

mous road in England. I had "learnt" it at school, and knew that it once ran from Dover to London, from London to Chester and from Chester to York. Just recently I had tracked it diligently on a series of county maps, and discovered that, though only vague fragments of it remained in Kent, Surrey, Shropshire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, it still flourished and abounded exceedingly in my particular neighbourhood as a right line, austere, renowned, indispensable, clothed in its own immortal dust. I could see but patches of it in the twilight, but I was aware that it stretched fifteen miles southeast of me, and unnumbered miles northwest of me, with scarcely a curve to break the splendid inexorable monotony of its career. To me it was a wonderful road—more wonderful than the Great North Road, or the military road from Moscow to Vladivostock. And the most wonderful thing about it was that I lived on it. After all, few people can stamp the top of their notepaper, "Watling Street, England." It is not a residential thoroughfare.

Only persons of imagination can enter into my feelings at that moment. I had spent two-thirds of my life in a town (squalid, industrial) and the remaining third in Town. I thought I knew every creosoted block in Fleet Street, every bookstall in Shoreditch, every hosier's in Piccadilly. I certainly did know the order of stations on the Inner Circle, the various frowns of publishers, the strange hysteric, silly atmosphere of theatrical first-nights, and stars of the Empire and Alhambra (by sight), and the vicious odours of a thousand and one res-