed of my diamonds," I shouted. "The thief is a woman, or Satan in a woman's dress! She's caught by her gown in the door! Seize her, hang her, shoot her, do anything you like with her, but get me back my jewels. Look out, she's got a pistol and will shoot!"

"There's no woman here," cried the night clerk, for it was he. "Open the door."

"She was there a moment ago," I persisted.

"I tell you there's no woman—no person—here. Open the door. You must be crazy."

"I obeyed cautiously and saw indeed that there was no girl there. I looked and my stick-pin diamond and cuff pearls were where I had left them when I went to bed. The big diamond sparkled and glistened on my little finger like a welcoming friend.

"You've been having a bad dream," said the clerk.

"He had taken in the situation at the first pop and I awoke to find that I had made myself ridiculous.

"I stood the wine for the guests at my table at dinner that night and have never since drunk a highball or worn jewels, or accepted attentions from pretty women while on my travels. You see, I carry nothing but this nickel watch. It cost me one dollar and a quarter. It keeps good time, and I have in my pocket a few silver coins to meet daily expenses. The dream was a warning lesson to me to be more prudent."

As I sat pondering over the strange story the traveler rose.

"I will now say good night and good bye," as he extended his hand. "I hear the screech-owl on the Princess Victoria hooting, and I must away. If you should at any time visit Toronto, look me up and I'll give you the time of your life. Perhaps," he added with a mischievous grin, "I'll join you in a trip in a flying-machine."

Then, like ships that pass in the night, we two dreamers sailed away and saw each other no more.

MR. LONG ON NAVY POLICY

THE Navy League "Trafalgar dinner" was held at the Waldorf hotel, and was attended by nearly 150 ladies and gentlemen. The Duke of Somerset presided, and the com any included the Duchess of Somerset, Mr. Walter Long, M.P., Sir Robert and Lady Hart, Lord John Joicey-Cecil, M.P., Lord Valentia, M.P., Sir Francis Lowe, M.P., Mr. J. Gretton, M.P., Colonel Sandys, M.P., Mr. C. D. Rose, M.P., Mary Lady Inverclyde, Lieutenant Carlyon Bellairs, M.P., Captain Faber, M.P., the Hon. Gervase Beckett, M.P., Mr. P. Thornton, M.P., the Hon. T. Cochrane, M.P., Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, M.P., Mr. A. S. Wilson, M.P., Mr. S. Roberts, M.P., Major-General Sir John Shide, Mr. S. H. Butcher, M.P., Sir F. and Lady Pollock, the Hon. W. P. Guinness, M.P., Mr. J. F. Mason, M.P., Mr. J. T. Middlemore, M.P., Colonel Sir C. Wyndham Murray, Captain Kincaid Smith, M.P., Mr. J. M. Paulton, M.P., Mr. G. Fetherstonhaugh, M.P., Mr. A. Mond, M.P., Mr. W. B. Smith, Mr. H. Seymour Trower (chairman executive committee of the league), and Commander Crutchley, R.N.R. (secretary).

After the loyal toasts, the toast of "The Immortal Memory of Nelson," submitted by the Chairman, was drunk in silence, all upstanding, and was followed by the song, "The Death of Nelson."

The Chairman, in proposing "The Naval and Military Forces of the Crown," said that they had met under the auspices of the Navy League, which was the recognized organ of public opinion for bringing pressure to bear on the government to keep up the navy. It was shown in 1884, 1888 and 1893 that public opinion must be exerted to make a government do its duty as regarded the Navy. He was, therefore, a little alarmed to find that the British Navy League should be so poorly supported in comparison with the German Navy League. The British League had 20,000 members and associates, an estimated annual income of £3,500, and 86 branches; while the German League had 1,018,000 members and associates, its annual income was stated to be £50,000 of which over £30,000 was known to be from the members' subscriptions, and its branches numbered 3,000. The fact that one-fourth of the German naval expenditure in such perishable matter as warships was paid for by borrowed money rendered it the more certain that it was intended for war in the near future, for the process of borrowing money could not go on indefinitely. The whole weight of all organized opinion in Germany, except that of the Socialists, had been exercised in favor of the increase of the Navy. In England, on the contrary, members of Parliament were invited on three separate occasions to sign memorials to the Prime Minister in favor of cutting down the Navy. The present Government had given us three shipbuilding programmes, which provided a considerably less tonnage of warships than the three corresponding programmes of one foreign Power. The public must not be taken in by naval reviews when ships might be made to look very smart with a coat of paint, and yet be quite unable to steam at half-speed. Only that day the Navy League had drawn attention to the fact that eight out of 14 battleships of the Channel Fleet had been for some time, and throughout the recent crisis, refitting in the dockyards. Taken together with other points on which fault was found, such as the dangerous depletion of war stores in all the dockyards, one could not help thinking that the administration was at fault. Changes were carried out in 1904 which centred power far too much in the hands of the First Sea Lord, and it was a question whether the time had not come for inquiring into the working of these changes. (Cheers.)

Mr. Long, replying to the toast, said it would be a deplorable thing if the Navy were to become involved in ordinary party warfare, but it seemed to him that this argument could easily be carried too far, inasmuch as it might be used practically to prevent all criticism or discussion at all. (Hear, hear.) He could not help regretting that there was not, from time to time, in the House of Commons an opportunity for discussing naval questions in such

a manner as to avoid the necessity for a party division, and to afford a full and free opportunity for everybody interested in the question to express their own views, and for the government of the day to hear those opinions freely expressed without having regard to the result of the division. (Hear, hear.) He regretted very much to notice that in some quarters there had recently been charges made against those who criticized the present position of the Navy, and it had been alleged that there was an attempt to create "scares" and to cause alarm in the public mind for which there was no justification. Intemperate language of this kind had been used which, in his judgment, was altogether unjustifiable and, indeed, grotesque when one realized the quarter from which many of those criticisms had come and the form in which they had been made. One had only to think of some of the articles which had recently been written to realize that, apart from the grave statements of facts contained in many of those articles, the character of the articles themselves, and the journals in which they had appeared, afforded sufficient proof that, whether the writers were wrong or right in their conclusions, they were actuated by purely patriotic motives and not by any desire to create "scares," or to cause alarm in the public mind without justification. (Cheers.) He had no desire, there or elsewhere, to attack the First Lord of the Admiralty. He looked upon the office of First Lord as one of the most difficult and one of the most responsible in his Majesty's Government, and he thought the fullest time should be given to the new occupant of the office to enable him to take a complete survey of the whole position, to make up his mind between the various opinions expressed, and to decide what was the right course to adopt. It would not only be unfair to condemn a Minister who had been so short a time in office as the present First Lord had, but it was extremely impolitic to do so, as it forced him into a position of defence, and made it more difficult to him to weigh the various arguments and to impartially examine the various statements made.

There was in many quarters a very considerable feeling of anxiety as to the position in the future. Those whom he was addressing were well aware of the fact that there had often been a demand made that the heads of our Navy and our Army should be sailors and soldiers and not civilians. So far as the Navy was concerned, if we had not attained precisely to this result, we had, at all events, had something very nearly approaching it. We had had a very distinguished sailor in a position of great responsibility and power at the Admiralty—a position which he had occupied for a very much longer period than any of his predecessors. Everybody would, he thought, admit that very good work had been done and many admirable reforms had been adopted, but, none the less, he thought the majority of people in this country had serious doubts as to the present position of affairs, and entertained grave misgivings as to whether adequate steps had been taken to make the future secure. (Hear, hear.) He believed himself, and he had been at some pains to examine the facts and figures, that the Navy was never more efficient than it was today. He was quite sure that officers and men were of the same splendid type that had ever distinguished the British Navy (hear, hear), but as things stood he was afraid there were some serious grounds for anxiety. In regard to the two-Power standard, we had had strong declarations from the Prime Minister on more than one occasion, and nobody doubted for a moment that the Prime Minister meant to the full every word that he had uttered. At the same time, he was bound to say, having read all the declarations made by him, both in Parliament and outside, with the utmost care and attention, he yet felt that there was some ground for doubt. What we wanted to be assured, in explicit language, was that it was the firm determination of the Government to maintain the Navy at what had always been understood to be the two-Power standard, interpreted on more than one occasion as something like 10 per cent. over the combined strength of the two strongest

Powers in ships. This was a standard which they believed to be, and which, indeed, he believed the Prime Minister had, when in Opposition, described to be, the minimum which would secure for us safety in regard to our possessions. (Cheers.)

With regard to the shipbuilding programme, there could, he thought, be no doubt that the present Government had fallen seriously below the standard that was laid down by their predecessors in regard to laying down ships (hear, hear), and it was undoubtedly the fact that there had been very grave delay in completing the ships laid down. Having regard to the fact that in dealing with the Navy one must always think of the future even more than the immediate present, it was, he ventured to say, of vital importance that the shipbuilding programme should be carefully thought out, and when once laid down, firmly adhered to. (Cheers.) In regard to stores, all the information at his disposal led him to believe that a very serious risk had been incurred by their depletion; and when he came to the training of the Fleet, he thought one did not require to be an expert to feel satisfied that if our shores were to be adequately protected, the fleet upon which we relied for the purpose should be most fully and completely trained. He could not help thinking that the practice of breaking up the Fleet into two or three fleets, under distinct commands was a mistake. In regard to the programme of shipbuilding, while it was absolutely necessary to maintain perfect freedom of action, it was most desirable that the programme should be laid down for a definite period, if not for four years, at all events, at least, for two. This would give much greater continuity; it would remove much of the room which now existed for doubt and for anxiety; and it did not seem to him that it would involve any risks, either from the point of view of expenditure or of the right of the Admiralty to make their own dispositions. He did not desire to attack naval Ministers or to create a feeling of alarm; on the contrary, he was more than anxious to support and back up the Ministry of the day so long as it was clear that they intended to maintain the Fleet at what had always been admitted to be its minimum strength. (Hear, hear.) The Navy League ought to be welcomed by all those who were true patriots, because it would be able to keep public opinion informed and to arouse unceasing interest in the public mind, without which it was hopeless to expect that we could have a fleet in all respects such as we desired—one which would be able, if called upon, to do its duty, and protect the vast interests of this great Empire. (Cheers.)

USE OF STERILIZED WATER BY GREEKS

The ancient Greeks already recommended the use of sterilized water. Rufus of Ephesus in the first century of this era taught that "all water from rivers and ponds is bad, except that from the Nile. Water from rivers which flow through unhealthy soil, stagnant water and that which flows near public bathing places is harmful. The best water is that which has been boiled in baked earthenware vessels, cooled and then heated a second time before drinking."

This hygienic prescription was intended both for healthy and sick people, since it was applied to the armies. "During marches in the camps pits must be dug successively from the highest to the lowest level of the place. These holes should be lined with clay such as is used for making pottery and the water should be made to percolate through it. The water will leave all its impurities in these pits."

It may be inquired how the ancient Greeks, knowing the processes of sterilization and filtration of water which they applied to that of the most limpid rivers, should have drunk without precautions the waters of the Nile, which our microscopes allow us to decide "sound," but which is in appearance the most worthy of suspicion of all, and is so muddy, so yellow, that it resembles wine. From Gazette des Eaux et Revue Scientifique.

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