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## THE WAYFARER

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DRAWINGS BY ANDRÉ LAPINE

**A**CLEAR sky and an open road; a road that led to anywhere; a sky that made the Wayfarer open out his arms and cry.

"Sky! I am the god Man—your sun blisters me—summon your clouds and breezes, for I am hot and thirsty, and instinct tells me that I may not find an inn this day."

He was a ragged man, huge-limbed, snub-nosed, freckled, with tawny-gray beard and big blue eyes, jaunty of step, and had a voice like a cataract. He swung a heavy ashplant to the meter of his moods, and demanded of everything, dead or living, the whereabouts of an inn. Every now and again, he stopped and jingled the money in his pockets:

"Money to spend—money to burn—but, forsooth! likely to burn a hole in my accursed pockets. By the hoary head of Moses, I will split the skull of the first knave I meet, if he cannot send me to an inn! What, in the name of Bacchus, are roads for but to build inns on them that I may drink?"

But there were neither skulls to split, nor inns wherein to drink, so he strode along, cursing and singing.

"The Lord he made me a thirsty man,  
And a terrible thirst he gave.  
I've been dry as a hide on the desert wide,  
And parched on the salty wave.  
And if ever I find me an inn again,  
I swear by the torrid sun,  
I'll sit in the bar where the pewters are  
And stay till the last drop's done."

This conceit tickled his humour, and he repeated it several times, varying it by rising from a murmur to crescendo on alternate lines.

There seemed but little prospect of finding an inn in such a country; indeed, there seemed little prospect of finding anything belonging to the haunts of man. Over the crest of a mighty hill the road went, curved like a scimitar. It was a mere shadow of a road, grass-grown, and perceptible only by the parallel depressions, which, at some time, had been made by wagons. When he reached the top of the hill, the Wayfarer paused and looked around, moved by the beauty of the silent vista.