

thus spread a wider net. For it is curious how many things happen to us, often at the time apparently momentous, and, generally, interesting enough, which do not count; curious how few real landmarks even a long life need contain; and even more curious how lasting can be the effect of what seem to be trivial occurrences and experiences: words even, lightly spoken by others, which fall on soil so that very instant prepared for them; casual wayside meetings; actions of total strangers; and so forth. Not until later can we distinguish between the influential and the unimportant. It is as though a few drops of water sank into the duck's back.

For example, with many a boy the acquisition of a first gun would be a landmark. But it was not so with Rudd. When his Uncle Hector gave him a rook-and-rabbit rifle on his sixteenth birthday he was excited enough; but the event was no landmark. The landmark came a few days later when, in the evening, as Jusk was falling, he shot his first rabbit, and on running up in triumph found that he had merely broken its leg. After vainly trying to kill it by breaking its neck, he had to place the muzzle within a few inches of its suffering head, blow its brains out, and at the same moment relinquish forever the pursuit of sport. That was the landmark.

Again, the marriage ceremony might be considered a landmark in any life; but it is a mere blur in many a mind compared with, on the hither side, the fact of acceptance, and, on the farther side, the moment