CANADA CHAPS

J. G. SIME

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CANADA CHAPS

. . By J. G. SIME . .

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY
TORONTO: S. B. GUNDY: MCMXVII

Printed in England by Butler & Tanner, Frome and London

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Canada

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HE was a typical Canadian — young, straight, strong, muscular, and clean. His eyes were clear. His mouth was firm. His mind was simple. He vexed his soul with no unnecessary questions. He took life as he found it, made the best of it, fought when he had to fight, took his luck quietly; whether it was good or bad, accepted it. That was the way he struck me anyway; that is the way that Canada strikes me. Large and simple.

Gladly, without the slightest difficulty, he told me all the things I should have liked to ask him. He had no mock-modesty—he was entirely unself-conscious. All that he could tell me of the War he told me, quite aware that he had seen the merest corner of it, yet retaining his impressions, reserving to himself

the right to criticize and hold his own opinion —modestly.

I noticed that the thing he spoke of in Englishmen was their silence. That was what he liked and most admired about them.

"Fine!" he said—that absolutely last superlative of Canada's praise—"the way the English hold their tongues!"

And when I ventured to demur a little Canada's eyes sparkled, and he shook his head at me.

"Fine!" he said again. The way he said it this time was unanswerable.

He had come back on leave, and had been at home in Canada for just a week; and in three more short weeks his wounds, he thought, would be in need of getting near the fighting-line again. At home a week, and hardly that, and his chief thought was how to get back across the ocean. He hankered for another taste of War.

"There's a fascination!" he kept saying. "All the time you're there you hate it just like sin, but when you're home again you can't be happy!"

His body was in Canada—he loved his country as Canadians do—and yet the rest of him, his thoughts, his dreams, and his desires, were back in France where he had spent his strength in fighting. When I asked him where the fascination was, he merely shook his head.

"Quite a story that!" he said, and exercised his gift of silence.

He had gone over with the First Contingent —Canada's first offering of fighting-men to England. He told me how he had been keen to join, throw his business over, take to soldiering, learn to fight. He had that quietly business-like exterior that is so characteristic of Canada's new-made military men. He had that sort of look, not so much military as just ready. He had the handiness of Canada transferred to khaki: he was a man who incidentally has become a soldier, not the soldier who incidentally chances to be man.

The thing he really loved to talk about was all the early time when he had everything to learn, and War lay spread before him as a

distant promise. He talked about the difficulty of getting in at all at first.

"Why," he said, "a bad tooth, a cor'rn"—he had the crisp Canadian r—"would tur'rn a fellow down two years ago!" And then he looked at me and smiled. "Some change since that!"

When he had told me of the farewell march in undress—semi-dress perhaps!—he puffed a little while in silence, for I need hardly say that the start and finish of our conversation was in cigarettes.

"I sometimes wish our folks had seen us when we'd worked a bit." He looked at me with straight young eyes. "We looked some different when we got to France." Then, in a minute, he said, "They'll not see us now," and sighed a little—just a very little. "Seems a pity some way!" Then as his words came home to him, in the same breath he added, "What does it matter? It's all right, of course."

I like him for first thinking one and then the other. I think the truth is either way you look at it. I glanced at him and guessed the way

his company looked: a bit of the Dominion disciplined and ordered; the big Canadians swinging into action; boys eager for the taste of life and death before them.

Next Valcartier. Valcartier, the virgin wilderness on Monday, the military camp on Tuesday. He loved it. He could have talked for ever of it, he was untiring when he even thought of it.

"The best camp yet!" he said. "Roads, shower-baths for the men, electric light!" And his eyes shone. The thing that touches a Canadian to the heart is, not so much his country, as his country blossoming straight from wilderness to city. When he was talking of the camp you saw the picture of it in his mind—that great primeval bush, the wilderness, the blazing of the trails, the labour and the sweat and toil of it; and then the finished roads, the baths, the light—order made out of chaos in a week or two. He talked of it and in his voice was Canada's pride of conquest in the earth. I saw the boys, willing, good-tempered, clean as a tree is clean, strong as an animal is

strong, hewing and blasting, cursing and laughing, taking life elementally. Workers in land, strong pioneers, that's what Canadians are. That's what gives Canada her business look in War.

Valcartier broke down his silence, and we lingered there. He told me of the beauty of the wilderness, and then he told me of the beauty of the telephone. He loved his Camp! There he had lived and worked. There he had learned his job. There he had longed for War. From there he went to join the ships that took the First Contingent over, and he loved it. He had the kind of pride in it that a mother has when with astonishment she sees her work—her child—grown into use of road and shower-bath and electric light. She sees her child a man and feels that she has made him! Yes, the Canadians love their country with a kind of mother-love. They see it in the rough and in the making—actually make it. Europe comes into cities for the most part ready-made—or did until two years ago—but Canada starts from bed-rock, builds from the earth, views

possibilities in hills and streams and falls, and loves her country for the very trouble she has had in shaping her.

September and October in Valcartier, then sailing orders.

"We were over-officered," he said. "We thought that some of us would have to stay behind." And even at two years' distance his eyes widened at the thought of it. "*I* might have had to stay!" His voice said, "Think of it!"

"But if you had? You loved it there and you were happy. Were you so anxious to be fighting? Couldn't you have stayed in Camp and worked there——" I caught his eye and my voice died away. "Oh," I said. The incident closed in silence. A woman forgets sometimes how a man feels towards fighting. "There's a fascination in it!" As I looked at him I wondered—where.

Then he told me how they went aboard: how he came up on deck at dawn one morning, saw the ships in Gaspé Bay, and watched the sun come up on them.

"It was all grey," he said, "and then the sun came up." He stopped a moment. "Pretty things! They stood there in the rising sun—three lines of them, ten transports to each line, and each line with a little warship at the head of it." His eyes grew soft. "A fleet, with us Canadians aboard!" He smiled a little. "Pretty things!" he said again.

He turned and looked away from me a minute, out at the trees—great trees of Canada—waving. He looked, through the branches out through the summer sunshine, up to the blue, blue sky beyond. In his mind's eye he looked, I think, at Gaspé Bay again, and at that fleet of ships full of Canadians bound for France. He thought a minute; then he turned to me and said:

"Don't you forget that was our job." He paused a second. "Over there"—he jerked his head up England way—"they'd say to us, 'Good of you to come!' Good!" and he looked intently at me. "It was our job. We were in it. *Our* fight too." He paused again,

struggling against his inarticulateness. "See here, we went because we wanted to—it was our scrap."

I nodded to him.

"Yes, I know."

"But *do* you know? The Empire was at War, and we don't want to have you think that it was *good* of us to come. It wasn't that way that we came. We came because we wanted to."

"I know," I said again.

Our eyes met—they spoke to one another, and he smiled a little.

"That's all right," he said, and struck a match. "I like to have that clear with every one—it was our scrap just as much as England's. Don't forget it!" He struck another match, for he had been so keen that I should understand Canada's war-time spirit that he had forgotten for a moment even to puff, and his cigarette was out!

Then came the trip across—nineteen days of perfect weather. And once again his eyes turned inward, as we all look to see our pictures

of the past inside us. This time I fancy he was looking at the good things War has brought us : comradeship, willing service, men working all together for a common end. He saw the drill, the daily training, the beauty of the sea, the great majestic fleet of ships making its way across the ocean ; and, above all, he felt again that sense of being closely linked to other men. Such things as that ran through his mind as he sat looking past them to the trees.

The branches just outside the window stirred and waved a little, and the shadow of a breeze came wafting in on us. We were quite silent, and when he turned to me his eyes were bright and full of memories.

"Nineteen days," he said, "of perfect weather. It was good to be alive ! I shan't forget it." Then he added simply, "I was happy."

As they neared England a big new battle cruiser came to meet them, the first that most of them had ever seen, he said. And then he told me how the tars had all lined up on her and cheered, and that made them feel that they were coming home.

Home! Canada's name for England. And this time the Canadians came, not just as tourists, but as workers. They came home again to serve the country they had heard about from childhood. That was their England. Queer to think that English forbears were to send Canadians back—men strange to England and yet deeply English in their blood and bone and sentiment! He looked at me with those intelligent eyes of his.

"Would you believe that the place was black with people just to welcome us Canadians!" His eyes sparkled. "Black with 'em, cheering. And the women with their hands full of flowers and cigarettes and fruit to give us. Such a welcome that—so hearty."

I wish the Falmouth women could have heard him say it. For that was Canada's thanks to England for her welcome-home again.

Three months they worked in England.

"We had everything to learn," he said. "Green troops—my, we were green! We swallowed everything they told us." He laughed a little.

"Well, you've learned since then?"

"We've learned."

They lived and worked in England. But by the time the New Year came the men were keen as razor-edges to be gone. They were tired of Salisbury Plain. They liked England, but they missed the spaciousness of Canada, the dry clear air, the frost and snow, the sunshine; and they had come to fight.

"They were good to us," he said, "but we were keen to get to France. That's what we came for, and the time seemed long to have to wait for it. When the orders came"—he drew a breath—"well, we were ready."

He told me of the breathless eagerness with which they waited news. He told me how great six-foot men broke down and cried like children when they heard they had to stay behind.

"They had to stay, for we were over-officered. That was too bad!" he said.

"Did you all long so much to be in France?"

"Right in the trenches there. That's where we longed to be." He flicked his ash

off. "Oh, we were sick and tired of waiting. It was fighting we were after—fighting that we came for. Poor chaps! It was hard luck on them. *I* was the lucky one!"

Keen, as he said, as razor-edges. Keen to see the desperate game, and play it desperately. He was the lucky one—to be allowed to take his life in his two hands and risk it.

Then came the step to France. The ocean had been good to them; not so the Channel. They put off in the best thing England had to give them—an old cattle-boat—and, once aboard, the winds and waves saw to it that the orchestra played up. It blew and buffeted, the tub pitched and tossed. There was no room for anything—no place to lie, no inch on which to call your soul your own. Men wrapped themselves in anything that they could find and lay down anywhere, and, keen as razor-edges as they might have been, I dare say there were moments when they wondered why they had ever left their homes, why they had ever thought that they'd like fighting, why they had ever troubled to be born at all.

"That was unique," he said. "When I came staggering up on deck next morning—Phew! that was a sight."

So these Canadians came to France. They landed at a port they hadn't meant to land at, weary and sick, with broken legs and arms amongst them. But they landed—that was the main thing. If wind and waves had driven them out of the course the captain meant to take them—one port did as well as any other. It was France. If men had broken legs and arms—bones mend. They had come to where they longed to be. All through the summer months in Canada they had worked for this; for this they made their camp out of the virgin wilderness; for this they gave up work at home, left their people, changed their clothes and ways of thinking, toiled at new ways of work and thought—turned from peace-loving citizens into soldiers. They were there, with Canada behind and France in front of them, close to the fighting-line at last.

. . . . .

Now that he was across the ocean and in

France and Flanders his way of speaking changed a little. He was young and strong and full of eagerness to see and feel and know. He had longed for fighting. His heart was at the fighting-line and in the trenches; but, when he got there and actually lived a soldier's life, he changed his attitude of mind a little. There was a fascination in it, as he said; and in the midst of it he felt the fascination—even three thousand miles away it drew him back again. Yet when he came face to face with grim reality he saw War differently. Much that he saw was fine, but it was fineness without glamour. It was a skeleton of life he saw there and, though bones are beautiful, to most of us they're grim without the flesh. From this time on he told about the War as he had seen it in the trenches. It was no narrative of things he liked to talk about and linger over: it was brief, terse, scraps here and there, confused, sometimes a picture, but far more often just a welter of sensation, sentences half begun and broken off again, hints—and silence. He told me rather of the way War struck him than of War itself.

Once he said, "It's a fool thing, War!" And once, "It's grand!"

They landed, entrained, and reached their billets. There they found cold for a welcome, rain and mud and bully beef and biscuits, and very little room to live in.

"They told us we could hear the guns," he said, "you bet we listened!"

"And you heard them?"

"Heard them? The great big fellows! They had me scared to death."

Then, nearer, they heard rifle-firing. He saw his first man hit—and fetched the stretcher-bearer.

"Blood-curdling rather—that!"

And then the trenches.

As he saw more and more of War, I noticed that he spoke a great deal less of what he felt himself. Sometimes he said it was exciting, or called a new experience interesting, but what he chiefly talked of, as the time went on, was how his men felt; how they feared; whether they were comfortable; what he could do for them; whether he was doing all

he could for them. These were his preoccupations. And, now that he was home, one of the chief things that he chose to do was to seek out wives and mothers so that he might tell them how their sons and husbands lived and died in France and Flanders. That was the hardest job of all, he said. And he turned and looked out at the trees again, and watched them waving in the summer sunshine. Widows; homes without sons—that was a part of War he learned in France.

The English took them in and introduced them to the trenches. "My, they were kind to us!" and that he said to me not once but fifty times. "Kind!" An unexpected word to hear right in the midst of War and shells and fighting and fierce struggle for a yard of ground. And yet the thing he made me feel above all other things, I think, was that amidst the fierceness there is consideration. Men out there, down at bed-rock of danger and discomfort, show each other kindness. They share. Those who know, share knowledge. Those who are brave, share courage. Men share

their lives with one another. Those who are last come first—the first most willingly come last. In danger and discomfort they are one.

So they got in—by kindness of their English kinsmen; learned how it feels to hear a bullet whizzing past you, got their first baptism of rain and mud, knew the first war-time feeling—half eagerness, half fear. And then he told me of the first round he took, that first impression of real soldiering—preparation no longer, but the real thing.

"We were green troops; green!" He paused. "And my, that English crowd was kind!"

And then we fell on one of those tiny incidents that take us all by storm, and leave a memory for life. It was a dinner that he had had—not bully beef and biscuit, but a real live dinner. As he talked of it I saw the English officer asking him to come and dine with him, the shanty where the mess-room was, the little banquet—soup and roast and vegetables too! —and his immense enjoyment. That dinner is a part of that first night: the way up to the

trenches, the anticipation, the nervousness and the excitement, the unaccustomed English ways of speech, the kindness of the older soldiers, the darkness, the confusion—the unknown No Man's Land beyond the parapet. Never will Canada taste soup like that or roast like that, all his life long, but he will see that scene in Flanders, and feel that fluttering at the heart which the bravest man is not ashamed to feel at such a time. Queer the way such little things take hold of us, and queer the way they bring the big things up in us. He told me more about that dinner than he ever told me of the trenches; and any picture of the trenches that I have from him came through that dinner and by means of it. Trenches, perhaps, are indescribable; so by instinct he drew a picture of them by describing things I knew. At any rate for me, too, his dinner is a part of that first night—a part of War.

He told me of the things we all have read about since War began—of climbing over parapets to see the wire entanglements. Exciting that, but nervous work! He told me of the

"stand to" before daybreak—more like a nightmare than a healthy dream. He told me of trench raids, well-loved by the Canadians—the fierce excitement of the rush when feeling is dead in you, and everything is concentrated in the sure eye, swift foot, quick hand, and rapid intuition of the next thing.

He tried to tell me how it feels to have no feeling, to have thought blotted out, to be an animal for the moment, alert in all the senses, rapid, wary, fierce.

He told me about Ypres and Festubert. And, as one speaks of casual incidents that pass before one, he mentioned how he had been gassed and wounded twice, laid up with rheumatism after lying in the trenches, first knocked to pieces, then patched up again.

"Sometimes you feel," he said, "as if it can't be real. I've seen things—watched them—and felt nothing." He paused. "It's like a Movie. It's not real—you feel it can't be. Sometimes you *want* to feel and can't." He paused again. "It isn't like that all the time, of course. There's times you feel just scared.

You're frightened stiff. You lie there in the trenches—you're wet and cold, and shells come pounding down on you. You lie and wonder where the next'll land. You're scared. So's the man next you. You're all scared——"

He caught my eye and saw, I think, a look there of surprise.

"Yes," he said, "I know. You folks back here at home all think it's charging and recklessness and rush and feeling nothing. Well, it isn't——Don't you *see* that it's far finer just the way it is? The men are scared to death and cheery. They're frightened stiff, and yet they *do* the things. God knows they haven't much to joke about, and yet they're cheery all the time. The men—they're fine! You never saw the like of them. They're brave, they're frightened and they have the courage of the devil, they do the things. What they *do*! Oh, they're——" He hesitated for the word. "They're irresistible. They're *fine*."

He paused a minute.

"And you can't tell what a man's feeling. There was a chap I knew, the finest boy that

ever stepped, dare-devil, up to everything, scared at nothing, first there and last to come away again." He smoked a minute. "One day I asked him, 'Are you never scared same as the rest of us?' He looked at me and laughed. 'Scared!' he replied, '*I'm* scared stiff all right. There's never been a day, an hour, since I've been out that I'm not scared and frightened all to bits.'" He puffed another moment silently. "Don't you see that's fine?" He puffed again. "And he's dead too. In the end they got him."

We waited while the trees outside went on waving and the world looked golden in the summer sunshine.

"That was the finest chap that ever stepped. He was my chum."

And he was silent.

After a bit he started in again. His eyes met mine. He smiled.

"Of course," he said, "I see the way you mean it—and it's true too. There are fellows —great lumber-jacks and guides and trappers —out-door men. *They* don't feel frightened.

Why," he said, "they love it." He paused again. "But then, you see, they've got no nerves."

To look at him, you would have said he was a creature unconscious of a nervous system—you would have sized him up as healthy. Only when he said a thing like that, and you looked closely at him, then you saw in him the marks of having suffered. I don't mean wounds—they heal. I mean that in his face—across his brow, under his eyes, and round his mouth—were lines: the lines that come on older faces naturally, lines that mean apprehension, fear, suffering, memories that no man cares to speak of or look back to. I was silent.

He turned from me and looked out at the trees again. The heat was breathless. There was a golden haze on everything.

"The noise out there," he said, "the *noise*! That knocks you out."

And he was silent too. We sat there quietly for a bit; and, when he turned to me again, his face was young. He laughed.

"I know the kind of thing you think. It's

Bill!" He laughed again. "You think we're all like Bill."

"Who's Bill?" I asked.

Then he told me of a day of shelling. Great eight-inch shells came pounding in on them.

"The world's end come at last! You couldn't speak, you couldn't think, you couldn't breathe for noise—and so you joked about it."

And in the midst of this he made his rounds.

"Down in a dug-out there," he continued, "I found two men, and one of them was shouting, bawling, roaring. What he kept saying when he got his voice above a shell was 'Dinner, Bill; wake up!' 'Who's asleep,' I asked, 'in all creation?' And, seeing I said something, he just pointed to Bill." He laughed and when he laughed like that he was quite young again. "'Wake up,' the fellow said, and shook his chum and pounded him, 'wake up—it's dinner.' Bill turned and yawned and stretched and said some truck about the Germans. When I roared at him to ask him, 'Don't you mind the shells?' he shook his head. 'No,' he said, 'like 'em, mister.

They're a mother's lullaby to me. When they start shelling I get awf to sleep—and stay asleep till they stop awf again.' Then he said, 'Wha'at's for dinner, Joe—old Bully?'"

Canada laughed again.

"That finished me," he said. And then, with mischievous laughter in his eyes, he looked at me. "That is just the way you folks at home think all the armies act, and every man amongst 'em!" His eyes grew graver. "I tell you now," he said emphatically, "it isn't. Don't forget it."

There was just one thing I felt I had to ask him still: and that was where the fascination was. For I kept wondering. And while I hesitated in what words to clothe my question I saw him glance down at his wrist-watch, and then straighten up. The time had nearly come for him to go.

He looked at me. His eyes were friendly.

"I'm kind of sorry that I've told you nothing, but it's hard to talk. It's hard to tell things. And, besides——" He thought a moment. "Well, there is no story in it—

that's the truth. War's just a crowd of little things all happening together. Believe me, there *is* no one big thing to tell you."

He paused.

"One way," he said, "War's a fool thing—there is no sense to it. Take it the other way—it's grand. You take the lying in the trenches there—that's a mean, miserable, dirty trick. You lie there and you wait. And miles away a chap that never sees you, never even knows whether his shot has got out, works his gun the way he's told to do. And you lie there and stop it p'r'aps, and die, or you get mangled up, or else they clean you up a bit and take you home and patch you. Look at it that way, and War is mean. It's poor, it's dirty, and there's nothing to it. That's Trench War. Just an affair of high explosives—no fun, no dash, no anything."

He paused again.

"The War down Mexico way's a bit of fun, I guess, and p'r'aps there is some dash to War like that. But there's no fun in lying in the mud and waiting. That's all you do. Just

lie there, watch the shells, and wonder when they'll get you. That's the life out there."

He waited quite a long time. Then he spoke again.

"But there's another side. There's the things that happen, there's the men. The things they'll do——" He turned and looked full at me, and in his eyes was knowledge bought with flesh and blood, wisdom and grief. "Think of a fellow with his leg blown off, just lying there and waiting. And when the stretcher-bearers come at last, think of his saying, 'Leave me, there's lots of fellows worse —take them.' There's lots like that. Or take a man, a bad 'un, drunk, profane, always in trouble. One that would fire right off the handle. Take it one day when bombs were falling in like hell on us, and men were dying there like flies, and there were stretcher-bearers wanted, take it a chap like that came up and volunteered. Take it he knew enough to give first aid, brought in the wounded—worked. And take it that when a shell was coming, then he threw himself atop of two of 'em and

saved them. Think of it, just a man like that——"

He stopped and looked away from me.

"Oh," I said, "he wasn't killed?"

"Sure he was killed. He knew he would be killed. That's only one of thousands that you never hear of."

He sat there smoking for a long long time.

"Yes. War's a fool thing. But when it comes, then some one has to do it. And, by the time you're all stirred up, you do it. Some one has to. But don't think," he turned to me, "that men go doing it out there with any glamour or illusion—truck like that. That's for the folks at home. The men out there just do it, and they feel—we feel—every one of us that's been out there—— We feel there *couldn't* be another War like this. No there couldn't be, for when you've seen it, it's a dirty job. It is, it is."

He spoke quite quietly, but behind his voice were waves of feeling.

"You go out there, all full of expectation. You wonder, and you have the fool ideas we all

have till we've been there. You go. You see men killed all round you—worse than killed—your chums, some of them just kids——" His eyes were shining—tears are no shame to men in war-time. "Life's not the same for us, for any of us that come home again, mind that. It's not the same. How can it be? We've lost our chums, we've—seen things. But once you're in it, you go through with it. And when you sit back here and think of all the men out there, bearing the brunt of it, working and sweating, and making fun and joking there—and dying——"

His young mouth quivered and he set his teeth upon his lip.

"You asked me where the fascination was," he said. "Well, there's the fascination, if you want to know—the sharing. And the grand equality." He looked at me intently. "Out there it's mud and rain in winter, and it's heat and sand in summer, and it's noise and suffering and wounds and blood. But there's the sharing. It's waste—but we're all in it just together."

He stopped and searched for words to say it with.

"Out there's the only time I've ever known the way it feels to be all just the same. Equal. That's where War is grand." He threw his smoked-out cigarette away. "We're all soldiers there. We're equal. Every man has got his chance—to die."

He stood up—big, strong, powerful—a bit of his own virgin wilderness come to life and walking.

"There," he said, "you have it. That's the fascination. Back here it's pretty and it's nice and comfortable, but we're not the same as one another. We don't want to share. And when you get out there it's horrible and terrible and wicked too, but you can share and die and be as good as any man. Out there we help and want to, that's what makes the difference. And when you've been all through it and you've come back home and think it over, the——" He looked at me. His eyes were clear again. His mouth was set. "Well, when you're through, by God, it's worth it."

He's sailed again. He's almost at the Front by this time. If he has to give his life before War's over, as he said, he's learned the value of it. For he gives life gladly—perhaps it's worth it.

Chips

Chips

HIS job was selling ribbon at the Ribbon Counter—and he didn't like it. He didn't like it at all, he disliked it; there were days when he loathed and hated it. And the reason why he loathed and hated it was because Nature hadn't cut him out for the job.

For a miracle—because such is not the way of salesmen who sell at Ribbon Counters—he was tall, and he was strong, and he had muscle, muscle that he would dolefully feel for in the intervals of serving lady-customers. He came by his muscle rightfully enough, for his folks were of the earth, earthy. He came straight off the earth, himself, too, and he had only come off it because it was so almighty dull to

be spading it up and spading it down again for ever. "P'r'aps it'd be some better in the city!" he had said to himself; and he had taken chances on the hope.

Now, however, that he had succeeded in getting his job at the Ribbon Counter at a very minimum wage indeed, there were days—when the lady-customers couldn't find the ribbons their souls desired, for instance—on which he half-wished himself back at his everlasting spading. He still went on talking to himself, but in the store his tune gradually changed till it definitely reached the minor key, and stayed there. "Why, I'd sooner thresh a'all day than wha'at I'd sell a ya'ar'rd a ribbon to a lady!" he'd say inside himself as he stood on his side of the counter by the hour together, doing his best to please and not succeeding. And when the lady-customer would say she'd like to have that first bolt of ribbon down again he'd say "*My!*" to himself—and things stronger than that. And he'd get the box down again and undo it and spread the ribbon out and say, "A sweet thing, madam!" and tide it over the counter

in a flowing wave, while in his heart he would say, "Hell and damnation, hell and damnation!" And even that didn't do him any good, for it wasn't strong enough to meet the case. And then, after about a life-time of deliberation, when the lady would say she guessed she wouldn't take anything to-day but would go home and "think it over," he would have to say—oh, so courteously, for it is courtesy or quit—"Very good, madam!" and watch her sailing away, presumably *to* think it over. And he would stay where he was and wonder why the strongest language yet invented by man is so inadequate to the most everyday occasions. Then he would turn to the next waiting lady-customer—blood-sister to the first—and history would repeat itself.

He saw no way out of it short of going back to the land—and the lady-customers hadn't pushed him that far yet. So he just held on from one Bargain Day to another, hoping against hope that he might wake up one fine morning, not to find himself famous, but just to find the Fair Sex—as it is sometimes even

yet erroneously called—growing up above ribbons. No such thing. The Fair Sex never grew an inch. It kept on coming and asking to have that first bolt down again, and then it invariably said it would go home and think it over, and *da capo*—it was as unchangeable as the hills of God. That is the way of a maid with a salesman. Such is a salesman's life.

When War broke out—he saw a way. He knew nothing about War, but he thought it couldn't be worse than a Departmental Store, and, though he knew less than nothing about a shell, he fancied somehow that he would take to it more kindly than to a yard of ribbon with a woman at the other end. This time he said to himself, "Well, it can't be *worse* anyway!" And pretty soon after he said it—for his inches were all right and even a trifle over—he was out of his beribboned life and into a khaki suit with a number all his very own to know himself by in all extremities.

It was not a beribboned life he led in France—no one could say that of it. All the days of his life there, humanly speaking—as people say

when they think it is some one else's turn to die first—he was thoroughly and desperately uncomfortable; but he learned a lot. He learned what hunger means, and what fear means, and what the Communion of Rats means, and what pain means, and what comradeship and sharing mean, and how it feels not to have a dry stitch on you for days and nights together. He learned all this, not at his finger-and-toe and mind-tips, theoretically; he learned it deep down in the bones where you don't forget. He practically committed all these things to memory for life—and they were only the beginning of his education. However, some of the other things he learned in the same way don't fit well into print and paper and decent family reading. So we won't think about them.

He got on well with everything and every one there was. They liked him "fine." And indeed there was something very nice about him—something so nice that he had managed to bring it out intact even from behind the Ribbon Counter. Besides being nice he was

thoroughly good with his hands—ingenious —was there ever a Canadian yet who wasn't ? And he soon taught the English chaps he found all round about him—factory lads from the North for the most part, handy, too, but handy in another way—how to light a fire with a rag soaked in paraffin and a damp twig or two, and how to keep it alight just long enough to boil the water for a cup of tea and no longer than that. It genuinely shocked him to see the waste of wood and time and the general ineptitude of the indoor worker at the outdoor task, when first he watched the factory lads starting out to do it for themselves. It shocked him so much that, feeling the need of sympathy, he appealed to an Australian who happened to be standing by as to whether it wasn't " ah-ful ! " The Australian confirmed him in every particular, and then bet him five to one *be* could light a fire with three twigs less than Canada. After which there was a considerable wastage of lumber in settling up the dispute. The factory lads stood by to see fair play ; and naturally the winner—who happened to be

Canada that time—got the name of Chips.

Once free of Woman and the Ribbon Counter and planted safely in the mud of France, Chips began to blossom ; and, after seeing to it that his pupils were finger-perfect as to fire-building, he turned to as *chef*. He showed them how to crumble the hard biscuit and turn it into porridge—I think he called it "mush"—and next, a very popular stunt, he showed them how to hash bully beef, and how to serve it as a hot savoury instead of a cold roast. By the time his pupils could all light fires for themselves with six twigs apiece, and cook a hot meal over it with their own hands, Chips was a happy man and a tremendously popular character ; and popular he remained all the time he stayed in khaki. The only time he got into any trouble at all was once when a bad habit he had of acting on his own unaided impulse got the upper hand of him and brought him into violent conflict with the great mass of generally received opinion. But the conflict only lasted for a moment, and then he was knocked out of business and made to con-

form to the world and its ways, and, as a friendly Tommy afterwards observed to him, probably it was all for his own good. The way it came about was this.

Chips was new to the trenches and tired, and the noise which was going on all round about him may have had something to do with it—noise kept up too long and too continuously is pretty destructive to those troublesome things we call nerves. Anyway, the shelling had been going on for a good long time, and Chips was pretty well fed up with it, and frightened to death, of course, and trying not to show it ; and, on the top of all that, something he was cheek by jowl with was knocked straight out of humanity by a bit of shell.

Chips just happened to look round—tired and frightened and all the rest of it, remember—and right in front of his eyes he saw what not a minute before had been his chum. He saw it and he looked at it. He heard it crying out in a voice he didn't recognize, heard it begging for death, heard it imploring some one just to put a bullet through its head and make an

end of it. And Chips lost his head. He lost it utterly. The next thing he knew was another voice he didn't recognize, either, shouting, "Here, wait a minute. *I'll* put you out of your pain. Don't you worry. I'm comin'." And it was then that he found himself quite suddenly and unexpectedly in a minority, and for the moment unpopular.

Afterwards, back in billets, when things were quieter and he had found his head again, Chips couldn't forget the incident. His chum. That! "Why mightn't I kill ut?" he kept saying, at first to himself, but afterwards out loud to the other chaps too. "Why? *Why* mayn't you? It's wicked not to—it's crule. You'd let me if it was a dawg." And though the answers he got were for the most part physically conclusive, they didn't convince him. He went on wondering and wondering, just as he used to wonder behind the Ribbon Counter, only of course he wondered different things now. Behind the Ribbon Counter he only used to want to know who made women like that—and why; but now in the trenches what

he wondered was if the sixth commandment was really all right, or whether there mightn't be exceptions to it now and then. He wondered and wondered all the time he was in billets, and at intervals after that too. And it was only very gradually that he learned to leave such things to the stretcher-bearers without an inward protest. Even to the end he would catch himself saying, "But *why*?"

One day a good long time after this, when he had not only learned but assimilated a lot of things that we who stay comfortably at home never get the chance of running up against, Chips found himself once more in the orbit of high explosive or bombs or something equally unpleasant. He was just as frightened as ever, only he was differently frightened; for by this time he had learned quite definitely and positively to keep his head on any and every occasion—he had been over a year at the Front. An officer was going along and Chips was watching him—and a trench-mortar burst. The officer dodged round, and came out again

at the other end of the trouble—unhurt. He wasn't an officer that Chips knew anything or cared anything about. Indeed, he wasn't conscious of thinking anything particular about him one way or the other: he just watched him, as many and many a time in his early days on the land he had watched a team of horses making it's way along a country road. He neither thought nor cared nor felt anything at all. And yet, when he heard another bomb coming along—nothing in the world could have been more involuntary and instinctive and unreasoned—he stepped in before the officer he neither knew nor cared about and saved him. He protected the unknown body at the cost of his own. And he hadn't even time to wonder why!

As Chips lay in hospital, however, and, just as soon as he was definitely sure that he had anything left to think and feel with, he started wondering again. He had what is called an active brain. He lay and he wondered day-long, and sometimes night-long too. He wondered—why! Why, at the outset of his mili-

tary career, would they not let him put that poor thing out of its pain ? It wasn't a man any more. It longed to die. It had to die. Then, why mightn't he help it ? Why had they so disapproved ? And why at the end of his military career—for the trench-mortar was the end of it all right—had he stepped in to sudden destruction all to save a major he neither knew nor cared anything about ? And not only that, but why had he been applauded for doing so ? *Why* ! He went on wondering and he found no answer.

When the major came to see him, which in the fullness of time he did, he said :

" You old fool, what made you step in between me and that bomb ? "

And Chips answered :

" Beca'ase I tha'aht you were more useful, sir."

But, though he said that, he knew well enough it wasn't the real reason. He had to say something, and what he said sounded right with a sort of surface rightness. But deep down in his heart or his soul or his somewhere

or other, Chips knew that the same, the very same identical impulse that had made him want to kill one man had driven him to step in, at the price of his own flesh and blood, between another man and death. If certain death had been before him and he had seen it there awaiting him, still he would have stepped in between that bomb and anything—officer, private, friend, enemy, child or dog. He knew it. And he hadn't the slightest idea why.

"It's a queer business, eh, miss?" he said one day to his nurse, who happened to be a kindly, chatty, ribbonless thing that he never for a moment thought of associating with Woman. "It's a queer thing sure!"

"Wha'at is?" said the nurse, who was a Canadian too.

"Well, miss," said Chips, suddenly finding himself up against a question with the explanatory thing inside of him as inarticulate as ever, "this killin' things and yet not bein' allowed to kill 'em, and patchin' up wha'at's better dead. It's a queer trick, wa'ar, eh?" he said again suggestively, and rather deprecatingly

too, for by this time he was never quite sure how people would take his views and wonders about life.

"If I wa'as you," said the nurse—she was a young woman of sound common sense—"I wouldn't think about ut. You jes' try and forget a'all tha'at." And then to give the subject a pleasant turn she said, "You'll go right ba'ack in tha'at store there, I guess, and see wha'at tha'at'll do for you when you get ba'ack home, eh?"

And she smiled pleasantly at her patient and, the wards not being very full at the time, composed herself for two or three minutes of cheering conversation about nothing in particular.

There wasn't much of Chips that was movable at this stage of the proceedings; but all that was movable Chips straightened up. And he took hold of his mind and stiffened that up too as well as he could so as to bring it to bear on the subject.

"See here, miss," he said slowly, "tha'at store there."

He actually managed to raise a little bit what once was his hand.

"Go ba'ack in tha'at store?" said Chips. "Never! I'd sooner be in hell."

And there was the sound of a tearing bandage somewhere to italicize his remarks.

"My, *my*," said the nurse. "Oh, law!"

And she bent down to go to work and see what had happened.

But Chips kept her off at the point of the bandage till he had said to her what he had it in his heart to say. All the whys and wherefores as to killing or saving men suddenly vanished into thin air. They seemed nothing at all in comparison with the importance of saying what he felt, and knew that he felt, and knew this time *why* he felt about Life behind a Ribbon Counter. He suddenly became articulate.

"You listen here a minute, miss," he said. "It's like this." He paused to find exactly the word he wanted. "When you're out there," and, feeling he had no energy to waste, he merely flicked an eyelash in the direction of the fighting-line, "it's ah-ful, sure, it's mean

and dirty sometimes, and it's "—he hesitated—"well, it's *terrible*. It's terrible all right," he said, "but someway——"

He stopped again, and he kept off the nurse just by the force of his eye and what was left unsaid inside of him.

"You wa'atch men die and worse than die out there," he continued, "and you mayn't help 'em through, and you're frightened and you mayn't say ut, and it's—it's an ah-ful"—he hesitated again—"it's an ah-ful—*mess*. But when a'all's said and done you're doin' somethin' for your money. You're doin' somethin' if you ha'ave to spend your life a'all the time after tryin' to forget ut. And——" He stopped, and back of his eyes there seemed to be a gathering mist—"It's not a'all ba'ad." The mist kept gathering and gathering. "Take my word for ut, miss," said Chips, "it's not a'all ba'ad out there." He hesitated. "There's things you feel." And a great tear detached itself and rolled away.

"There, there," the nurse said, "you lie down and rest."

"Wait," said Chips. He paused and drew the deepest breath he could under the pressure of his plasters and bandages and splints and things. "'Way in the store," he said, "behind the Ribbon Counter there—tha'at's sma'all. Tha'at's poot." He stopped a moment and his eyes grew clear and hard. "You slave," he said, "and slave and do your best—wha'at for? To wa'atch the women come and gra'ab and sna'atch the whole day long. Jes' tha'at. You *couldn't* please 'em."

He paused again.

"You've never seen a Ba'argain Day, I guess," he said—by this time he had forgotten that even nurses are part of Womankind—"*you've* never struck it when there's ribbons a'all ma'arked down three cents a ya'ar'rd, and ha'ad to stand there a'all day long and wa'atch the women tearin' round the ba'axes—cla'awin'—tra'amplin' one another." He swallowed. "Women too!" said Chips. He nerved himself for one last effort—he was getting very tired. "Believe me, miss," he said, "if you seen tha'at, you'd choose a rush atta'ack and

bawmbs a'all fa'allin' round you like cawnfetty sooner. Every time." He tried to nod. "There *is* no choice betwixt the two of 'em," he added. And fell back on his pillows.

"There, there," said the nurse soothingly again—she liked Chips, just as the men had done—"don't worry."

And she began to rearrange.

Chips lay quite silent till she was all through. Then he looked up at her and started in to whisper. He was pretty tired.

"One way," he said, "you get cut up and killed p'r'aps, but yet you're gettin' *somethin'*. There's the things you see—life—mixed in with a'all the rest. But in the store—ba'ack there——" He stopped, and to catch his next remark the nurse stooped low to bring her ear within hearing distance—"you're givin' life, jest a'all for nothin'." He paused and heaved a little sigh. "Amongst the shells they say it's hell all right, and p'r'aps it is." He paused again. "Ba'ack at the Ribbon Counter there it's worse than hell—it's——" Suddenly his flow of eloquence was

stopped. He lay there. "It's death," he said. And he was silent.

The nurse said "My!" and "Well!" They were the first things that occurred to her and did as well as anything else she could have thought of. She didn't understand, of course, but she was just as kind as if she did. And now that Chips had got it thoroughly off his chest he went to sleep and wondered nothing more till he woke up.

The Ribbon Counter won't see Chips again —that's clear. But then it wouldn't want to now that he's minus pretty nearly everything that you can make a living by. What *will* Chips do when he comes out of Hospital? Who *will* want him? That's what I wonder. You can't make livings out of asking why or telling wherefore. There's a deal of wondering yet, I fear, ahead of Chips.

The Brothers McNeill

The Brothers McNeill

I SAW him from my arm-chair in the Pullman Car. He was leaning heavily on a stick and getting along the platform slowly, evidently making for the very train in which I was. I was so delighted to see him again that I left my seat and ran to meet him on the little outside platform; and when he came limping to the steps at last, and stood there smiling up at me a minute, quite surprised, I couldn't help holding both my hands to him as if he had been a brother. So do we welcome our soldiers home again.

The last time we had met was before the War—that cleaving of the lives of all of us. He had been fishing in the head waters of the Restigouche, and through the hot Canadian summer days I had learned, not indeed to fish

—I didn't want to—but *how* to fish and how to watch a fisherman with a sympathetic eye. It needs some training, even that!

We had singled one another out from our respective parties from the start; he was to me what Italians call *simpatico*, and I was, I imagine, much the same to him. It wasn't that we had anything particular in common, any special shop to talk about, any intimate confidences to exchange: it was just that we liked to be together, and I liked to watch him fishing, and he liked, I think, to have me looking on at him.

The War had broken up that *dolce far niente* for us. On August 5, I think it was—in 1914 naturally, I mean—he laid his rod away and left his fishing, and started out to find recruits amongst the lumber-men and guides he knew so well. For he was native to that part of Canada, and as Canadian as a knot in one of Canada's own maple trees.

He had no difficulties to contend against. They liked him, all the men down there. He knew them, knew how to handle them;

they loved a fight, and rallied round him to a man. Before six weeks were past he led two hundred men. Great elemental primitives. And he and they had gone to France to fight.

I looked at him, as he sat next me in the Pullman Car, and liked him just as I had done a year before. And, as one does to those one likes, I looked him over eagerly and marked the changes in him. He sat there in his weather-beaten uniform, a patient look of waiting in his eyes. His face was thin, his body worn. His arm was hurt, his leg was hurt, his side was hurt. He walked with difficulty, he who a year before had run and leaped and dived and cast a rod with anyone! One thing was left unchanged in him—his smile. Thank God, there's something left untouched by War!

As we sat facing one another there, I seemed to feel the sunshine of the Restigouche again, and scent the pines.

"How many fish to-day?" I said involuntarily.

"Ah!" he said. Then, "Those were good days." And said no more.

He looked hard-bitten, sitting there. There is no other word for it. Always an outdoor man, he seemed to have become seasoned and tanned, as lumber is tanned and seasoned, with wind and weather. In spite of all the cuts and shots there was a lot of him—to go back there again. One saw, to look at him, that he was on the uphill road to healing, and I never doubted that to go back was what he meant to do.

"Where are the men?" I asked him.

"Dead," he said. Then, after a minute, "Do you remember Rob and Jock McNeill?" he asked.

Remember them! Who could forget them? Of all the sturdy sons of Canada—transplanted from the sturdy soil of Scotland—those guides of his, the brothers Rob and Jock McNeill, were surely sturdiest.

As he spoke their names, it seemed to me as if I saw again the river Restigouche in spate, a canoe adrift upon the tossing waters, and Rob

or Jock—I never knew the two great twins apart—lying at ease among the rough dripping grasses on the river bank. He—Rob or Jock—lay there, smoking of course, thinking perhaps, with keen black eyes upon the heavy freshet; and then—I remember how I hardly could believe my senses!—I'd seen him, pipe in pocket, plunge like a water-dog; and I had clasped my hands and said, "He's drowned!" But after a bit this new Undine, canoe in hand, came bobbing up again serenely. And then I watched him strike out for land, breasting the current, make his booty fast, and, dripping as he was, more like a water-dog than ever, lie down upon the river bank again and light his pipe! Glancing my way, and possibly recognizing that safety lies in explanation of tactics to an officious sex, he called in my direction, "No stealing this time, lady!" And then I remember how the giant, hope springing eternal in him, slowly smiled. "Mebbe the darned owner's gawn and drowned himself!" he said. Just a hint to Providence. The rest was silence. Forget Rob and Jock McNeill? Not likely.

"Oh no, I've not forgotten them, I said. "But they're not——"

"Dead," he said. "They're dead, the two of them. I've left them there in France."

He looked far out. I glanced at him and saw his eyes were full of tears. Remember he was hurt a little—even a maple will bleed through a torn bark in spring-time.

"I took them over with me just a year ago. Two hundred, you remember them. Two hundred men."

He gave himself a little shake to rouse himself, and then he told me just what had happened, as it happened; and as I, far from War and unfamiliar with the workings of it, understood him, here it is.

He got himself and his two hundred as far as England. Then both his morning and his nightly prayers were all directed towards one end, to get sent farther—to the Front. The whole Two Hundred in the little town in England were as one man strong, the terror of the country-side. He said while he was there he sometimes wondered whether it was men or

devils he had brought across the sea with him. Mischief and pranks and restless electric raging energy all day and all night long—live wires let loose! Morning and evening, as I have said, he said his prayers; and in between his orisons he sent apologies.

All the Two Hundred knew its mind at any rate. It wanted to be there: the Front, the Very Front, the Fighting Line—and nearer still if possible. He knew, he said, when once he got them off to France, they'd welcome them. But the South of England, and Mrs. Grundy in particular, looked on his Two Hundred with a Gorgon eye. Perhaps even more unfortunately Mrs. Grundy's daughters, to a girl, were of a different way of thinking. They looked on Primitive Man to love him, and all the Primitive Woman left in them rose up to welcome and embrace the Early Male.

It was a blessed day when he set sail at last for France with his Two Hundred. I say set sail because, as he was telling me his story with his Canadian quips and turns of speech, it seemed unsuitable to me that these Early

Primitives had gone by motor-cars, and modern train and steamship, to the fighting line. Those bearded pards, spare in the loins, with massive shoulders, and the strength of bears—they should have had a sailing-ship to take them over, and gone a-walking on the other side with bows and arrows in their belts to face the enemy!

Once landed there, two hundred men were happy. None of them sighed for the Miss Grundys they had left behind them. They set themselves to fiercer joys, and found a fitting place for all the devilries that had been so out of place in England. No more apologies. No more need for prayer—over in France *they* were the answer to it rather. The time had come to point to his Two Hundred and say, "A grand thing—and my own!"

He said he had learned a lot from them. He learned that rules and regulations, whether in French or English, are things breakable. He learned that foolhardiness at any time may be an ecstasy. He learned that courage, like love, may be a breaking as well as a fulfilling of the

law. They never tired. Sleep they could do without. Food could be taken at any time. Clothes were an afterthought. Life was before them to be lived, life to be freely taken, men shot down anywhere like deer in hunting-time. And they had lived to see the day!

He told me how many and many a time he'd watched McNeill—the brother Jock or Rob, either or both, it doesn't matter—up in the branches of a tree, a bird of prey: eye straight, mouth set, rifle to shoulder, death at the other end. And he had heard them murmur, "Still-hunting isn't in ut. Darn you, take that!"

One night there was a desperate game afoot. He turned to me.

"You know those desperate games, you've heard of them?"

I shook my head.

"A gun," he said. "You know? A machine gun, you've heard of that?"

I nodded.

"Well," he said, "that to get. That to bring along by hook or crook. That to chance life or death on."

He looked at me.

"The job to get it you don't know, thank God," he said. "I'll tell you this: it was a job for us."

When they had desperate games like that afoot they'd learned enough after a bit, it seemed, to come to him and ask him to set his men to play them. This time they came and asked for twelve. As he looked down his line —shorter and shorter with each new day, alas! —the two McNeills flickered an eyelash each just to remind him that desperate games were in their line, that desperate deeds were food and drink to them. But though he took the one he left the other. He said he couldn't spare them both at once: they were the best he had to give. Rob was the one he took, Jock the one left. For once the twins were to be known apart, one gleaming in the sunshine, one in sullen spate.

When in the blackness of the night he called the names of all his twelve, twelve answered. But hardly had they answered to the roll-call when a thirteenth answered, clamoured, and

claimed his place. And in the blackness of the night he heard a laugh, a curse, a struggle.

The twelve went off to play their desperate game, with Rob McNeill legitimately amongst them. If Jock McNeill had stolen in by stratagem who would be likely to regret it but the man he'd left behind him—he, too, alight with ardent longing to take chances with the life God gave him? He might regret, perhaps some Germans——

He stopped and looked far out again.

"That was the end?" I asked.

"It was the end," he answered. Then after a moment, "We got it, as the German gun-crew knew. All that was left of us brought the gun along."

And he was silent.

I saw the Restigouche again, overgrown, sunny, expansive. Nature is in her lavish mood when she makes men like Jock and Rob, and lets them grow and propagate. I used to call them Romulus and Remus only last summer, and say a she-bear must have suckled them.

" I often think," he said to me, " that life is queer. How could one ever guess that Rob and Jock would part from Canada, and that I should have to leave them there, across the sea, in France." He looked at me. Again I saw the tears deep in his eyes. " They were the best I had to give," he added. " I loved them both."

He's off to France a second time, two hundred strong. And he'll be off again with twice two hundred more if that's required of him.

A taste of Woman and a meal of Fighting, then, if it must be, Death—Forgetfulness. That's the philosophy of all the Jocks and Robs he takes with him—the categorical imperatives they ask of life.

A Tenderfoot

A Tenderfoot

ONLY three years ago and he was fresh from England—English of the English. Yesterday I met him in the street in khaki—next door to a Canadian. So rapidly does the Dominion mould her immigrants.

It's just three years since he first landed, looking for a job. He came to find a job in Canada presumably because he couldn't find a job at home; but I don't know that that entitled him to all his airs, such airs, poor dear, as he put on three years ago! And yesterday in the street I met a strong young thing with not an air or grace from head to foot of him. Warmly we greeted one another when we met —rather as friends than chance acquaintances— and went to lunch together, just like friends, to talk life over.

A nice boy he was when he first came, quite a nice boy; no more than that. His eyes were nondescript and candid, he had a pleasant smile, and no physique to speak of: he was slight and gave one the impression of not much staying power. And, like so many of our modern English boys—those of them who come out to Canada at any rate—he had no alertness, no superfluous energy, no life, no eagerness to live. His way was rather to stand still, stock-still, acquiescent, taking such oddments of life as came his way: and, if none came, then he just accepted it. And now his blood had reddened and his skin had tanned, his mouth was smiling and his hand had got a grip. He had come alive, oxygenized, perhaps, by the clear air of Western Canada and her outdoor life.

As I stood talking to him fresh out from England three short years ago, I can remember how I watched the lines, the furrows, School and College had written across his brow. There they were, ploughed in his face, witnesses to all the money that had been spent

upon his education. Witnesses, too, the glasses that helped the halting eyes to do their duty, the anxious nervous look upon his face, the inevitable cigarette that had helped him through it all. How seriously he had taken himself and all his education then! How lightly he seemed to bear it now after three years of roughing it! I remember thinking even in his serious youth that his blue eyes were nice—that *he* was really nice—all that was left after examiners had done their worst by him. I remember thinking that if only he could forget, throw to the four winds of heaven all they had crammed him with for the past years and years, what a nice boy he still might be. And here he was back again, the accomplished miracle, his learning—the little learning he had crammed so zealously—well behind him and the fresh air in his blood instead. Even that mind of his—that poor ill-treated mind of his!—here it was out of its swaddling clothes for good and all, out in the world, a bit of God's good world, and busy remoulding from day to day the body that belonged to it.

Talking to him yesterday I remembered how three years ago we had talked of jobs together, and with what a touching air of patronage he had said—he, hardly landed from the boat that brought him !—that there were plenty of jobs in Canada. "For the right sort, plenty," I had said to him. "But Canada, remember, needs, above all, men that know their work. No room for dilettantes here." "*We* can supply them," he had answered with that British sublimity that is so hard to bear. And when I had asked, "You mean with good, efficient manual workers?" he had replied, "Not manual, oh, not manual. *We* supply the theory."

I remember how I laughed, probably provokingly enough, as I asked him how much good he imagined his theory was going to be to him in a new country. "How much," I had said to him, "can you make, build, actually build with hands out of theory alone? We need hands out here, remember, to make us homes to live in, and bridges to cross, and theatres to think in, and churches to make

merry in when our day's work is done."

And he had looked at me as if, young as he was, already he felt that Woman had her definite place, ordained and preordained for her, and would do well to stay in it. "You can't construct or build without it, you must have theory," he had said to me, and as I looked at him to-day I remembered his faint superiority of tone. "It's theory you need, to know how to set about it!" "And how do you intend to *do* the job?" I had asked him. "Oh," he had answered me, "you can find manual workers, lots of 'em, to *do* it. Theory's it!" "How I should love," I had said to him, "to have a talk with you in just about three years' time from now. What a lot you'll learn if you stay in Canada so long." "Learn!" he had said to me. "**Did** you say learn? I haven't come out to Canada to learn. I'm through all that."

And I had looked down at his hands, fine-grained and soft—yes, actually those very self-same hands he had brought back with him to-day!—and I had said, "What have you

learned ?" "Oh, the usual thing," he had answered vaguely. "Lots of maths. But I'm through the beastly rot, thank all the gods. I'll learn no more." "You're right," I had said to him, "truly beastly rot it is—for boys like you."

And he had looked startled, shocked at my ready agreement. He had looked almost as he might have looked if he had said defiantly he was an atheist, and I had calmly answered so was I. "Oh well," he had said, "you have to know it." And, when I had asked him why, he had assumed a lofty air, and said it was difficult to explain, the inference being that it was only difficult if you happened to be explaining to a woman! And, now, here he was back again, in khaki, going home with the Canadians—a Canadian soldier. I looked at him and could hardly believe my eyes.

"How did you do it?" I asked him, laughing.

And he, responsive now, quite simply answered me:

"You were the very first I ever came across

to talk a little sense to me." Then he laughed a little. "Don't be offended," he said. And when I shook my head he laughed again and whispered, "And I thought you mad!"

"I know you did," I told him. "Do you remember when you said you loved a sail-boat, and how I said it was a pity that you couldn't work at sailing one?"

"Sure I do," he said. "'Mad as a coot!' I thought, when you said that. And, would you believe it, that was the very way I had to make my living for a bit."

He looked a trifle shyly at me, laughing across the little restaurant table.

"That sail-boat I had at home and had to sell, she was a clipper! And once I got out here she was worth more to me than any college course, I tell you!"

He stretched a rough brown finger out and touched my hand with it.

"And once," he said, "I met a witch that told me so before it happened!"

You notice he still called England home? They always do.

We ate a little while in silence, then I said :

" So, once you got out to Canada, knowing about sail-boats was usefuller than passing exams in maths ! " And I smiled at him.

" You bet ! " he said. " I made my bread and butter awf of sail-boats. Maths don't cut any ice in Canada."

He spoke the odd mixture of the Englishman who has lived amongst Canadians proper away in what Eastern Canadians call the wild and woolly West ; and I meet much the same Canadians in the tame and silky East, although they always tell me that there aren't any there ! His English inflections had stuck to him willy-nilly, but his vowel sounds had taken to running into one another, and his R's had leapt from throat to palate. Also his conversation was besprinkled with colloquialisms as from a pepperpot, and here and there he used an oath, harmless enough, a mere bad habit, to point his morals with.

" And after the sail-boat, what ? " I asked.

" A little bit of everything," he said. " A

little bit of anything that buys a meal of meat and tea and bread and butter."

His hand went naturally to his pocket. Then he drew it back.

"Light up," I said, "smoke, certainly."

He talked more easily once he had his pipe between his teeth.

"When I came out and talked to you that time," he said, "I had my theory at my fingers' ends all right. I was balled up with it. There wasn't any room for sense."

He nodded to me.

"Just as you told me, lady, when I wouldn't listen! Went West instead and hawked my damned theory around." He laughed. "God! You should have seen me with my letters—sheafs of 'em there, believe me!—when I found they wouldn't so much as look at 'em. 'What can you *do*?' they always used to ask me, just as you did! And when I started out to tell, Great Scott, they laughed. They said I was a little god on wheels and turned me down."

He sucked his pipe.

"Things looked like hell!" he said.

He puffed a bit in silence.

"One night," he said, "I took to thinking. There wasn't much else in front of me. I took to thinking as a change from supper."

"What did you think about?" I asked.

And most unexpectedly he answered:

"You!"

"Me!" I said, laughing. "How did you come to think of that?"

"It came of wondering," he said. "I sat there wondering how I could earn a supper, for I was hungry."

He broke off.

"Say, do you know what being hungry's like?"

I shook my head.

"*That* teaches you all right," he said. "Hunger's a College Course, you bet! It sets you thinking, take my word."

He puffed again a bit.

"Well, I sat thinking, and I thought of you, and how you said to me, 'It's not the same out here, remember. There *is* no market here for theory. What they want here, and need

and mean to have and pay to have, is practice.' "

"Did I say that?" I asked.

"Don't worry what you said!" He puffed a bit and then went on. "'There's lots to do,' you said, 'there's pretty nearly everything to do in Canada. And all of us, men and women too, and don't forget it, have to turn to in Canada and *do* it. It's the only way. Don't bring your theory here,' you said, 'it's worse than useless. Lend a hand with all the rest of us, or, even better, *give* a hand. Hands—millions of them!—with brains working through the finger-tips is what Canada needs. That's what's going to make her a country worth living in!'"

"You didn't seem to be listening when I said it," I said, laughing. "But I do remember saying that, or something like it. And then you said, 'But surely there has to be some one at the top, showing them how? That's where *we* come in."

He pretty nearly put his hands before his face.

"Did I?" he said. "Oh no, I couldn't have.

I don't believe it. Don't—don't rub it in like that."

"You did," I said, "you positively did!"

And then our eyes met and we laughed together.

"First you shocked me," I said, "and now you've shocked yourself—that's as it should be. When I said to you, 'Don't land your airs on Canada! You'll be done for life if you take up that attitude,' you smiled superiorly. And don't you remember how I told you your superior airs would be like curses and come home to roost? Then you said——"

"'That's Shakespeare!'" he interrupted. "That's what I said. Don't I remember! Oh, what a beastly prig I was, and how I needed kicking!" His eye looked graver. "I've had my kicking since, though; I've known what it feels like to be up against it. That teaches you a lot!"

"But not too much!" I said.

"Well," said he, "Canada's lambasted me all right. She's made a tough of me, I guess."

"And incidentally," I said, "a man."

Our eyes met in a smile. His hand went up in military fashion.

"I'm through the mill anyway," he said, "and p'r'aps I've learned my lesson, or a bit of it. Some day I'll tell you how. Just at this minnut this tough hasn't time to tell—he's going home to fight." His blue eyes gleamed. "Thank God for that!" he said.

"Think of *you* going home a Canadian!" I said, and smiled at him.

If he had been a Frenchman he would have shrugged his shoulders. As it was he shook his head at me.

"Call it Canadian if you like," he said. "English, Canadian, it's all one to me. We're in this all together. And we'll come out of it together."

He took a drink. Then, somewhat shamefacedly, all the old original English Adam coming out in him, he said:

"One thing the War does anyway, you can't deny, it makes a lot of brothers of us—chums."

He looked interrogation at me.

"What about the sisters?" I said, smiling back at him.

But, had I realized his grip in merely shaking hands, I never would have said it!

The Girl He Left Behind Him

The Girl He Left Behind Him

HE took his supper out of season, at an outrageous hour, because he wanted a chance of solitude. It was his last night East—his doctor had sanctioned his going home to-morrow—and he wanted a quiet hour, if he could get it, before that everlasting train-trip West. So, having eaten, he made his way towards the Chintz Parlour to have a smoke and read. Then bed! Perhaps the Chintz Parlour might be empty of all humanity at this unusual hour of his. He hoped so anyway.

It wasn't called Chintz Parlour by the Ladies Committee that owned and ran it, but that was one of the names—the most printable one, perhaps—the men had for it amongst themselves in strictly private conversation. They

had no fault to find with it, none in the world. They thought it awfully decent of the women to get it going for them as a sort of transients' home. They were immensely grateful, as is the way of men to women in the modern world, and more especially in Newer Worlds, perhaps. And, in this case, well they might be.

For the Chintz Parlour had a dining-room —chintz-curtained—where good, plain, absolutely unbefurbelowed meals were served, and just next door to that a billiard-room—also chintz-curtained—and farther up the passage a reading-room—also chintz-curtained —with a long table piled up with magazines and periodicals and newspapers, almost snowed under by all the literature sent in by a frail but sympathetic sex. And upstairs there was a little sitting-room like a boudoir, more chintzified than ever, with covered chairs and a chintz cosy-corner, and a bookcase full of chintz selected reading, choice and delicate, warranted not to bring a blush to any soldier's cheek. And then, upstairs again there were the bedrooms, specklessly, awesomely clean,

chintz-curtained too, with little chaste cot-beds so exquisitely made that it would take a hardy warrior to think of disarranging one by getting into it at night. One chair stood guard at every bed-side, the floor was covered by the best linoleum : the sort of room in which to take your things off one by one and fold them up, then, thoroughly in tune with the infinite, wind your watch and go right-mindedly to sleep. On waking, if you were to put the question to yourself, " Am I down-hearted ? " the answer of course would be a ringing " No ! "

It was, as you will understand, a fearfully tidy house ; " well-ordered " is perhaps the better name for it. And the Committee Room with its green baize table and its stern unwinking lights flanked all the other chintz delights and kept a sentry eye on them. The Committee Room, indeed, had its chintz curtains too, but they were its one concession to the lighter side of life.

There were lots of men to come and make a home of it, lots and lots, in khaki every one of

them, of course. Men on their way to somewhere, with fighting and warfare on their lips. Men back from fighting somewhere, talking of cigarettes and how they loved them at the Front, and silent as to all the rest. Men with the world before them, strong and hearty; men with the world behind, in bandages. Men walking straight and strong; men limping, halt and lame. Men with clear eyes to look on God's good world; men with their eyes closed to outward beauty for the rest of life, and all the seeing in their faces turned to wistful listening.

They came and went. One and all, well and ill, they liked the Parlour and were grateful for it. Good souls they were, and kept on telling one another, in-between-whiles, how great the women were, to be giving furniture and oil-cloth and appropriate pictures, arm-chairs, and all the chintz the city could supply. The boys were grateful, as I say. But they *had* an unscriptural name or two amongst themselves, I'll not deny it, and on the whole they liked their meals out better,

and the beds, perhaps, were just a shade too chaste for them. Also, it did come over them at times that Woman was a trifle omnipresent and omnipotent there; a thing of beauty over-busy superintending them perhaps, a refining influence, only too close at hand. Man likes Woman certainly—who can deny it?—but not too much of her. Man likes his work, his games, occasionally his dinners, always his own strictly masculine clubs without her; but, after all explanation, this simple fact remains an eternal mystery to the feminine heart and head. When all is said and done Chintz Parlour Ladies are but Woman, which is women; and if they erred at all in their Men's Club it was on the side of permeating a khaki atmosphere with just a breath too much of—shall we call it *brise charmante*? Give them their due. Theirs was a perfectly ordered house. Khaki was safe in it; no breath of scandal ever touched its reputation. There was no Wine, you may be very sure of that, only a little regulated Song occasionally, and if at first sight there seemed a powerful lot of Woman

going, she knew her place as Angel in the house and stayed there.

All this explains his taking supper at an unusual hour and making his way to the Chintz Parlour in hopes of an hour's solitude before his turning-in time came along. He looked around cautiously—not a soul about! Good. He heaved a sigh of satisfaction and relief. The next thing was to gauge the maximum of possible comfort and, to start out with, to lay hands on the one un-chintz-covered chair. There was but one, so naturally there was a rush for it, but fortunately it was unoccupied for the moment and he secured it for himself. He wheeled it to the radiator, turned it so that his back was to the door, arranged another chair to hoist his legs on, took up a magazine at random, lighted his pipe, and soon had forgotten everything in the joy of tobacco and the first short snappy story he got settled into. For when your cells are on their job building you up again, then life, even in the guise of a ten cent magazine, tastes like a sparkling wine. It's only when you've lately

known what sickness is, or when you're suffering from the madness men call love, that you can feel life's bubbles wafting up and up in you and breaking lightly on the surface.

It was just when he was well into his snappy story and the taste of his old friend was sweetest in his mouth that he heard a rustle behind him, a rustle and a kind of flutter, and a little cough.

"Hell!" he said to himself, "it's another of the damned things come down here." And he sat tight.

After a minute he heard another rustle. He puffed with intention, and he positively nailed his eye down on the print in front of him.

Then came a flutter. He glared at the printed page without distinguishing a letter.

Then a half-cough, a very little one. He sat tense. So had he felt when they were shelling within a yard or two of him.

And then, close by his ear, a small voice—a light soprano—said:

"Wouldn't you like? Couldn't I read to you, p'r'aps?"

It had come. Another of 'em skipped down

there to make him happy, and he hadn't the strength of mind to tell her to go to hell! He turned, and with a stifled sigh he faced the enemy.

It was a slip of a young enemy he faced, small-boned and slight, elegant with that studied elegance that money alone—and lots of it—can give. Its hair stood out like threads of fine gold wire—the pale gold of half a century ago—and its eyes were blue like the stones in its finger-rings, and its lips were parted a little and showed the frail white tended teeth, all mended and patched so that art nearly held the mirror up to nature, but not quite. And as the damned thing stood there facing him, in the whole fragile look of it there was a sort of half-appeal as if it had come to ask him something, and finding itself there stood hesitating on the brink. With the first look into its sapphire eyes he gave himself up as lost. He straightened up, took his feet down off the other chair, removed his pipe, and with another stifled sigh placed his magazine in the slender manicured hands outstretched to take it.

"Sure," he said. "Read away."

He felt everything in resignation but the beauty of it.

"Where can I sta'art?" she said, fluttering the pages of the magazine as if it had been a fan to play with.

"Wherever you feel like sta'arting, miss," said he.

"But aren't you *reading*?" she said.

"I wa'as," he said.

He seized his pipe and shook the red-hot ashes out of it, not on the floor—oh dear me no!—but tidily, on to the ash-tray nobly planted close to the masculine elbow by a fostering feminine care.

She paused a moment, fluttering the magazine, and looked at him. Her blue eyes grew more intensely blue than ever. They had a wistful look.

"My," she said, "don't you feel to wa'ant to keep on smoking?"

"Don't signify," he said.

And then, without so much as glancing at her, he fished his penknife out, and scraped and tapped and scraped again.

She paused another minute. Her eyes got bluer and darker till they were the colour of the very most expensive sapphires. Then suddenly something in the nature of an idea shone out of them.

"Say," she said, "you don't quit smoking 'cause I'm come, eh?"

He went on scraping busily.

"Why," she laid a most innocent, child-like hand upon his coat-sleeve, "I jes' love ut. Quit? Don't you do ut." She looked round apprehensively, then just above her breath, "There's no old Cats around?" she whispered. Then gallantly, "I'll smoke meself!"

He stopped the toilet of his pipe, and their eyes met frankly. They lighted up. Smoke is uniting.

"Say, did tha'at hur'rt?" she said, bending a little towards him.

"Wha'at hur'rt?" he said, his legs up on the extra chair again.

She pointed shrinkingly to all the bandages he wore.

"Tha'at!" she said.

"Tha'at," he said, "wa'as a picnic, miss."

Her eyes shone mistily.

"My, my," she said, "you'll ha'ave to tell me some, I guess. It's wha'at I'm come for."

It was a new idea to him. He sat digesting for a bit.

"You'll pardon me," he said, after digestion was complete. "You didn't come streaking down here to make me happy, eh?"

She held her cigarette away a little, daintily, between her first and second fingers, and shook her head until the fine gold wires almost seemed to jangle.

"Come down to please yourself?" he said. "I'm feeling better. Gee, that's great!" Then, after a moment, with an inspiration, "Wha'at more did you come for, miss?" he asked.

She puffed the smoke out leisurely.

"Don't I keep telling you that I'm come beca'se I wa'anted to," she answered.

"Jes' tha'at?" he said.

"Jes' tha'at," she said. Then caught her

breath and glanced at him and hesitated for a moment.

A man can beat a woman at the silent game. He left her to retrieve herself, as best she could. Then after a bit, a good long bit, she said :

" See here, I'll tell you. Listen. I'm come beca'se I wa'ant to know. I *ha'ave* to know—and you kin tell. That's all there is about ut."

He recognized reality.

" It's up to you," he said.

She drew her chair a little nearer his, and rested an elbow on the table, and through the silvery smoke she looked at him.

" Wha'at is a trench ? " she said.

" A trench ? " He turned his pipe and bit on it. " A trench is great, you take my word," said he.

" Some da'amp, I guess ? " she said.

" And so's a ba'ath," he said. Then, falling back on his main argument, " You take my word, a trench is great," he said.

She made an effort to get deeper down in him. The eyes that looked into his quite unconsciously grew larger.

"They say there's ra'ats!"

There was a quiver in her voice.

"Ra'ats? Sure there is ra'ats," he said.

"Oh!" she said.

"Believe me, miss, there's times in Fra'ance," he said, "a ra'at is comp'ny."

She shuddered.

He sucked his pipe.

"I've counted fifty-nine meself," he said. "Sixty's a Social!"

"Not ra'ats!" she cried.

He turned to look at her. Her face was eyes, all sapphire eyes, turned almost black with horror and dismay. Then suddenly she tossed her cigarette away, clutched at a cobweb with a piece of lace sewn round it, hid her eyes in it and sobbed.

"Gee whiz!" he said, and sat there thunderstruck, dumbfounded, full of dire amazement.

She sobbed despairingly. To hear her, you would fancy there was nothing between her and ruin but a cobweb.

"Did I do ut, miss?" he said at last.

"No," she sobbed, reaching a forgiving hand in his direction. "It's only——" Sobs filled the breach.

He gazed at her with apprehension. After a bit he laid his pipe down. *Angina pectoris*, or toothache, or else some hidden feminine ill from which the normal sympathetic male is barred? He waited till she took away her cobweb and revealed a slightly swollen nose, two overflowing eyes, a flushed and quivering face.

"Oh!" she said.

"Don't be down-hearted, miss," he urged. "Do your bit! Wha'at is ut anyway?"

She hunted a jewelled wrist-bag up and fetched a piece of paper out of it.

"Tha'at's the best boy I ha'ave," she said. "He's there."

She leant across and put the bit of paper in his hands.

"See," she said, "look at ut. Listen. Is there ra'ats where *tha'at* is?"

He read the piece of paper, looked in her sapphire eye, and spoke.

" If there's a ra'at in sight of where tha'at is," he said, " my name is mud."

" Oh ! " she said.

She gasped a minute.

" I'm glad I came," she said.

" Keep ut up," he said encouragingly, " keep the band playing. There's good times ahead."

Her nose was still a little swollen, her face still flushed, her gold wire hair dishevelled, and her eyes shone pale against the pink puffed eyelids. She looked a fragile piece of goods—woman, wife, mother, could that be in store for her ? Involuntarily there rose before him other women he had seen of late. Women, deep-breasted and broad-flanked, going about their business in the fields, knowing what war means. Women all of them ? He looked again—he met her eyes. Yes, all women, even this little one, and each one with a man at heart.

" There's one thing more I ha'ave to know," she said.

She caught her breath the way a child does after crying.

"You listen here, leave ut at tha'at," he said emphatically.

Her eyes filled up with eager tears again.

"It's only shells," she said. "Wha'at *is* a shell?"

A soldier is proverbially a man of action. This soldier felt his time had come to act.

"You know tha'at ca'andy store right on St. Anne Street there?" he said.

"Why, yes," she said, "I know the ca'andy store all right. It's where they carry Mexican Kisses Saturdays."

"See here. Next time you go in there and buy your chaw'clate, miss," he said, "look in the window. They got a shell fixed in among the ca'andies there. Keep lookin' and you'll get ut. Then you'll know."

"A real live shell?" she said incredulously.

"Sure thing," said he.

"But wha'at's the name on ut?" she said, still incredulously.

"It has a tie-tag on," said he.

He was unanswerable.

They sat a minute, then she pointed to his bandages.

"Wa'as tha'at a shell?" she said. Her voice had deepened, tones and tones.

He looked at her. And sitting before him was the younger sister of those other women.

"Wa'as *tha'at* a shell?" she said again.

"See here," said he, in search of compromise.

"I ha'ave to know," she said.

"Why," said he, "then if ye ha'ave to know, it's this way——"

She put her two hands up and pushed her hair back off her temples and she shut her eyes.

"Here," she said, "stawp awf a minnut, will you."

Then with her hands still at her brows she looked at him.

"I *ha'ave* to know," she said—her voice went like a string that runs the whole gamut of the scale in breaking—"and I don't dare."

He felt that he was up against it.

Then suddenly he heard ministering angels in the shape of steps and voices in the hall. He recognized Chintz Parlour Ladies and, for

once, he was glad of them. As she recognized them, too, the younger sister to those other women vanished.

"Ssh," she said.

"Saved again!" he thought.

Finger on lip she crept to the door on tiptoe, peeped through the door-hinge, then crept back to him again.

"They'll go in that Cawmittee room of theirs, I guess," she whispered. "Wait jes' a minnut. Then we kin both skidoo."

The Ladies passed in estimable conversation to their green baize room and shut the door on their chintz-curtained mysteries.

She drew her furs together, fixed her hat.

"Good night," she said, "I sha'ant be likely to forget. I'll look to-morrow in tha'at ca'andy store, you may depend."

Under the hat-brim her sapphire eyes gleamed strangely at him.

"But I know ut now," she said. "I know ut now. Good night."

Gone like a streak. No ghost at cock-crow ever sped more silently.

He slipped his coat and cap on, switched the light off, tiptoed after her.

"A close ca'all that," he muttered. "Damned near had her turn a woman on my ha'ands!"

He chewed a moment on his pipe-stem.

"The child!" he said. "Poor little woman!"

And he went his way.

The Ladies, appearing shortly after to make Khaki happy, found on the floor a cobweb, drenched, with lace sewn round it. In one corner, written crosswise by a man, they found two names bridged by a dash: Winona-Errol. And the man's writing was stitched and embroidered by a hand that tried unskilfully to keep the form and shape of every letter.

All the Chintz Parlour Ladies to a woman said:

"That Monkey!"

The Admirable Joseph

The Admirable Joseph

WHENEVER I have anything extra precious the War comes and takes it away from me. Not that I grudge it—oh no! But when it comes to the War asking me for Joseph, and getting him too, well, I can't help feeling that that is coming it rather strong.

Joseph is—what shall I call him?—my Monsieur de Ménage, perhaps, if that strikes you as more or less of an equivalent for the transatlantic Charlady. Joseph is my houseman, my henchman, my pearl of great price. And I wish—not that I grudge him for one moment, oh no, as I said before—sometimes, just for an instant, that Joseph had been over age.

Joseph is Canadian—French-Canadian—something neither quite French nor quite

Canadian, something distinct from and yet appertaining to both France and Canada. He followed, in my little flat, in the train of a super-English Charlady, of whom be it only said that, as she crossed my threshold for the last time—outward bound, thank God!—I remarked to myself out loud as I closed the door behind her, "Next time it shall be a man or nothing!"

For some time after that, nothing it was; and, resisting with ease during that transition period all temptation to the eternal feminine, I did the work myself. I did it, but at what a cost of choicest brain-tissue and of everyday flesh and blood! The wear and tear of brain-tissue arose from the concoction of labour-saving devices which, as I lay awake at night, I planned to save my flesh and blood; and the melting of my solid flesh was due—hints for Hamlets here—to the lifting and carrying, the rubbing and scouring, the polishing and dusting that no labour-saving stunts could be devised to rid me of. Some days I thought, "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness!"

And then, other days, I had my doubts about it. For lodges in wildernesses are but shacks in Canada, and *that* needs muscle! And muscle as embodied in a strong and willing man was what I was crying out for even in a Bachelor-Suite with Janitor Service and Continuous Hot Water and Cold Storage Coils, etcetera, as radiantly depicted in the advertisement. No strong and willing muscle coming my way, I was fain to go on specializing on my labour-saving stunts; and so heartily did they thrive on my grey matter that they took to rolling in the manner of an energetic snowball, and then *I* took to a notebook and to wondering whether I couldn't dress them fa'ancy, as they say in the Dominion, and carry them to Market and pass them off as a Real Live Book. At this psychological moment Joseph turned up, and a good job too, for, as you will clearly see, I was well on the way to becoming a commercial knave and a household prig.

As a preliminary to action Joseph conversed with me over the telephone in fluent French-

Canadian French. If you say anything about French-Canadian French in Canada, they always tell you that it is the pure old unadulterated French as spoken by the Grand Monarque himself in the intimacy of his court circle, and carried carefully across the ocean by the real originals somewhere about three hundred years ago. That may be. But while the Grand Monarque's special brand of accent has been maturing in the cask the world has gone on circling, so that his pure old unadulterated French has now become caviare to the general and unintelligible to the particular. This being so, I hinted to Joseph that a conversation at close range might be preferable. Forthwith the voice of Joseph vanished at the other end, and shortly afterwards he made his appearance at the door.

He came right in with a rush and a hustle and he took hold—that was the Canadian part. He told me I had an *accent superbe*—that was the French in him. He took a bird's-eye view of my flat with his brown intelligent eyes, he took off his boots and he put on a pair of list

slippers, he tied an apron of strong green baize crosswise about his body—and there was Joseph, a brisk young sprig, all ready for the fray !

I never come to grips with the predominant male but I become unwillingly conscious of his native inborn superiority. I do not wish to argue this matter. I merely wish to point out two things. First, how can any woman hold her own with something that can roll up a carpet and carry it over his arm like the newest thing in rain-coats out to the balcony, and there continue to shake it till all the neighbours down below send up to complain ? And secondly, how is a woman to compete with a matter of a piano waltzing out into the middle of the room and her dining-table acting as if it were the hero of a Séance with Spiritual Influences bearing down on it from every side ? In the muscular light of Joseph my labour-saving stunts seemed suddenly paltry things. I ceased to mould them into marketable guise. I plucked them out of my notebook and cast them from me—I mean, I locked them safely in a drawer—and humbly I offered *mes com-*

pliments to Joseph. And when he, with a negligent wave of the hand, replied, "*Madame, pour un homme, ce n'est rien!*" I couldn't but feel that he was rubbing it in.

Before Joseph came I had made myself a vow, and that vow was not in any way to try to improve Joseph's mind—I had done a good deal in that line with my previous super-English Charlady which will account to almost anyone for wariness—nor to inquire at all into Joseph's home-life. In a word, I had determined to take plenty of thought for to-day on my own account and none at all for the morrow on Joseph's. I am not prepared to say how it came about that before Joseph left me on that very first occasion I seemed to know more about him than I had bargained for. I did know it—let that suffice.

Joseph, it appeared, had acquired his household skill as what the Scotch call "orra man" in a School of Domestic Science. My Monsieur de Ménage suspended his labours while he ticked off his acquirements on his fingers; and, speaking for the moment as a Scotch

Divine, I may say that these acquirements grouped themselves naturally under the four following heads. Ménage—all of it—inclusive of the waxing of floors and the whitewashing of ceilings; the mastery of the tool-chest; the rhythm of the wash-tub; the technique of the oven. Joseph went on sweeping. The Admirable Crichton himself could hardly have asserted in rounder terms than that the Supremacy of Man. Indeed, I doubt if the Admirable Crichton ever asserted anything half so useful. He may have—I confess I don't know much about him. But, speaking generally, reputations don't go tinkling down the centuries as the reward of usefulness. The Admirable Joseph, with all this Science and Art flowing out literally from his fingers' ends, makes one dollar in the day—and as to a reputation, he never heard of such a thing and wouldn't know one if he met it.

Joseph is, so far as I am aware, Canada's one authentic miracle. And since miracles such as he happen rarely in any parts of the civilized world to-day I may, perhaps, be excused for

having taken a little time to become a thorough-going convert. What happens in Canada in a general way is that people come to do your work, and they earn your dollar by asserting that they are to the full as good as you, and they prove it by smashing all such household gods as come their way. Having thus undermined both your intelligence and your pocket, they go away again. A prolonged course of such Help engenders scepticism; and I confess that before the advent of Joseph I was, if not a downright sceptic, at least well on the way to agnosticism. My change of heart—my conversion—came about in the following manner, a direct result of Joseph's masterly yet sympathetic attitude towards the great vexed question of the Boot and Shoe Shine.

In older lands, amongst certain ultra-modern sections of the community, I know that it is now the fashion to declare that you *like* blacking your own shoes, and what a pleasant, cleanly job it is, and how educative! Well, I *don't* like it. And the only reason that I have

been prevailed upon to black my own shoes since my migration across the seas is because I have lacked the courage to ask any New World Citizen how *he* likes it. I may say that I am not alone in this pusillanimity. When the only millionaire friend I have—she lives in the New World next door to us, the States—wants *her* shoes blacked, she gently pulls the front door to behind her, enclosing safely within all that she has culled from Orient and Occident in the shape of Chief Butlers and Bakers; and she takes a run around the corner to the nearest Shoe Shine Parlour, and there, for ten cents and a tip, she gets her shoes shined by a darkey gentleman with a wide smile and an accommodating manner. And then she goes back home to her Chief Butler and all his satellites, and she slips indoors, and she waits in her nicely-shined shoes till the chauffeur brings round the five thousand dollar Limousine with the five hundred dollar prize Chow on the box. And then Aphrodite is herself again.

Living in Canada and not being a millionaire

myself, I don't even go the length of Shoe Shine Parlours. I just black my foot-wear on a newspaper on the kitchen floor and keep my ten cents in—where my pocket ought to be; and this I have continued to do for a period now not exceeding ten years. It was with the appearance of Joseph on my horizon that I first ventured to prick up my ears. I put the shoe-shine proposition up to him and, with ears still pricked, I waited to hear if the miracle rang true. All I need to add is that one of the proudest moments of my life was watching Joseph immediately afterwards. He was on his knees on the kitchen floor, where I myself had previously so often knelt, he held a tin of shoe paste in his hand and, ranged on a newspaper in front of him, were all my boots and shoes. Thus did Joseph set me above millions and their millionaires! So true it is that every cloud has its silver lining!

Of Joseph the Miracle I need say no more. To those who have crossed the ocean the mystic word "shoe-shine" will explain all; to those who have not crossed the ocean there would be

no good trying to explain. So I shan't try. I pass to Joseph the Patriot.

When Joseph broke it to me that he wished to go and serve his King and Country it was, I confess, a blow : the more of a blow, perhaps, because I had never thought of Joseph as wishing to go fighting anything, never having associated him with any warfare nearer than that of the Grand Monarque. As soon as I had got my breath back, therefore, I most unpatriotically pressed Joseph for his reasons, and Joseph, once more suspending his labours, once more ticked off—but this time it was his logic—on his fingers. He said one did not support oneself in *un luxe effréné* on one piastre a day. He indicated—in italics—the ten cents *de plus*, the one dollar and ten cents, which is the daily payment of the Canadian man in khaki. And he wound up by remarking, in the French as spoken by Louis in the inmost recesses of seventeenth century home-life, that it was *un* snap ! *un* job *sur* ! and *bon pour tout l'hiver* ! I then took my innings.

" Joseph," I said, " it is *not* a snap ! It is

not a job *sur*! It is not even a job *sain*. You may," I said, "and probably you will, get killed."

"Death, madame," replied Joseph instantly, with a shrug in which were all the centuries of France and not one of those of Canada, "is an accident which comes to any man, which must come to all. I go a little way to meet it. *Voilà tout!*"

The conversation ended here.

And now I know that every one is waiting for me to say that Joseph took all my silver forks and spoons across the ocean with him. I'm sorry. He didn't. There's no climax. Joseph is Joseph, Canada's one authentic miracle, and not Madame Potiphar herself, I verily believe, could have tempted him as far as a tea-spoon. He sailed last week, and I'm counting on his being a credit, not only to his Kings and Countries—I allude to George and Louis with their respective lands—but to the Overseas Contingent too. If there happen to be any medals going for Domestic Help in war-time, Joseph's the boy to wear them.

As for myself, now that the War has taken my Joseph from me—not that I grudge him, oh, dear me, no, as I remarked before—I've foresworn all Help, both male and female, and fallen back on labour-saving stunts. I find they take about an ounce of muscle to a hundredweight of brain; also that they are disintegrating to the moral character. So if you ever come across a book of mine—I got my notebook out the other day—composed of them, don't read it. You'll find it heavy and immoral.

Achilles Minor

Achilles Minor

JACK McGRATH lived opposite the drill-ground of the Beavers. Beavers of the Dominion was not their canonical name, but it was the one they went by on account of their insatiable industry. They drilled in the morning, they drilled in the afternoon, they drilled by electric light, did the Beavers, and the regimental band played all day long and most of the night, and practised its scales any time there was over, so as to be bright and ready for a nation well known to be both efficient and musical. The Beavers practised warfare passionately. They are a living instance of what it is possible to do when you go on doing it both in season and out.

They were followed, or I may say initiated, in these endeavours by their patron saint—Bounce. Bounce was, and is, a quadruped in

the nature of a dog. He has the melting eye of a fox-hound and the scowling jaw of a bull-dog; he has the prick-ears of a terrier and the chest of a mastiff. His legs are one at each corner, and his gait is that of an incredibly rapidly stotting ball. As to his tail, least said perhaps is soonest mended. He is not so much a dog as Dog. He is the canine species in one composite example. His name, as I have said, is Bounce.

What Bounce did before there was a war I do not know; but, since there has been a war, Bounce has known what it is to have an aim in life. He belongs to the Company—to all the Companies in succession—which drill in the piece of ground opposite to where Jack McGrath lives. He isn't exactly their mascot because he doesn't want to go to War with them—Bounce, so far, is untainted by militarism. When Bounce's Companies go to War he lets them go to War and merely barks them the best of luck. He then takes on the next lot and sees it through. It is a busy, if impartial life.

Jack McGrath and Bounce are friends. They are friends, that is, as far as friends can be friends when the affection is all on one side. Bounce gives what he can, but affection is not in his power to bestow. He gives an inalienable good-will. Jack has oceans of affection to dispose of to whoever will be kind enough to accept it. And *his* principal occupation in life is to sit at his nursery window watching Bounce as he sits at ease, sagaciously cocking one ear to every order and fixing any slacker with a judicial eye. And when drill is over—which happens when the Beavers can't stand upright on their legs another minute—Jack listens to Bounce barking them home to barracks; and he sighs and wishes he were grown-up and ready to be a Beaver too, and just setting off to join Dad—wherever that may be.

Jack McGrath is really and truly John Willington McGrath, and it was only his daddy who ever called him Jack. His mother says he is to be called John, and she calls him John herself, and when she happens to be in she sees to it that he *is* called John by his nurse and

the cook and the house-parlourmaid and the furnace man and any etceteras that may happen to be about—Master John, please, whenever you have occasion to address him by name!

There is no doubt about it that Mrs. John Willington McGrath is a very fine woman, and that she is universally admired and looked up to. There isn't a Project in which she is not personally interested, you could hardly find a Board in the whole city—I mean a Board with a capital B of course—that she doesn't sit on, and as to Red Cross Meetings she is to them what the Beavers of the Dominion are to drilling. She is insatiable. If only I could remember the number of bandages she reeled off in one short week you would, I am sure, stop whatever it is you are doing and think about it. I can't exactly remember the number, I am sorry to say, but I know it was something quite unusual.

The best of us, however, cannot manage to be in two places at once, and therefore you will understand that Mrs. John Willington McGrath could not both be making bandages for the

Wounded Soldiers at Red Cross Meetings and at home superintending her own household at one and the same moment. Her house was a big sprawling house, one of those houses in which there is lots of room for a little boy to get lost in. And as to the nurse and the cook and the house-parlourmaid, if they were not busy making bandages they were just as busy in other and equally essential ways. There are first principles in all things, and the first principle to a wounded soldier in need of a bandage is an unwounded soldier in need of a kiss. The nurse, the cook and the house-parlourmaid shouldered their end, Mrs. John Willington McGrath shouldered hers. It is a just world.

John Willington McGrath, not being a soldier, but only a small boy sitting at his nursery window wishing he was one, was not an object of special interest to anybody: and consequently he was left a good deal to his own uninterrupted meditations. They were not particularly stimulating. He was hedged in by a great many things which he was never on

any account to do; there were so many of them, in fact, that it seemed hardly worth while trying to keep up with them. One of the things that he was *not* to do was ever to think of going outside the yard gate alone. He was to go out nice healthy walks with Nurse and then come home again, and stay home until the time for the next healthy walk with Nurse came along; and, if it hadn't been for the War, John Willington McGrath would assuredly have grown up a credit and an ornament to this admirable system of bringing up the young. It was only when the War interrupted the system and took to providing aims in life for Major McGrath and Mrs. John Willington McGrath and Nurse and the cook and the house-parlourmaid and Bounce, that it seemed about time for Jack McGrath to see what he could do about providing an aim in life for *him*self.

It was one dusky snowy afternoon when it first occurred to Jack, on his knees at the nursery window and tending to boredom, that he *might* manage, perhaps, one day to trot across

to the drill-ground all by himself, just for a minute, and have a look round and pat Bounce, if Bounce seemed agreeable and open to pats, and then, still all by himself, trot home again. It was a daring thought! And, as is the way of daring thoughts, it rapidly waxed strong and set to kicking in the following way.

One of the few things that Jack McGrath might do was to go and play in the little yard at the back of the house. It was not an æsthetic spot. It had some clothes-props and a clothes-line and an exceedingly ancient outhouse which, though it didn't know it, sometimes played the part of Castle Dangerous, and the whole was surrounded with high rickety wooden fences on which cats—not of the House of Hapsburg—precariously sat and didn't wash themselves. Jack went out to this enticing playground through the kitchen door, which was always left unlocked for him to go in and out by; and when he had played as much as he wanted to he went in again by the kitchen door and, by order, straight up to the nursery without speaking to anyone or pausing any-

where. Sometimes, however, Cookie, who was not of an adamantine disposition, would enter into a little welcome conversation by the way, and even, on occasions, go as far as toffy or a piece of cake. Once she went as far as a plate of ice-cream! But that was a purple patch.

As Nurse and Mrs. John Willington McGrath went on becoming more and more preoccupied with their respective aims in life, walks became fewer, and gradually long unquestioned play-times in the yard behind became the rule of Jack's existence. It was one afternoon when he was shovelling snow—and there is more in the shovelling of snow, even in company with a clothes-line and dishevelled cats, than grown-ups dream of—that the daring thought, quite suddenly, alone and practically unassisted, shot up into a daring action, and he did it!

He was very busy moulding his snow into the image of a man, he was deeply preoccupied and not thinking in the least about breaking bounds, when through his busyness and his preoccupa-

tion and the cats and the dusk and the thickly falling snow came dimly, round the corner of his mind, as it were, "Right—*Wheel!*" and from the distance, lovingly, "Oh, take me back to Canada!"

The Band! The Beavers drilling! Bounce! Jack McGrath threw his shovel down, and paused. The wooden bolt was hard to reach but not impossible. After a few preliminary tries, Jack slipped it back, and the next minute he was looking shyly round the corner of the gate-post exactly opposite his nursery window. No one objected. No one so much as glanced his way. He ventured round the gate-post, in a tiny morsel. Still no one shouted an order for his instant execution. On tiptoe he made his way to Bounce and timidly he laid an arm about his neck. Bounce wagged what I should like to be allowed to call his tail. That settled it. Jack stayed to watch the Beavers drill, and his first apple from the military Tree of Knowledge tasted sweet.

When he got home again he found a gusty nurse who rattled him to bed by means of

jerks and shakes, but that was nothing. He was used to that. She hadn't found him out —that was the main thing. He, Jack McGrath, had stood within the actual living drill-ground of the Beavers, a hand on Bounce's neck, and watched the drill! Like Terence Mulvaney, Jack had had his day, and no nurses, however gusty, could take the taste of that away from him. He went through his bath and supper in a species of military ecstasy. He fell asleep wheeling all sides at once with Bounce presiding. Bounce too—he had been a kind of unexpected miracle. So affable! You will observe that Jack McGrath had also hit upon an aim in life: an intermediate drilling soldier midway between his nurse's kisses and his mother's bandages.

The Beavers went on drilling day by day, and Jack joined Bounce as staple audience, unpaid claque. They watched together till the drill was over; then while Bounce barked his soldiers back to barracks Jack slipped off across the road, in at the gate and kitchen door, upstairs, safe into nursery bounds again.

The fact that Nurse saw nothing only shows that more than one can be preoccupied by aims in life.

After a bit we all get bolder, and Jack was no exception to the rule. One evening after drill was over he found himself almost involuntarily partaking of a kind of aftertaste, a run the Beavers sometimes took, when they had kept an ounce of leg to run with, uphill and down again to keep the dinner appetite in training. The order of their cavalcade was thus. First Bounce, assisting in the manner of an india-rubber ball gifted with voice; then a Commanding Beaver, making good his claim; then miscellaneous Beavers, sweating at every pore, and intermixed with gasping drums; and lastly, Jack McGrath, a breathless unit.

He hadn't thought of coming with them—hadn't meant it in the least. He hadn't the slightest notion where the Beavers might be going, had simply followed on a breathless impulse when he saw that Bounce was up to something more than merely barking home to barracks. He *couldn't* leave them, that was

the truth of it. He felt as drawn to khaki as Nurse or Cookie, felt all the fascination of the Colours in his little heart, responded to the rhythm of the drums, the swiftness and the glow and rush of military preparation, till every tiny nerve thrilled in him from head to heel. He ran behind, alive with eager longing just to be allowed to join them for a minute, just to be allowed to make believe he was a Beaver.

He ran and ran. He ran uphill, he pattered breathlessly. He was upheld by pride and joy and daring views of life. The world was a place worth living in, a place for men and drums and barking Bounces—even little boys. He heard the deep echo of the mastiff bay, and as he listened to it, drew a freer breath. It heartened him. And after a bit he needed heartening, for Beavers in drill go very quick indeed. Soon the time came when Jack McGrath stood by a snowy road-side, done and spent, unable to run another step, watching the Beavers vanishing round a distant corner, and listening to an invisible Bounce's bark. *Then* it was that the blackness of the night first

struck him; also the impossibility of ever getting home again! His underlip began to quiver.

The next thing he knew was a warm moist sponge upon his face. Nurse, doubtless, at those old tricks of hers—for ever washing! He didn't stir. Then he was only half conscious of a snort, a snuffle, a vigorous scratching that surely wasn't Nurse. What could it be? He nestled down again, too tired to think about it one way or the other. Then a bound away—a bounding back again—barks—more warm moist sponges on his face. "Bounce" was his sleepy thought. Dimly he stretched his arms to reach his friend and cuddle him. And then he was conscious of being lifted into kindly arms, a flash-light on his face, and then a voice: "Say, Cap! Sure it's the youngster that comes in to watch us drill there, eh?" And after that a Tower of Babel offering words of counsel to its Commanding Beaver.

It was hard work to keep awake enough to feel that he was being wrapped and wrapped again in something soft and warm, to feel his friend's

resounding bark go through and through his tiny brain and almost waken it, to hear through mists of sleep the order, "Forward—*March!*" and dimly feel himself part of the marching orders, rapturously cradled in them, then to snuggle closer in the kindly arms that held him, and to sleep. So he reached home with Bounce as courier.

The following day Mrs. John Willington McGrath dismissed her household—she called it "household" as a good majestic term to use. She said she was surprised and shocked and horrified. Words like "disgrace," "no reference," and "instant dismissal" fluttered through the air; and dire responses made a sorry litany. She had to put her Meetings off, both in the morning and the afternoon, and hunt through registries to find well-recommended cooks, "house-tablemaids," and nurses. Was ever anything so out of time and tune! I fear we can't expect a second record week of bandages.

As for the kisses, they're all right, I fancy. When khaki is abroad records are made in kiss-

ing every day and week and hour. Bandages don't grow by what they feed on : kisses do.

Jack's aim in life will suffer most, I am afraid. He'll have to take to kneeling at his nursery window and flatten his nose against the window-pane again, that's all there is about it. I wish he could have Bounce to come and live with him, but that's not likely. Mrs. John Willington McGrath can't do with dogs. She says they're dirty in the house and apt to bring infection. And anyway, Bounce has got his Company to see to and can't leave it.

The fact is, aims in life are ticklish things to have or handle !

Harry Baxter

Harry Baxter

IT was one of those golden days of the Canadian Fall, when the sun pours down its radiant heat, and the air is like wine. I was walking up an expensive street in a New World city, to right and left of me the Nouvelle Noblesse, tucked away in dignified seclusion amongst their trees and their sprayed lawns and their almost too-opulent greenhouses. I had a book in my hand, which I read as I made my way slowly uphill, and I was so lost in it—for it happened to be a real book, and it gripped you—that a voice at my elbow made me positively jump.

I turned to the voice, and my eyes looked straightway into a pair of the most charming eyes I ever saw. They were grey-blue, large, open, candid, shaded with long dark lashes; and they were the most innocent, the most

childlike eyes, I think, that ever were fitted into human head. Looking further, I found that they belonged to a young man of four or five-and-twenty, perhaps, or thereabouts. He was strongly built; he held himself well; he was most intensely shabby; he had the nicest smile; and what he said was:

"Could you give me something for a plain meal? For I'm hungry."

It is not peculiar to myself, I suppose, that a request for any of the everyday necessities of life—food, clothing or the like—makes me supremely uncomfortable; we none of us can help feeling, surely, that a fellow-creature has a sort of right to things like that. So, without stopping to consider why such a fine bit of humanity should be penniless and a beggar, I took some money from my purse, handed it to him, and said, in a voice that sounded in my own ears almost apologetic:

"Have you no money then at all?"

"Nary a cent!" he said, and smiled at me. His teeth were strong and white and regular, like a young dog's.

"Why, how's that?" I said, quite naturally smiling back again; for smiles are infectious things.

"Well," he said, "it's this way."

And from his tongue I knew that he was English bred—and English well-bred too—for all that his speech was sprinkled with none too finely-bred Canadianisms.

"It's this way, ma'am," he said. "I've been on a job in Nova Scotia there. And I fixed that. Then they kept telling me the good jobs down in Old Quebec, and so I footed it. And now I got here. Nothing doing."

"Nothing!" said I. "Why, surely. They always tell me there's a job on hand for any strong-built, handy man."

"Well," he said, "try it. That's all I got to say. You try it. *You'll* see what they'll offer you."

That sounded fair enough. It silenced me at any rate.

"So if you saw your way," he said, smiling at me with eyes and mouth, "if you'd just try me, you'd soon see the stuff I'm made of."

I considered a moment.

"What sort of thing did you do in Nova Scotia?" I asked.

"Clerical work," he said.

"Oh," I said, and felt the air grow light with hope all round me, "that's the very thing. You can go down to the offices of the "Canada Balsam" now, this very minute. They're short of men to do that work; I heard it just last night. See," I said, "take my card." I fished one out of my purse, and handed it to him. "You give them that. Ask to see Mr. Campbell, say I sent you. Why," I said, as brisk and joyful as you like, "you'll be on a job this very night!"

He didn't look quite as enthusiastic as I had thought he would.

"Oh," he said. And then in a lower tone, and with the most engaging change of colour in his cheeks. "There's the clothes. I couldn't go like this. They'd never give a job to clothes like mine, never in life."

He gave a little gesture with his hands to call my attention to the state of things with

him. And it was true enough. His suit had seen long service, and tough service too. The seams of it were snail-promenades for shabbiness, and, as to linen, it was non-existent. I glanced at his face again—his cheeks were scarlet. I had hurt his feelings! I hastened to mend them up again with all the healing things that I could think of.

"Of course," I said, "how stupid! Do forgive me! We must think what we can do. Just wait a minute," I went on, considering. "Yes, come this evening. Come to the address you'll find there on my card, and I'll try then and have something ready to suggest. Come about eight o'clock, and," I continued hastily, for he was blushing more than ever, "are you sure you have enough for now? Wouldn't you like a little something, just to keep you going?"

He thought, perhaps, he would. He got it. And when I asked him, as an afterthought, his name, he told me it was Harry Baxter. The free and easiness of it seemed to suit him somehow, I thought, as I watched him striding down

the hill with long, strong steps. A well-built creature that it was a joy to watch!

Eight o'clock that evening found me born again, and more austerely born than in the morning sunshine. Perhaps it was the removal of the grey-blue eyes and Harry-Baxter smile that did it; perhaps it was the shower of friendly suggestions as to jobs and handsome, strong-built fellows on the loose. At any rate, when the maid came to tell me there was a "person" waiting in the hall, a chill was on me as I went down to interview my blue-eyed beauty, and more than one piece of super-excellent advice swam in the forefront of my mind.

Hat in hand, humbly on the door-mat, stood Harry Baxter; large as life, and shabbier than ever in the full glare of the electric light. He greeted me with friendly eagerness as soon as I hove in sight; and, as my eyes met his, I was acutely conscious of a slight softening somewhere round about the region of my heart.

"Oh, I had a good meal," he said, "the best I've had for many and many's the day! And

I'm right glad to have the chance of thanking you."

He looked at me half shyly, half expectantly, wholly happily and trustfully. What could I say? I said that I was glad, and I felt glad. And all my scraps of sane and super-excellent advice began to slide away from me like ice on hill-sides when the sun gets up at midday.

"Well, I've been thinking," I began, making an effort to hold on to something of what I had had it in my mind to say, "over what you said to me this morning."

His face fell just a trifle. The Harry Baxters, as a type, tend, perhaps, to rate the feeling heart above the thinking head.

"And I wondered," I went on hurriedly, "I couldn't help wondering, why it was you couldn't find a job. For they all tell me that there's lots to do, if you take anything that offers. And that's the way, you know," I said, more hurriedly than ever, for I wanted to get it all in at the first blow, so to say, in case my courage should not be equal to a second, "you know that just as well as I do. It's the

only way: just take the first that comes, never mind how disagreeable, and *work* at it."

He looked crestfallen. For the first minute he said nothing.

"I didn't think *you* would go on that way," he said, then, and in my bones I felt that he would put me in the wrong before he'd finished with me, "I thought *you* were different, somehow. That's what they all say."

He was right, of course. It is exactly what we all do say to one another: all that about never minding how disagreeable your job may be, and do it with all your might, and the worse it feels the better for you in the end. And it must be dull to be the under-dog, and have to keep on listening all day long. I felt apologetic; but at the same time I also felt that I must say my say out to the other end, or how was I ever to face those variously suggesting friends of mine!

"Yes, I know," I said, "but, indeed, you really must. It's the only thing to do. And," I went on, forcing the pace, for this was my final blow, and hard to give, "I want you to

come with me to-morrow morning to the Workers' Help."

I stopped short. His face fell about a yard. He said nothing.

"Perhaps you've been there already?" I faltered.

"No," he said, "I haven't. But there's no jobs there for me."

"Oh, yes, there are," I said, with all the deep conviction of the intensely ignorant. "Why not? You meet me there at ten," I said persuasively, "and then we'll see what we can do."

He stood quite still and silent. If I hadn't promised faithfully I would, I never, never could have stuck to it.

"Come," I said, making my last effort, and swallowing hard, "you'll do it, won't you? It's worth the trial, surely?"

"Yes," he said at last, "I'll come. Since it's you, I'll come. But I wouldn't come unless."

"Thank you," I said—and felt it, every letter.

Then, as my hand was on the front door-knob to let him out, he said in the lowest of tones :

" I suppose you couldn't——"

" Couldn't what ? " I said.

" Couldn't lend a chap a trifle just for his bed and breakfast ? "

I looked at him and he was blushing rosier than ever.

" I'd pay it back, I would," he said, " the very first money I touch at the job you'll get me. I'll pay it back."

He looked at me, and his long-fringed eyes were almost more than childlike in their innocence.

" You can trust me," he said in his soft English voice. " You've got no need to fear."

As I looked back into his blue-grey eyes, lo and behold, a change came somersaulting over the spirit of my mood.

" How much is it to be ? " I said. " Wait just a second."

Upstairs I ran, and down again, and put the money in his hand. He smiled at me with not a word, and I smiled back again.

"Sleep well!" I said.

"Sleep like a child," he answered, "thanks to you."

I closed the door on him.

With the next morning's sunshine, if the truth be told, I had my doubts once more of Harry Baxter. But, as I turned the corner, and the church clock struck ten, there he was sauntering up and down the pavement, whistling softly to himself; and, the minute he saw me, up he came to meet me. He wore a morning smile, his eyes were beaming, instinctively he half held out his hand, then quickly drew it back again. I felt a sense of shame at having doubted him, and taking his strong brown hand in mine I shook it heartily.

"Oh, I slept well," he said. "It was the thought of a friend that did it. And I woke up happy."

There was nothing effusive in his way of speaking. He spoke quite simply, naturally, just as if he were stating plain and honest fact. He spoke, in fact, as friend to friend; and just as simply I accepted it.

Together we passed into the offices of the Workers' Help. There in the outer entrance hall was the usual melancholy crowd of scapegoat men and women, waiting their turn for audience: unwashed, unshorn, unlovely to look upon. Through their listless ranks we passed, Harry and I, into the Holy of holies—the little inner office—where all day long the Workers' Helper sits before a ponderous tome, his stylo well in hand.

"Well," said the Workers' Helper, turning to Harry once he had motioned me to a seat and commented on the fineness of the day, 'and what's *your* letter of the alphabet, young fellar?"

He booked name, age, and nationality, and, while still writing, not to lose a precious moment's flash of time, he further added:

"Speak up, H. Baxter. You git busy!"

I glanced at Harry. A change seemed somehow to have passed over him, a subtle change which it is difficult to define. He looked less artless, less childlike, less happily candid, in a word, less Harry Baxterish—all the difference

between the tiger wandering freely in his native jungle and the same tiger behind the bars, on view for five-and-twenty cents. He said nothing whatsoever.

"Well," said the Workers' Helper once again, and this time his atmosphere was forceful, "git busy there. On for a job? Tough jobs for husky fellars; heavy gits you, eh, H. Baxter?"

Harry said naught.

I interposed with some timidity, intimating that clerical work was what Harry's heart went out to.

"Clerical work!" the Workers' Helper said, and this time his tone was scornful. "Clerical nothing! He's some man, is Baxter there. A tough job, stone-breaking, or down at the docks there, on a crane, that's his kind, ma'am, believe me."

Harry's eye sought the ground, and not a word was out of him.

I suggested, more timidly still, that clerical work being what he was used to, perhaps——

"No picking here, nor choosing either," said

the Workers' Helper, finishing that. "He takes what he kin git, or nothing."

He turned to Harry, and addressed himself to him directly.

"Now, young fellar, what you been used to outside clerical work?" he asked. "You've spelt more words than clerical, I guess. Take the sawft pedal awf ut, speak up there. And keep ut up, H. Baxter."

The Workers' Helper gave his stylo marching orders. Harry spoke up.

He told us how he had gone to Australia to try his luck. Not finding it, he beat it to New Zealand next, to see what that would do for him. He then worked his way to the United States, and sampled them *ad libitum*. In due time Canada had to have her turn—out West, down in the Lower Provinces; and now, with his face turned Eastward, his hope was simply to find something that his hand could do, and do it.

"Put up a job in London, Ont. What firm, eh?" said the Workers' Helper in that unsympathetic voice of his right in the midst of

the life-history. And Harry seemed slightly disconcerted at the prompt recognition of the firm he named. "Worked for Frederics & Varley, eh?" said the Workers' Helper. "Friends of me own. I'll write and git your reference there."

The flow of Harry's eloquence was stopped. He looked on the ground between his legs, and the fringes of his black lashes lay along his cheeks.

"Well," said the Workers' Helper, summing up his facts, "a husky fellar on for a heavy job. He'll get ut! And now, go wait outside, H. Baxter. I'll fix your business up."

Slowly Harry rose and slowly went out. Nothing childlike seemed left in him as out of the room he slouched and shut the door behind him.

"Well, ma'am," said that dreadfully efficient Workers' Helper as soon as he and I were left alone together, "that boy's no good. I tell you now. Job? Nothing! But, just to ease your mind, I'll fix him up and phone you."

He bowed me out, and beckoned in the first of the unwashed and unshorn.

He was right, of course, in everything he said and did. I haven't got a thing to bring against him. But, on the whole, I'm rather glad that *I'm* not on the book of the Workers' Help, or in the clutches of the Workers' Helper.

As I passed out I nodded all the encouragement I dared to Harry, perched on his wooden bench close by the outer door, the very last of all the long, unending stream of applicants. What I should have liked to do was give him some money and say "Never mind them!" As it was I had to leave him there, ruefully smiling back at my encouragement.

Later in the day the Workers' Helper rang me up. He'd found a pleasant, heavy job for Harry—"just the thing," he called it. Harry was on the job, and all the Workers' Helper hoped was that he'd stay there. I thanked him, and my heart felt lighter.

That same evening, after dinner, the maid came and said:

"The same person as come last night is here agin, ma'am."

And, sure enough, there on the door-mat was history repeating itself, blue eyes and smile and shining teeth complete. He said he liked his job so much—it was a job after his very heart, it seemed—all he had ever asked was, let him show the way he'd do it if he only got the chance. And now he'd got his chance at last, he couldn't sleep without just running round to thank me for the trouble I had taken to put him in the way of such a hard-working, honest life.

I was touched. I own it. And I question if there lives a woman with soul so dead as never to be touched by Harry Baxters! I took his hand in mine to shake encouragement, and say good night. Then, struck by a sudden idea, I asked:

"What did they pay you for your half-day's work?"

They hadn't paid a cent, it seemed, and wouldn't till the week was out. But he hadn't been going to mention that after my kindness.

And then I asked him what he had meant to do.

"Beat it all night," he said quite simply, "till time comes round to go to work again!"

I gave him money, plenty this time to last the week till pay-day. And then I pressed on him a greatcoat—which he didn't want to take—for chilly mornings on his way to work. His grey-blue eyes filled up with tears as he accepted it, and when he could speak he said this was a loan, he'd pay it off a little every week till we were quits again. He told me it would give an extra flavour to his working-days to think he had a human kindness to repay by means of them. He said a lot of things to me that night. And when he went away at last, it was light-heartedly I ran upstairs again.

Early the following morning the Workers' Helper rang me up. He was abrupt.

"Well," he said, "Hallo there! Well, ma'am, that lemon you brought in to us, that Harry Baxter, he stuck his job five minnuts by the clock. And quit."

I was aghast.

"Impossible," I cried. "Why, he was here last night, so happy in his work. He's there, he must be; there's been some mistake."

"No mistake, ma'am," said the Workers' Helper. "Harry Baxter's quit all right. Goo'-bye."

He rang me off.

His news took some time to digest.

One day the following winter, business took me to the Public Library. To reach the borrowing counter I had to pass the Reading Room, a huge, unventilated, over-heated hall, furnished with rows of tables, wooden chairs, and quantities of daily papers, weekly periodicals, monthly magazines. And on the chairs, lined up, were scores and scores of unemployed taking an hour off from the Workers' Help, perhaps, or in from the snow-ploughed, icy streets, at any rate, to get a warm and an hour's snooze for nothing.

Quickly I made my way along between the rows of them, when all of a sudden I caught sight of—something that held me fast. At a table, deep in a magazine, head on hands, our

greatcoat as his cushion, clad in the identical snail-promenaded suit of the autumn months, a little shabbier still, whom should I see but Harry Baxter! Gently I went up to him, and laying a hand upon his shoulder had the pleasure of seeing him jump almost as high as I did when he first accosted me upon the plutocratic hill. His eyes were the same as ever, and he hadn't lost his trick of blushing. He coloured scarlet as he looked at me, and yet he never flinched. Straight into my eyes he looked with his own childlike candour.

"Why, how could you bear to leave your job?" I said, and laughed, but not, I hope, ill-humouredly. "Still liking it as well as ever? Got a half-day off!"

His mouth relaxed, a twinkle came into those charming eyes of his, he smiled, and showed his young dog's teeth. Then he cocked his head a little sideways as he looked at me.

"I couldn't stick it," he said, "so where was the use of trying? I knew from the first minute that I had to quit." He brought his fist down on the table. "You couldn't," he

said, "and you just couldn't, and that's all there is about it. It was hard work in there and ugly too. And outdoors the sun was shining and the trees waving and the growing smell on everything! You long for it. You've got to have it if you're made that way. You know you have, if you're alive."

He really was unanswerable, and I didn't try to answer him.

. . . . .

What tempts me to the jotting down of these plain and perfectly unimportant facts is that I have seen Harry Baxter once again: this time no longer a lost brother all astray and wandering, but a found man, strong and straight in khaki.

Down on the drill ground, as I went by to-day, the men were resting for a spell, their rifles stacked, like warlike grain, behind them; three score of them, perhaps, were there, in knots of half a dozen, under the rustling trees, at ease. Out of their stuffy offices and workshops these threescore men had come, into the sunlight and the rain and wind, into the

free life of the open air ; and, stretched on the grass, they were discussing eagerly, chatting together as men do chat whose interests are identical. Freely they talked and laughed, and smoked the endless cigarette, their faces happy, open, full of young life. War—which not one of them had tasted yet—was to them, one and all, the great adventure.

Right in the midst of them, king of his group, waving in outstretched hand his cigarette, agog with laughter, relating, I suspect, a somewhat Rabelaisian anecdote, was Harry Baxter. And only to look at him up against the tree-trunk, relaxed in every muscle, his laughing head thrown back, taking no thought for any moment but the everlasting present one, was to feel life surging up and down your blood-stream, and joy of comradeship warm at your heart.

Just as I passed the bugle sounded, and each man leapt for his rifle and his place in line. I looked at Harry—first of his squad by virtue of his six foot two—but he no longer turned a childlike gaze on me. His steady eyes were

fixed intently on his officer, his mouth was set in clean, straight line. Head, heart and hand had found at last, apparently, the work they really liked to do; and this time they were really doing it with all their might.

Long after I was out of sight of him, the elementary rhythm of the drill came echoing down the wind to me:

"Left, right, left, right, left, left, *left.*"

Harry Baxter had got into line.

Lieutenant Marjoribanks

Lieutenant Marjoribanks

LIEUTENANT ALICIA MARJORIBANKS stood looking round her state-room, and she couldn't help thinking she had made a neatish job of it. When I say *her* state-room I use a figure of speech, for only one-fourth of it was hers. Three other military nurses, each with a scarlet shoulder-strap and regimental buttons, were to sleep in the three other berths; and, as Lieutenant Marjoribanks looked at her bunk and imagined herself stowed away in that inner stuffy corner for an indefinite period, she hoped that they might meet with charitable winds and waves.

Her luggage or her kit or whatever may be the proper name for it—her steamer-trunk at all events—was packed carefully away beneath the lower berth, in that kind of place where you

lie many and many a weary day and night before you can collect your courage sufficiently to climb down and grapple with the pulling of it out again. Her sponge and her tooth-brush and her brush and comb were well in place; there was a roll of miscellaneous wraps on the foot of her bed; and, tucked up on the wall by means of drawing-pins, was a sort of home away from home, a capacious pocket, into which before the end of the trip all her worldly goods, to a surety, would have passed. Everything she could conscientiously do to obliterate herself she had done; but however excellently your kit may be distributed, and obliterate yourself as you will, four nurses—four full-grown lieutenants—in one diminutive cabin is a tightish fit. And Lieutenant Marjoribanks, taking her last look round, couldn't help thinking that landing on the other side would be very, very nice.

She was bound, in the first instance at any rate, for what during her seven years' stay in Canada she had always alluded to as "home"; and what astonished her more than anything

else was that now she was leaving Canada she should feel, not so much as one who is going home as one who is leaving home. For seven long years she had been describing England in spring to any Canadian she could get to listen to her: England with trees all breaking into tender leaf, woods all misty blue with the wild hyacinth, and cuckoos calling the secrets of mating-time to one another all day long—*that* kind of England. Now that she was leaving Canada something inside admonished her that the time was almost ripe for her to begin describing Canada in the autumn: a gold and scarlet Canada with trees aflame, lakes like seas, and boundless space to breathe and live—*that* kind of Canada—to any Englishman or woman she could get to listen. She stood in her fourth of a cabin wondering at herself.

She didn't know that hers was the fate of the restless immigrant, a person who has definitely fallen between two stools and, whether he likes it or not, has to stay there. She hadn't grasped the fact that she had become a hybrid; you don't till you go "home" again, and she

had never had money enough to do that. Up to that moment she had constantly and rather defiantly regarded England as "home"; she felt a time approaching, even close at hand, when she would regard Canada as "home." Was home henceforth always going to be on that side of the ocean where she didn't happen to be? It was like jam every other day, jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, never jam to-day. She felt considerably puzzled.

When she first landed in Canada seven years before, Alicia Marjoribanks had been most things that an immigrant is not expected to be; and from the day she first set foot in the Dominion she never ceased surprising the Canadians. On her great-great-grandmother's side she dated back to a House that ought to have been a reigning one if only it hadn't gone and lost itself by the way; and all the Family, and in the old days Alicia herself more than any of them, had insisted that her chin had a tilt of the ancestral majesty. It is not easy to make your living off majesty, however ancestral, and though Alicia had grown up well

housed, adequately clothed and excellently fed, she had never had sixpenn'orth of real live money in her hand to spend. And as long as she stayed at home it was not likely she would have, either, for the point about the financial ends of the Family was that they most obstinately didn't and wouldn't meet, and that each successive year only proved them to be strangers yet and not within so much as bowing distance of one another. When, therefore, in the fullness of time, Alicia Marjoribanks had announced that she had it in her mind to cross the ocean and seek her fortune in the good old-fashioned way, the Family saw that it was very good.

Alicia Marjoribanks took to the profession of a Lady Errant when she was no longer in her teens, indeed, she was rather inclining to that third decade, which is sometimes called the prime of life; and, accustomed as she had always been to clothing herself in the tradition of majesty, she wasn't by way of taking any special stock in hats or the last pretty movement in hair-waves. She was a surprise to

Canada. Day in and day out she wore a coat and skirt of no particular cut, and a blouse like a man's shirt. Her boots were laced and strong to endure, her underwear was Jaeger, and she carried her gloves in her hand. She was neat and clean and well-scrubbed—she looked what old-fashioned folks call a gentlewoman. But though it is up to the genuine European article to look that way if it wants to, catch the Nouvelle Noblesse or the adherents of a Millionaire Regime of Terror taking a leaf out of any such book. No. The Dominion decided that Alicia was a freak, a crank, a sheep in wolf's clothing: it eyed her askance as gaunt and shabby and inimitably self-possessed she strode along its streets.

In her equivalent for a wallet our Lady Errant brought out with her a packet of nice cordial letters mostly from relatives adorned with titles, all commending her to the efficient mercies of the leading citizens and citizenesses of a Newer World. It was surprising how little enthusiasm the recipients of these nice cordial letters showed; possibly they had been there

before and remembered a subsequent indigestion. Alicia went to lunch with them and they asked her what she meant to do to earn a living or words to that effect, and, when she answered in her clear English voice that she rather thought, perhaps, the manageress of something really good might suit her, her hosts went and wrote more nice cordial letters which they gave her to take to other people. She ate a lot of complex lunches, and she met a lot of single-eyed, prominent business men, with attractive home-adjuncts that just for fun they called their wives; and then for about three months after that she spent her money taking train-rides all around Canada, pursuing the hopeful people living in ever more remote but always rising cities to whom the rest of her nice cordial letters were addressed.

It was Alicia's turn to be surprised when it appeared that nothing really good was in want of a manageress. And she was more surprised still when the single-eyed business men retired from the job of finding her one. They entered into no argument: they merely withdrew

themselves. Perhaps they needed the whole of their eye to run their own concerns. As to the attractive home-adjuncts, they had never had much use for substantial stockings and Jaeger underwear; so the day of complex lunches came naturally to an end, and a new and less attractive era dawned, a ten cent era of hot coffee and soda biscuit in the Never Closing Cafés—the kind of cafes that in Canadian sonnets are always made to rhyme with safes. Shortly after that Alicia's inside was even more surprised than she herself had been. It said that at home—*it* called it home—it had never been asked to digest such things as meals of hot soda biscuit, and it wasn't going to begin now.

When Alicia wrote home to the Family to say that Canada is not what it is represented to be, the Family wrote back by the next mail to say don't come home on any account; its exact expression was "Give it a fair trial." And it sent a little money—a very little—and a lot of furniture out of its ancestral attics, in order to follow up its practical advice as to the immediate setting-up of a Boarding House.

It said it had it upon good reliable authority, which it underlined, that a comfortable quiet Private Family Hotel was one of Canada's crying needs, so that Alicia's way was plain and open before her. In this polite manner it not only managed to get rid of a good deal of rubbish which it hadn't previously known what to do with, at the mere expense of the freight over, but it cast the heat and burden of the day on Alicia, and washed its hands of all future responsibility. It came out of the mess well and suitably, and a credit to itself.

Alicia got the furniture through the Customs as " Settlers' Effects," and she went and rented a cheap house in a cheap quarter, and she furnished it with the contents of the ancestral attics. She then began to find out what it means to make your living out of a rooming house and roomers, which is Canadian for a quiet comfortable Private Family Hotel. She advertised for business girls and professional women and she got them : nurses, teachers, stenographers, salesladies and Englishwomen fresh from the boat, ready and eager to run the

Dominion. Sometimes it seemed to Alicia Marjoribanks as if the whole bunch of womankind that turns its head and hands to earning livelihoods came crowding to rent her bed-sitting-rooms at the lowest possible rates. They all broke the ancestral furniture and said it was the climate, they all paid when they could and owed when they couldn't, and one and all, except the lately-landed Englishwomen, washed and ironed blouses in the basement kitchen on every possible occasion.

Alicia had to clean the place herself, and she didn't clean it very well. She cooked for any one who liked to buy, and when she cooked with rebellion in her heart her meals proved indifferent eating. She had a basement room which she kept for herself, and in it and the kitchen next door—where rats lived and moved and had their being—she made her home. Her roomers came and went, and on their complaints she lived. She had no money to go anywhere and no time to make outside acquaintances. As to the recipients of the nice cordial letters, no Cheshire Cat's grin

could have faded into more complete nothingness than they.

This scion of a Noble House served her roomers half the time that Jacob served for Leah, and if she kept from running into actual debt it is about as much as can be said of her, for she wasn't in it with Jacob as a business proposition. And all the three and a half years' long the tilt of her chin went on getting more and more majestic, and the blood of the House that ought to have reigned and didn't went coursing more fiercely through her veins. She loathed the climate, she detested the Canadian. She sized up Canada as raw and crude and young, she pointed out—when she got any one to listen, which wasn't often—its evolution into words like "rooming-house" and "roomer." A people blossoming out of season into such a language, said Alicia, was past praying for. And bit by bit all the time she learned how you *don't* make your livelihood out of the profits of a rooming-house.

Presently her rooming-house gave up Alicia altogether—she couldn't make it yield another

cent of profit. The Family's ends had grown to be such strangers now that she didn't even write to them about it; rather than that she sought her friends, the business men, who had retired from finding her a job. She found them like limpets in their native offices, greyer perhaps a trifle, but just as single-eyed as ever, hustling through life yet, much to her surprise, with all the cordial letters she had originally brought docketed neatly in some back pigeon-hole of busy brain. Alicia told her tale. They sat and listened.

You don't have three and a half years of practical education—scrubbing and cooking and scouring and washing dishes and earning the pennies that you live upon—without learning something worth knowing about life. This time Alicia knew what she wanted, knew definitely how to ask for it; and the business men, accustomed to humanity and to handling it, saw that the child who came to them once bringing her alphabet as a testimonial, and asking that the moon should be handed down to her, had grown to be a business proposition,

something to be weighed and measured and later adjudged a market value according to efficiency.

Almost before Alicia knew it she had handed over her rooming-house to a likely Englishwoman—and one most unlikely to find a job in Canada—who providentially happened to be a roomer at the time. She—the unlikely one—having been just long enough in Canada to learn a thing or two concerning transatlantic jobs and English ladies, most joyfully took on the skeleton livelihood of rats and roomers: and to her, just for a song at parting, Alicia entrusted the ancestral furniture. Herself and her two coarsened hands she took to hospital. The influence of a prominent New World Business Man—once you have got it securely focused on yourself—can land you almost anywhere, in reason.

There for the moment her adventures ended. Life in a hospital is life in a hospital, whether in Canada or out of it. Alicia was successively probationer, nurse, sister, all the rest of it; thanks to her rooming-house, each and all of

them successfully. Year by year she had abused that rooming-house of hers for bringing her neither moss nor money. She hadn't realized that year by year she had been digging out of it the kindly common sense that only roots in life's bed-rock realities. Most of us can't do and realize both at once.

Then came the War. The War that in shaking life out of whole nations is making what is left of other nations think—or try to. Alicia started thinking with the rest of us, unwillingly enough ; and with the rest of us came gradually to the conclusion, also unwillingly, that she had been a good deal wrong. She looked at the Canadians hurrying into khaki ; she watched an unmilitary nation turning soldier ; she saw the sentry learn his job before her very eyes ; she listened to the regimental bands fighting their way to time and tune. And slowly she began to realize that even a nation that says "rooming-house" and "roomer" may have a sympathy and courage all its own. For the first time she began to feel at home in Canada, a cousin of the Canadians.

She kept on thinking till the hint of majesty forsook her chin and left it with the tilt of everyday humanity; and then she began to feel at home with all the rest of us, and one of us.

And now she was actually settled in the state-room of the ship that was taking her back again to England—and further, perhaps, than that—as a Canadian Nurse! She was Lieutenant Marjoribanks, with scarlet shoulder-straps and regimental buttons, approved by the Government, with men in khaki saluting her as officer whenever they met her in the streets of Canada. And down in the hold were her packing-cases, presented by Ornamental Adjuncts of the Home, Adjuncts who had stopped dropping stitches in their knitting for a minute to bestow them. The packing-cases were full of dressings, soap, cigarettes, bandages, moccasins, bottled fruits, hundreds and hundreds of pairs of knitted woollen socks, and lots of other things, for Ornamental Adjuncts make a point of spending husbands' money in a generous-hearted princely way. It's their profession.

Whatever may be in store for us—when we are dead, I mean—nothing surely can be more unexpected and marvellous than this life we live and have to leave. How can Alicia Marjoribanks, the sheltered Englishwoman who made her way to Canada only seven years ago, be going back to England half-Canadianized, and something even more than that? Why do the simplest things in life teach us the most? Why should the service of her hands turn something that began by merely being of the female sex into a fellow-creature and a woman? Why is the way to a woman's heart through usefulness?

As I began by saying, Alicia Marjoribanks has got no answer ready to these problems yet. Possibly by the time the War is over she may have something more to say about it all, and yet I hardly think that's likely. Doing and talking rarely go hand in hand.

Vive la Patrie !

Vive la Patrie !

THERE was a first grey dawning in the sky, there was a first faint twitter of waking birds. Everything else was blackness and silence. In the whole sweet June morning there was nothing to be seen but a dim outline of Liguori Lalande as he came swinging down the road.

He walked with the gait of a worker in the fields, not swiftly and gracefully, but with a lurch and a roll and a heavy clump even in the sandy summer road. Yet for all that he made good headway. He made good headway, not so much because he liked to hurry and almost to run for miles and miles, as because he had to. For he was out in the dawning of the longest day in the year without his father's consent, without his mother's consent, with-

out—and this was the blackest thing about it—the old *curé's* consent. The plain fact was—though he didn't put it to himself in so many words—that Liguori Lalande was running away.

He was bound for the Recruiting Station, one he had dimly heard of a score of miles away, where exactly he didn't know. And he had to find it, and find it quick, for he knew that if he didn't get there before he was caught there would be trouble. His long legs covered a deal of ground as the thought of a possible capture went shadowing through his mind.

The War had broken out a good long while before Liguori Lalande had so much as heard of it. Little St. Ursule, where he had been born and where he had lived all his young life, lay high up among the mountains of Quebec. It was almost as far away from city life and city sounds as Olympus itself might be. But except in point of remoteness there wasn't any resemblance between St. Ursule and the dwelling-place of the gods.

St. Ursule was beautiful. It was very beauti-

ful. If Liguori had seen more of this world of ours, if he had been able to travel, as it is called, if he had known enough to compare one place with another, he would have known that St. Ursule was very beautiful indeed. Just at the moment, with the great hills waking in the half-light and framing the country as far as eye could see, St. Ursule looked truly lovely and majestic, a fit habitation for any god or goddess. But St. Ursule at midday, in the full glare of the sun, was another thing. In itself it was just as lovely, but it was no fit habitation for Olympians. Gods and goddesses don't live as the St. Ursuliens have to live. They don't work as St. Ursuliens have to work. Gods—and still less goddesses—don't make clearings in the primeval bush. They don't dynamite great frowning boulders or haul stumps or break land, and, when all that is said and done, they don't have to coax and wheedle a barren soil to yield a scanty crop and live on it. No god or goddess would stand for a moment the conditions that the St. Ursuliens take for life. They would have a

Dusk of the gods rather, and be done with it. Olympus and St. Ursule are both remote from the world. But there the likeness ends.

Liguori Lalande realized the hardships he had grown up amongst as little as the beauty all round about him. The people he knew lived like that, and he dimly supposed that so all men lived. He had been the first son, born while his father and mother still had red blood in their veins and young strength in them to beget strong children. And Liguori was strong. He was strong as a horse, stronger far than the horses he had grown up amongst, poor, lamed, overdriven ghosts of what God meant them to be. Liguori was strong, grandly, magnificently strong. And as the strong one of the family he had been set, almost from babyhood, to the hardest tasks of life.

There were many Lalandes, so many that it almost seemed as if the saints might run dry before the lot of them were safely named. Each year there was a new tiny life and a wearied mother. The new tiny lives fell to the lot of the sisters, to see to and drag about

and pet and slap alternately. And some of the tiny lives grew up into more poverty and more children, and passed away at last full of years and toil; and others, just as soon as they were christened, passed quietly back to where they came from, and their names were used again for more tiny lives, and they were forgotten. Either way, living or dying, the blessing of the Church was upon them.

Liguori had grown up under the shadow of great Mother Church. First he had learned from the nuns, the Grey Sisters who lived in the convent hard by the great bare church; and later he had gone to the village school, visited by the *curé*, administered by the *curé*, fathered by the *curé*. School had played no part in Liguori's life. He had gone there because he had to, and he had learned his lessons at home in the evening because he had to; but his lessons had meant nothing to him, he had never even been very clear what they were all about, and, at the end of it all, if he could stumble along a little piece of print it was about as much as he could manage. He had infinitely

preferred even the everlasting jobs of childhood to lessons: the driving up of the cows, the staggering here and there with the heavy pails of milk, the chopping of the firewood, the sawing of the cordwood, and the helping to stack it, all the lighter never-ending tasks of the farm and the farm-house and the farm-yard that fall to the share of the youngsters of the place. He had always liked the open and the open air, and in a dim unconscious kind of way he had liked the hills too, the trees and the meadows close round the little homestead, the long road stretching up and up into the bush, and the wild untrodden ways beyond.

Some of his happiest days had been spent up in a bit of sugar bush that his father had, a little belt of sugar maples grown up unexpectedly amongst the dense greenery of oak and pine. He had loved the tapping of the trees, the drawing off of the sap, the listening to the drip, drip of the sweetness into the pails.

He had loved the winter nights and the sleigh-rides, now and then, home from some

job he had been sent to do, the chime of the sleigh-bells and the crisp keen air with a touch of death in it, the brilliant countless stars and the flash of the Northern Lights in the great dome of blue above his head. Even with all the work and all the over-work there are moments, when you are young and strong.

So year after year had passed, one like the other. In winter-time there were frozen days of clearing in the bush, and the building of a midday fire and a hasty meal, and sometimes long lonely nights in the wooden hut that he had helped his father to build up there. And in summer there were long days of work in the open, the fields at sunrise, home at noon to his mother's great plentiful meals, long, sunny, sweating afternoons, haying, reaping, threshing then home again, supper, bed; and all the year round the profound undreaming sleep of the outdoor life. He knew no other way to live. He asked no better. Year by year he used his strength freely, rejoicing in it and hardly knowing that he did so, as Adam may have rejoiced, working in the Garden long ago.

And now he was away from it all, going he knew not where, never to come back again. He stopped, turned, and looked a moment.

There lay the house beneath him. A wooden homestead, built by his family's hand: built, as his father had often told him, by a Lalande fresh out from France long years ago. It lay before him with shafts from the risen sun touching it to life. It was his home. There was no passionate affection in Liguori—work like his, year after year, leaves no room for that—but the thought of his mother came dimly to him as he stood looking, that mother, borne down by her work of conceiving, carrying children, bearing children, suckling children, starting the weary round afresh. Well or ill, year after year, she worked for the children she had borne. The look deep down in her eyes came back to him: patience and faith, the lessons life had taught her.

This was his home. He had left it. He could never come back to it any more, for his father had forbidden him to go and fight. He had said to him, "This is no quarrel of yours.

You shall not go." And the *curé* had forbidden him to fight. He had said, "Stay. Marry. It is time. Take a woman, beget children to the glory of God." As the *curé* spoke, new and mysterious longings had come to him. A woman! Something young and soft, lawfully his own, clear-eyed, innocent, ignorant! Something warm to clasp when he was through with fighting! He smiled. Something throbbed in him—his heart beat quick.

And now he was on his way to fight. For whom he hardly knew, for what he hardly knew. He only knew he had to go. His father, whom all his life he had obeyed, great Mother Church, whom he feared—neither of them had had ropes strong enough to bind him. He had to go. Peace and home lay behind him, fighting before him. He turned and took the road again.

The sun had risen. The sky was all aglow with glory, and the birds were singing their morning hymn to their Creator, none the less reverent because their hymn to God was first

of all a hymn of love to one another. The meadows at the road-sides were thick with buttercups, gleaming and still in the morning sunlight. The world was given back to man in all its beauty for another day; the earth was alive, life everywhere. And Liguori went pressing through all the beauty, unconscious of it, restless, eager, thirsting to reach the springs of life and death—and drink.

Some fighting ancestor lives again in Liguori Lalande, perhaps, flows in his blood-stream, urges him on to live. Life is a grand thing to have to give. *Vive la France!*

The King's Gift

The King's Gift

THE walls were draped with festoons of evergreen, and the holly berries hung like jewels where the festoons were held up here and there by a wreath. There were fir and pine amongst the greenery, and in the heat the bark gave off a faint resinous smell: if one shut one's eyes, one might almost fancy oneself in a forest with the sunshine filtering through the branches overhead.

But it wasn't a wood. It was one of the two places where Christmas dared to be Christmas in this year of Our Lord 1915. It was twin-sister to the fighting-line—the Hospital.

The nurses had stayed up late, putting the finishing touches to their work. And the long wards repaid them. Outside, the snow kept coming down and down in soft feathery insist-

ent flakes ; it looked fleecy and heavy as it lay balanced in tremulous heaps on the branches close outside the windows. And every now and then a heap would overbalance and fall with a soft swish to the carpet of snow below. Everywhere, as far as the eye could see, were fields of snow stretching away across vast Canada to the frozen North where there is no need to care for human life.

Inside, there were warmth and greenery and human life, life that was soon going mysteriously away from us into the darkness, and life that was going to stay amongst us yet a while longer. And on the plain tinted walls, framed in the greenery, were words of love.

The patients had had their presents. They had undone their parcels, and they had examined them, and some had appraised at money value, and some had taken graciously what came their way. There were petticoats and bed-jackets for the older women, and little prettinesses for the younger there. One little strayed French Reservist's wife, young and slight and vivacious, had had a little vanity-

bag for her share, and she sat up in bed and rifled its contents with inquisitive fastidious fingers, and earnestly looked at her thin face in the tiny mirror. Her dark eyes sparkled with the adorable ineffaceable coquetry of the Frenchwoman as she lightly touched her sallow cheeks with the powder puff, and her mouth was curved in a smile as she lay back tired and happy. She kept her vanity-bag tight in one thin determined hand as she lay there with closed eyes.

The nurses were bringing in the dinner—the midday Christmas meal. They moved rapidly from bed to bed and deftly arranged the patients, giving each her tray daintily set out with Christmas fare. The long ward was one smile from end to end, and the patients nodded happily to one another across their trays.

At the end of the long ward, in the very last bed by the window, lay a young woman. She had had looks in her time and vitality too, but her time was nearly through. She was young in years and old in experience. She sat up in bed leaning back against her pillows, and she

looked and looked as if she never could look enough.

What she looked at was a little boy. Her own. He had been allowed to come up as a great treat to have his Christmas dinner with his mother in the hospital. He had his own tray on his own little table close beside her bed, and he sat close up to the table with a napkin tucked in about his neck to protect his very best suit. He piled up great mouthfuls of turkey and dressing and cranberry sauce and potato and vegetable on his fork, and he swallowed and gulped with the absorbed, innocent, delicious greed of childhood. She lay back amongst her pillows and watched him. He had dark eyes, and fine soft brown curly hair. She looked at the long eyelashes against his cheeks and she thought, "He will have dark hair later on, like his father's." And then another thought flashed through her, "And I shan't see it!"

They didn't know that she knew. No one had hinted to her that she was even so much as dangerously ill. But she knew. She knew

well enough that next Christmas there would be more snow outside and more patients in, and that she would be away from it all. Where? She neither knew nor cared. All that she cared about was this bit of herself that would have to learn to live without her.

The nurse came bustling up with the Christmas pudding, and when she had helped the boy she stood watching him a minute with a kindly Christmas look in her eyes. Then, as she watched, the Christmas look faded out and into her face came another look. The child's mother, glancing at her, thought, "I wonder what children *she* will have." For that is how women measure one another.

The boy greeted his pudding with little cries of joy. His eyes were shining. His round cheeks were flushed, his mouth was smiling, and he showed his strong tiny teeth. He looked up between the mouthfuls, waving his spoon to his mother, his eyes talking to hers. And she seemed to pass out of herself and into this little body that she had carried in her own.

She looked at the suit he wore—her making.

Her hands had clothed him since he came into the world. When she was waiting for him she had sewn his little things and wondered what it would feel like to have a child; and her wondering had been to the reality what the shadow is to the man. Once she had borne her child he had become her life.

Her husband she had loved. She had loved him through his laziness, through his drinking, through his heavy hand. She knew well enough that he was no good, and she had gone on loving him all the same. She had worked to keep the home together, and when the kindly ladies she had worked for had urged her to leave him she had smiled. There were more things between her and him than kindly ladies know of—there was a child and all that a child means.

And now he was dead. He had died fighting, rescuing a comrade under fire, forgetful of himself at the last. And his King's acknowledgment of his service lay beside her now. She slipped her hand under the pillow to feel if it was safe.

All the bad memories of their past together were blotted out. She had never borne him malice for his drinking, his cruelty; and now she remembered only the happy times. Before they were married when they used to go snow-shoeing through the woods in the moonlight, and he was straight and strong, and she felt his arm round her like a pillar to lean up against. And their marriage night; and after that he had become knitted up with her longing for a child. And now he was dead.

She didn't wonder where he was gone, she didn't wonder whether he and she would meet. She looked at the boy and she thought, "We made this, he and I. And we have to leave it here amongst strangers." And it seemed to her that more was asked of her than she could give.

The child had finished his dinner. And when the nurse had come and gone and had cleared away the trays and the little round table and had taken her payment in a kiss, then he gave a great sigh, and like a contented animal he came to cuddle close to his mother.

She put out an arm and he clambered inside it, and she felt the warmth of the little body in at her heart. She curved her arm till she could feel the tiny heart under her fingers—the heart that once had beat under hers.

She knew they would come for him soon and he would have to go, and she had something she felt she must say to him first. She had to tell him that his father was dead. She felt him there, his body to her body, and she sought how she could build a bridge from his tiny bud of a mind to hers. Could she make him understand? What words could she use? He was too young even to remember quite distinctly that father who had sailed away overseas with the First Contingent at the beginning of the Great War; and what is death? How could she explain death to a child? But he had to know, and now, while she was here to tell him. It couldn't wait till next Christmas, not even till the summer. She had to tell him now, just as the comrade back on sick leave had told it all to her: the darkness and the fierce fighting, and then the pale dawn on

it all. And his father's desperate courage and the King's remembrance of that courage, the gift that lay under the pillow at her right hand.

How could she tell all that to a child so that he would remember? For, if he couldn't remember, who else would there be to tell him that he had had a father whom the King himself had delighted to honour? They might tell him all the other blotted-out things instead. And what would the King's present mean to him if they told him the wrong things, if she couldn't explain it to him rightly now! She sought for words simple enough to reach a child's head and heart.

She was so busy seeking that she hardly noticed the fading away of the child's talk, the quiet in place of the tiny happy chatter about Christmas and turkeys and plum puddings and White Ladies who brought such exquisite and unexpected things to eat. Then suddenly she noticed that he had grown heavy on her arm, that arm, easily tired now, which used to work all day long to earn food and drink for the three of them! Then she lis-

tened to the regular pendulum of his breath, and she looked down at him and she saw that the bugle—the joy-gift—had fallen out of the little relaxed hand. He lay fast asleep in her arm.

As she looked at him all that she had meant to tell—what had seemed to her so all-important—faded out of her mind. She thought only of the comfort of her child's sleeping body. The precious medal—sign and pledge of her husband's honour—slipped out of her right hand and lay unheeded on the bed. And she turned herself a little as best she could, and she folded both her arms round her child and drew him close to her that he might sleep soft on her wasted body. She had to leave him, this child whose blood had mingled with her own, whose life had been nourished at her breasts. In joy she had conceived him and in pain she had brought him forth, with anguish she would have to leave him behind her. Next Christmas, in what woman's arms would he lie? Whose hands would clothe and feed him? Would he go ragged and hungry?

She leant her head back amongst her pillows and the great tears slowly welled out under her eyelashes.

He lay in at her side with the perfect trustfulness of childhood. She felt his warm breath on her hand, and soon she would have to go out into the darkness without him. He was perfectly happy in her arms, and she felt the bitterness of death come between them.

The King's gift lay waiting.

Bread in Exile

Bread in Exile

I BOUGHT my gown at Virginie's, and there Jeanne fitted it. Jeanne—the only name I know her by—is a well-knit woman, most intensely thin. Her soft, mouse-coloured hair is parted and wound about her head in heavy plaits. Her eyes are grey and candid and alive with feeling. She works with concentration always, and with a sort of passionate care—the artist speaks in every line of her. And when I asked her what her country was, she answered, "Madame, I am from Belgium."

She is poor, very poor—that much is clear at a first glance. Her plain black gown is worn and shabby, threadbare in places, and here and there most pitifully patched. Her stockings are hand-knit and clumsy; her shoes will soon refuse to do their duty. And, as she

kneels to equalize a hem, her displaced skirt shows glimpses sometimes of bare flesh above the gartered knee. Dire poverty like hers affords no superfluity of linen.

When first she came into Virginie's fitting-room—tape measure slung about her neck, pin-cushion hung from her waist by a long tape—I hardly grasped the fact that this was the working artist of the gown that Virginie was never done explaining to me eloquently. Jeanne was so modest and looked so poor, and Virginie was so blatant and looked so opulent, that it was hard to apportion values just at first. But when I saw the slender hands at work, I knew. The one was the employer, there to talk and take the money in : the other did the work, and starved on it.

At that first fitting, Virginie was called away, to my relief ; and as soon as Jeanne and I were left alone I spoke to her.

" You have worked long ? " I asked her, watching the sure touch of her skilled workman's hand.

" Since I was six years old," she answered.

"I have worked, madame, always, since I remember."

"At six years old you started work!" I said. "Why, how was it that you began so early?"

"We were poor," she answered, "so poor, madame. I had to work, but I loved my work always, from the commencement."

She lifted her candid eyes to mine.

"It is when I work that I am happiest now," she said.

"Where did you live in Belgium?"

"At Liège, madame, we lived—my husband and my son and I."

She would have told me more, I think, but just then Virginie came back again, and drowned us in a flood of fluent nothings. After that deluge, realities seemed out of place, and Jeanne and I were silent.

The fitting over, Jeanne undid my gown with supple hands, slipped it off deftly, collected her little working tools, and turned to go.

"Good day, madame," she said.

"Thank you," I called out after her.

Parting Virginie's silken curtains and looking back at me, she said with her flitting, gentle smile:

"It is I who thank you, madame."

She let the curtains fall, and disappeared.

Somehow I thought of her. The pitiful patched bodice, the gaping shoes, the strong and gentle face stayed with me, till at the second fitting I almost felt as if a friend had greeted me when she came through the parted curtain.

On this occasion Virginie was wholly absent —she probably had other and bigger fish to fry—and her place was taken by a little pin-tray holder, a child, plump, apple-cheeked, and smiling. English, from Warwickshire, she told me, and smelling wholesomely of country English soil.

"Her name is Nora, and between the messages she has to run she learns to sew with me," Jeanne told me. "She makes good progress and, since I speak no English, she learns French from me as well. Is it not so, my little one?" she asked, and in her voice as she

addressed the child was that indefinable mother-tone of women who have borne loved children of their own.

"Speak some word of French, my child, that you have learned with me," she said. "Let Madame hear what you can say!"

Nora wriggled and grinned and handed pins.

"French is difficult," she said in an accent that amply proved the truth of her remark. "But I like sewing—sometimes."

Jeanne smiled at her, and gently touched the little hand she took the pins from.

"You tell me that you come from Liège," I said to Jeanne. "Then what of the husband and the son you speak of, are they in Belgium still?"

"Ah no, madame," she said, "my son is dead. My husband fought while he could fight. Then, only when he was incapable of fighting any more, he came away with me."

She spoke quite simply as one speaks relating facts. But behind the quiet simplicity of her speech I felt the passionate feeling ebb and flow.

"My son was killed. I had but one," she said. "They killed him."

Her hands were busy round my feet.

"So, when my husband too was struck, and he could help no longer, I said to him, 'Our son is dead. My friend, let us go from here and seek some place where we may live what life is left to us without him.' We chose no place, madame; it was in England that they said to us to come to Canada."

"How did you come—what money had you?"

She shrugged her shoulders with that immense philosophy of workers.

"We came," she said, "how do I know? Sometimes we walked, and, when my husband's strength was ended, sometimes there was a waggon. And men were good to us. We sometimes eat, and sometimes rested well, and so reached England. We came, madame, I hardly yet know how. My son is dead. It was of that I thought, not of our journey or our journey's end."

"He died in hospital, your son?" I asked.

"My son died fighting," she replied. "My son was brave, it was a soldier's death he merited."

"And you," I said, "what have you left to live for, now your son is dead?"

"Madame," she said, "I have my husband left and work to do. In Liège I left my sister. She is alone—they killed her husband and three sons. I have my husband."

"Did not your sister wish to come to Canada along with you?" I asked.

"She came a little way, madame, and then turned back. How should she come? Her husband dead, and all her children—three strong sons! How should she make the effort to begin again? I have my husband still."

I looked at her, and watched her gentle face and busy hands a minute.

"Oh, it's all horrible and cruel," I cried; "it's wicked; it's not fair."

She stopped her work and looked at me.

"In war men do what they are made to do," she said. "It is their work to kill, madame, in wartime. And women lose the treasures of their hearts and bear it."

"But they have taken all from you," I said.

"Not all, madame," she said again. "My husband I have still, he who first gave me what is lost to us. He will grow strong again with time, my husband, but I shall have no more sons."

"What was your husband's work in Liêge?" I asked her.

"Madame, he was a cook," she said, "a master-cook." Then with that touch of pride a woman shows in all that her loved men do, "And in Liêge they knew him for his cookery. He was a *chef*, and loved his work, madame, and did it well."

"And here?" I asked.

She gave again that philosophic shrug.

"Just now he cannot work, he is too weak," she said. "He cannot even throw from him the terror of it all; at night he dreams! But that will pass. When he is strong we will begin again in this new land, perhaps."

"You speak of your husband's terror," I said. "How did *you* stand the horror and the danger you passed through?"

"I hardly saw," she said, "I thought of my dead son. And always of the life I carried long ago in me—lost."

She spoke quite quietly, but as I looked at her, unceasing in her skilful, steady work, I seemed for a moment to see into her very spirit, to pass into the desolation of her grief and loss.

"And here am I ordering gowns," I cried, "and you and yours in misery."

"Not that, madame," she said quite eagerly, "not that. It is God's mercy that you buy your gowns, remember always that. There were no gowns to make, no ladies ordering gowns in wartime, and Madame Virginie told me I might go, she had no need of further services from me. That day I did not know what I should do, madame, I touched despair. Then when your order came, ah, madame, believe that I ran quick that night to tell my husband, lying there, 'All is not lost, my friend, I yet have work. Rest peacefully, and gain your strength while I make money for your life.'" Her hands dropped by her sides,

her grey translucent eyes looked into mine. "Ah, never forget, madame, your gowns are bread to us."

The curtains parted, Virginie entered and we were silent. Virginie looked me up, she looked me down; then, with an eloquent movement of her hands, she stood aside to let me see myself.

"Madame will see," she said, gesticulating gracefully, "that here we *know*! If Madame would but have the goodness to mention to her friends, perhaps——"

The triptych mirror showed me the artist's touch—into Jeanne's gown some of Jeanne's personality had passed. I never wear her gown but I think of her—her gentleness, her dignity, her deep humanity. "Your gown, madame, is bread to us. Ah, do not forget it!" Often I see the look in those grey translucent eyes as she said that to me.

Citoyenne Michelle

Citoyenne Michelle

MY little friend lived across the way in what Canada calls an "upper tenement." This, being translated, means a first story flat, which is reached by an outside flight of steep wooden stairs, slanting, ladder-wise, across the windows of the flat beneath, and blocking out their view. It was on the bottom step of her flight that Michelle elected to sit, with her small feet planted squarely on the pavement.

There, day after day, she sat, compact and serene in the sunshine, a rag-doll of dilapidated appearance in her arms. She was perfectly calm and self-possessed—quite evidently ready to take her part in anything reasonable that came her way. I smiled at her, not she at me. But she smiled and nodded back again; and

it was she who waved a tiny friendly hand at me.

In all our acquaintance never did I see her upset, nor anything approaching it; and I don't believe she could have been untidy if she had tried to be—no, not in so much as a gesture. While as to being what is conventionally called "naughty," either at home or abroad, well, all you had to do was just to look at her. Sitting there in the sunshine she was the fulfilling of the law itself.

All her tiny person bore the impress of an excellent mother—one of those women who cherish healthy notions as to the *foyer* and the *famille*. And to those healthy notions Michelle most certainly owed her neat white socks and shoes, her wholesome pinafore, the well-brushed, shining, flaxen curls bunched on her plump white neck, her smiling rosy cheeks. There she sat on her bottom step with her rag-doll tight clasped to her! And she looked as though she had made up her mind to grow into just such another mother as her own, and was practising hard.

Day after day her round blue eyes went placidly over me from head to foot as I went by. I longed to speak to her, and only didn't because I couldn't think of anything to say. At last, tired of waiting for the *mot juste* that never came my way, one day I stopped in front of her and said the first foolishness that came along, in the old human way.

"What is your name?" I said.

I spoke French because something told me that French was the only thing that she would understand.

"Michelle," she said. Her voice was as round and as poised as a soap-bubble. Her mien was dignified. Then, after a moment, "I am nearly six," she said. "And you—how old are you?"

"I am twenty," I replied, and looked her shyly in the blueness of her eye.

She glanced at me, she pursed her lips, she shook her flaxen curls from side to side.

"Twenty!" she said, and oh, with what an infinite gravity. "Ah, madame, that is a good age—twenty!"

Thus was I put in the place where I belonged. And here ended what we had to say on that first day.

Next time it was she who tossed the ball to me.

"Do you always dress like that—in grey?" she inquired one day as I was passing by.

Anxiously I put forward all that can be said for grey. Doubtfully she listened, and then shook her head.

"Always in grey?" she said.

Her eyes went over me from head to foot.

"And the same hat?" she asked then. "The same, always?"

As I looked at her sitting there in the Canadian sunshine, smiling, so unself-conscious, so infinitely self-possessed, she seemed to me to have brought a breath of France across the seas with her—"*une vraie Française de France*," as French-Canadians say. I decided on the whole to side-step the question of my daily raiment. It seemed the safer way.

"Is this your home?" I said, indicating with a hand's wave the upper tenement.

"Yes, madame," she replied, acquiescing quite courteously in the change of subject. "I live up there with *maman* and *papa*." She paused, then with an air of rounding off the subject, "And with Monsieur and Madame Calvadon."

Sufficient for that day was the good thereof. Our second conversation ended here.

Next time we took a clear and practical turn, worthy of France.

"Michelle," I said, and bent and took her tiny hands in mine. "I am going to the grocer's, to buy something. Will you come with me?"

She rose at once. She stood up squarely on the pavement.

"Yes, I will," she said.

Carefully she arranged the rag-doll as nurses arrange a baby in long clothes on the arm: and then she turned and placed a warm fat hand in mine. She seemed to touch my heart with those small fingers.

Holding on tight she trotted, with no needless chatter, by my side till the time came to

cross the road. Then from the legal security of the curb-stone Michelle bent forward. She took a careful look, first up the road, then down again.

"We must wait, you know," she said, enforcing my attention with a tiny, wagging index finger. "We must always wait, madame, for there are motors, and some of them are wicked." She shook her head till the bunch of flaxen curls was almost disarranged. "They might run over you!" The word "*écraser*" might have been spelled with twenty R's.

Safe at the grocer's—not "*écrasée*" this time!—Michelle knew her rôle, and played it. She stood close by the counter, looking upward, taking it in, interested, yet at the same time quite disinterested too. There was no hint of a request in her blue eyes when I inquired her taste in fruit.

"I like bananas, madame," she answered. She was prompt, crisp, and most polite. Then as she clasped the big banana in her arms "I like oranges, too," she said. "Oranges are nice." Her tone was perfectly detached.

On our way home, first the orange tumbled down and rolled away, and then the banana had to show what it was good for in the way of an adventure, and then the doll saw fit to overbalance. So that, by the time we reached the steps we were united by our misadventures, so united that I dared to take a liberty. I asked her for a kiss—our first—and knelt down on the pavement to receive it.

Gravely Michelle laid her banana, orange, and doll securely on the step, out of harm's way; and then adjusted weights and measures to bestow her gift. She stretched up two short arms as far as they would go. We kissed —a *bon baiser*—one of the very best.

After this we were friends as we had not been before—was there not an orange, a banana, and a kiss between the two of us !—and Michelle took to telling things, casual bits of information, as friend to friend. Monsieur and Madame Calvadon she mentioned nevermore. But she told me how she had come from France with *maman*, ah, so long ago ! And how bar-tending was *papa's* profession—and

since bar-tenders had evidently not come her way in France, she mentioned this fact in good Canadian. And then, most important fact, and best of all, she told me that quite soon she hoped to have a little *minon* of her very own—a grey and white one that, if you only pulled its tail, said "Miaow!"

And then one day she came to visit me by special invitation.

"And your hats, madame, where are they?" said the miniature scrap of France on this occasion.

I showed her the cupboard where I kept my meagre store of hats, and to the inspection of every separate one of them she brought her spirit of eternal femininity.

"And here's a piano," she remarked a little later. "Who plays the violin?"

So Monsieur Calvadon, perhaps, was musical!

And lastly, in a low appraising tone, sizing the situation up:

"Oh, everything is very nice here!"

When it came to tea-time, it was sponge-

cakes and milk we had. And Michelle, in her high-cushioned chair beside me at the table, ate with absorption, yet with perfect innocence and grace—much as a squirrel, poised on his swaying branch, takes off his meal of butternuts.

We were contented, both of us, and happy.

Hand in hand we walked home across the street that night, and kissed again at parting. It was the last of our little talks together.

To-day the bottom step over the way looks desolate. Michelle's father has stopped bartending and has gone away to France—to fight: and he has either taken his Madame and little Michelle with him or they have moved to cheaper quarters here in Canada. Michelle, at any rate, has gone. I miss my tiny friend when I look out. The step she made so like a home by merely sitting there has taken on its lone, lorn look again. I often think of her.

Good-bye, Leicester Square!

Good-bye, Leicester Square!

SHE was a little nun from Belgium and she was safe across the ocean—that was one thing. She was on her way out West to join a newly-started Branch of her own Sisterhood, Belgium behind and the new Western life in front of her—that was another. But to my mind the main things were that she spoke the prettiest English I ever listened to—the faults that were in it only made it sweeter—and that she was as pretty as a picture, with black-lashed eyes as blue as speedwell blossoms.

I met her in the one uncloistered moment between two cloistered lives. For one moment the nun in her was eclipsed by the natural woman. What more natural than that we

should talk together when the young thing's delight was to tell as it was mine to listen ?

" When the great guns boomed and the Germans were close on us, madame," she said, " they came to me that night and told me I must go. I was too young, they said, to stay where soldiers came. ' Sister Angèle, go,' they said to me, ' and go to-night.' "

Her blue inquiring eyes looked into mine.

" They gave me Sister Véronique to care for me—old Sister Véronique. Ah, she is old, old," said Sister Angèle with a wise shake of her young, young head, " so old, madame."

We paused to think how it must feel to be as old as that.

" She did not want to come, that Sister Véronique," said little Sister Angèle, " but they made that she accompanied. And then, madame, she would not leave behind what she possessed, and so wore all her wardrobe at one time upon her body. And that made travelling a little difficult, madame."

Sister Angèle began to check the articles one by one upon her shapely finger-tips.

"All her own linen, she wore," she said, and sank her voice in mentioning such things even to me, a sister-woman. "And, ah, madame, how many petticoats! I could not count those if I were to try."

She shrugged her shoulders and outspread her hands.

"And then," she said, "as she possessed two habits, she wore both, and on her feet some stockings! She said she would not leave behind her clothes for rascal strangers."

"And you," I said, "what did you do? Did you take all your wardrobe with you, too?"

She pursed her mouth and shook her head.

"Ah no, madame, I brought simply what I wear. I am young—there are more clothes," she said, and shook her head with all youth's certainty in the shake of it. "But Sister Véronique is old. When one is old it gets more difficult, I think."

"Well," I said, "tell me what happened next."

"It was when we came to your country

madame," she said, and oh, how politely! "I regret, it was in England that we found our difficulties. They had given money for our journey, but it costs much to travel, as Madame will know, and, as we went, that money vanished like late snow in spring-time."

"So how much had you when you reached England?" I asked.

"Three francs, madame, remained to us—no more," she said. "I did not tell Sister Véronique. She prayed unceasingly, and three francs only was too little to interrupt those meditations. I kept silence."

"When we reached London it was night," she said, "and the Monsieur of whom I took my counsel at the station told me to take a —a——" she hesitated.

"A taxi-cab, perhaps," I said.

"*C'est bien ça, madame*, a taxee-cabbe," she said. "I knew where we must go, I had the piece of paper safe that they had given us in Belgium. But, as we flew through the black night, madame, Sister Véronique grew

frightened. For she knew not where we went, and she complained and almost wept with all that unaccustomed weight of clothing."

Her eyes grew larger and darker blue with every minute.

"We drove and drove," she said, "and drove and drove, madame, till almost it seemed as if we might be driving back to Belgium. At last we stopped—and, then, those whom we sought had gone away. A lady spoke with us, and wrote a new address, but when our taxee-Monsieur looked what she had written he said that was far, and must be for to-morrow and a train again. Another resting-place it was for us to seek that night, and then that lady said we could not stay with her. She had no room for us, it seemed. And it was late, madame, so late."

"What did you do?" I said.

"I told the taxee-Monsieur all there was," she said quite simply, "and Sister Véronique prayed loudly all the while that I was telling him. I showed him my three francs, and then he said our ride had cost already more than

that, and I was frightened, madame, and did not know what I should do. I was afraid until I looked on poor old Sister Véronique. Then I forgot. I only wished to find a resting-place for her. I asked the taxee-Monsieur's help for that."

"And he?" I cried, for, even when she was sitting safe beside me there in Canada, I felt the moment's thrill. There was something in the very youngness of her that went straight to one's heart and stayed there.

"He looked at me awhile, madame, and then he hesitated long, until, at last he told me he could bring me to a friend of his. '*She'll* not turn you out,' he said. I asked him if it were not, perhaps, too late to go to her: the night was half worn through, madame, by then. At that he only laughed, and told me not to be uneasy any more. Ah, he was kind to me, your taxee-Monsieur!"

She smiled at the thought of her taxee-Monsieur's kindness, and the curve of her smiling mouth was sweet to look upon.

"He drove us back to some great Square in

London, ah, so far to drive, so many lights, such noise," she said. "The name of it I do not know, for it was difficult for me to say, but L is the letter that it started with, madame. And there he stopped, and talked long with his friend, the lady." Here she sank her voice. "She wore much paint, madame." Rapidly she indicated cheeks and eyes, and then in deprecating tones, in case she had offended me, "But English fashion that may be, perhaps, I do not know these things. And she was kind to us. Ah, she was kind," said Sister Angèle, raising her voice again, "so very kind to us, madame. And when the taxee-Monsieur said no harm would come if we slept there with her, and I said, 'No, monsieur, I know it well,' she smiled at me. And then he said he would return next day and bring us once more to the train. I thanked him as I could.

"She took us in," went on my little sister. "She led us past much noise and much laughter. She led us to a room where we could sleep. And then she looked at me, and laid her hand upon my arm. 'Who sent you here with

that ? ' she said, and pointed with a finger at old Sister Véronique."

" And what had Sister Véronique to say ? " I asked.

" Ah, Sister Véronique saw nothing, madame, of what passed. She walked with eyes downcast, as we are taught to do, and always prayed —and then she spoke no English. So it was I who told that lady where we came from, where we hoped to go, and how it came that all our little money was expended. I told her, too, that we were very, very tired, for we had travelled far, madame."

" And then ? " I said.

" She brought us food with her own hands," said little Sister Angêle. " And as she went she said to me, ' I'll lock your door.' And then she asked me, ' You are not afraid ? ' And when I told her I was not afraid at all, she looked at me, and tears, I think, were in her eyes, madame. ' I had a daughter once,' she said, ' God help me, child, with eyes that looked like yours.' "

" And then she went, madame, and there

were footsteps and a *brouhaha* of laughter, and," she sank her voice again, "the voice of men. But I slept, madame, I was so tired. And when I wakened with the daylight, Sister Véronique knelt by her bed. She had knelt there all night through, I think, her head bowed on her arms. I went and touched her, and it was then, madame, I found that she was deeply sleeping there."

"And did your taxi-man come back as he had promised you?" I asked.

"He came," she said, "as he had promised it. And when I thanked that lady who had kept us safe from harm that night, into my hand she pressed more money, and she took my face between her own two hands, and looked deep in my eyes and kissed me once. 'Let me do this,' she said. 'I had a daughter once.'"

She looked full at me with her child's blue eyes. She smiled her sweet child's smile at me.

"And that is all I have to tell, madame," she said. "I am alone. I said good-bye to

Sister Véronique, for she is old, and stays behind to pray for Belgium. Me they send far, madame. But where they send me I shall pray for Belgium, too."

Home

Home

THE most of the day he spent lying back in his steamer chair. He wasn't fit for much but rest; and when would-be kindly people stopped and asked him questions—how he felt and whether he was glad to be home again, and if he wanted to go back—it all seemed so far away that he could hardly pull himself together enough to give a civil answer. They generally fell off pretty soon. They said he chilled them, called him unresponsive. And he forgot them before the meaningless sound of their voices had died out of his ears.

Yet he didn't seem to have much the matter with him. He had his eyes left to him, and his ears, and his speech; he had brought himself back intact as to arms and legs. It seemed

as if he should have been ready to talk, and to listen, and to satisfy all sorts of intelligent curiosity. They were apt to resent it, the people, and more especially the kindly ladies who laid themselves out to hear all about it. They criticized him a good deal, and said, "Look at those others, fifty thousand times worse, and how interesting they are, and what a lot they have to tell," and gradually they stopped asking him how he did and how it had all struck him over there. After a bit, they hardly bade him a good morning as they took their constitutionals past his chair.

It was true that there were many and many others worse than he. No one knew it better than he did. He saw them maimed, mutilated —and he shut his eyes.

The only one he didn't mind was the old captain who now and then would stop in front of his chair and pass the time of day with him. He was getting on in years, and he was bluff, weatherbeaten; if he had ever had an air or a grace he had lost it in seeing his ship safe home. He had passed his days on the water; his skin

was roughened and tanned with the winds and the waves, his keen old eyes were creased at the corners with keeping a far look-out, and his firm old mouth was set to the realities of life. He never asked useless questions—he never asked any questions at all. He just talked—with one eye on the weather signs and symptoms all the time—sometimes about his ship, sometimes about his garden at home, his garden full of trees and plants that he had brought back from distant lands and planted with his own hands in the Scottish soil he loved. He would take a seat somewhere—on the edge of anywhere—and begin to talk of the apple-tree he had brought back from Nova Scotia many and many a year ago. And he would wax eloquent on her apples—for his tree was feminine like his ship—and on the number of apples she could bear.

He liked to listen to Captain Roy, for Captain Roy was *real*. None of the intelligent ladies who used to stop and ask him things were real somehow ; no, not even their intelligence or their curiosity. They belonged to the

made-up things of life, those things that he used to live amongst and be interested in before—he crossed the sea the last time with his back to Canada.

Once Captain Roy began to tell him of his wife, and he dimly wondered what kind of wife. But when the captain said that whenever he wandered out into his garden, on one of Scotland's rainy days, this wife of his would come running after him with a waterproof and an umbrella, and would say to him, "Don't get wet, dear!" then he knew what kind of wife she was. And he liked it when Captain Roy shook with his great silent puffing laugh and said, "Me wet! She'll say, 'Don't get wet, dear.' Man, think of it!"

After the captain had gone on, and away up to his bridge, he would lie there with the echo of his voice in his ears, and his great laugh. He would think about the captain's love for his ship and his apple-tree, his interest and living joy in every plant and every leaf that grew in his garden, and the wife that was so over-ready with her umbrella sitting at

home year after year, waiting. He would think and think about it dimly; and then it would all pass out of his mind again.

It was late in the autumn. And as the boat made her way up the St. Lawrence the banks on either side were alight with glory. He had come back home. Yesterday they had passed the shore of Gaspé basking in the sun. He was back in Canada—he was home again. He kept saying it to himself, and then he would open his eyes for a minute and look at the banks slipping past him. The banks were beginning to look quite near: he was almost home. The little villages came, close one after the other, tiny sunny groups of houses with their great churches in the midst of them. And sometimes the distant sound of bells would come floating across the water. The call to the faithful.

How often he had thought of it all—over there. How often he had seen it, just as he saw it now, clear-cut, brilliant, full of colour, immensely peaceful, Canada, great tracts of country, stretching away and away. How

often he had wondered if he would ever see it again. Lying there in the trenches day after day, these scenes had passed before his eyes just as they were passing now before his shut eyes as he lay there in his steamer chair.

But now he had only to open his eyes to see it all, to feast his eyes on the colour, on the trees of living flame that were there to welcome him back to Canada. He had imagined, how often, what he would feel when—if—he got home again. And, now, he lay back, listless.

He was tired—too tired, he sometimes felt, ever to be rested again. They said it was nervous shock he was suffering from, but he wasn't interested in what they called it. He knew he was different—just *different*. If he had taken to thinking definitely for a minute he might have said to himself that a man can't go down into hell and come up again just the same. How could he? When you've seen things, they make a difference.

He didn't really think of what he had seen, lying there. Sometimes tiny things that he didn't know he had noticed when they really

happened would float before his eyes, and he would look at them just as if he were at a Picture Show, interested a little, yet hardly grasping that they were realities—past now, thank God. Once he saw a rough-coated, short-legged dog, a terrier as Scotch as the captain, scudding over the ground with its long nose close to the earth, stopping sometimes to scratch a little, then going farther, intent, all its soul on the scent. And it had passed out of sight, seeking. *It* was real. And another time he watched a man stick some candle-ends on to a piece of board, and then poise the board and swing a pot of water over the little piece of heat and make himself a cup of tea. He watched the boy's look in the man's eyes as he sat over his job, the sort of look a boy has when he's doing something intricate with a piece of string, and then he saw the man share his tea, hand his mug out cautiously. And the thought passed through his mind, would they have to drink it without sugar, and would they mind much.

That was real. It was like an etching on his

mind, that—bitten in. And another time he saw the men getting ready, straightening up, muscles tense. And a picture of two of them passed before his closed eyes, two of them, just shaking hands. He remembered their faces, the man's face that had knowledge somewhere in it, his hand in the boy's and his other hand on the boy's shoulder, and the glint of the boy's unknowing eyes as they looked up. Those two were real, very real. Affection, kindliness, loyalty—the captain's wife, the little terrier, the man sharing his drop of tea, the protective look in the older man's face, the boy's ignorance. These were all real things, surely ? Something real was left in the world then, thank God.

And besides these pictures that, in spite of their vagueness, were more real than the boat and the people walking about and the shores of Canada—besides these flitting pictures, hosts and hosts of them—there was noise. Just noise. Senseless, continuous, destructive noise, always in his ears. Noise and other things.

From the other things he came back always to the one or two realities. He held fast by them in case everything should go. The intent, purposeful look of the terrier, the dash and adventure in the boy's face! And sometimes, out of all these vague realities—other people's realities that he was only looking on at as if they were living pictures—a reality of his own would force its way. And then he would move his hand a little—he lay almost motionless all day long—and push his breast pocket against himself so that he could hear the faint crackle of paper inside it. There it was always, whenever he made the effort: the faint crackling of paper doubling on itself, letters written in Canada and sent to him across the ocean. And now he was bringing them back again.

How he had waited for those letters. Days would pass, sometimes weeks would pass, and he would hear nothing, and then he would lie hour after hour in such an agony of waiting that the fear of death would seem only a sort of afterthought, nothing compared with this aching longing to know how his wife fared.

The child that she bore in her seemed nothing at such times. He felt only a sort of impatience that it should get between him and her, keep her tied in Canada, keep her from coming across the ocean—nearer at any rate—keep him in this passion of anxiety about her safety. For he loved her, and love with an ocean between means fear.

Her letters when they had come had been all on one note. She was well, caring for herself because of—It. Her life had turned into a waiting, she lived now for two things, his letters and the coming of—It. "When you come back," she had written once, "I shall have—only think of it!—something to give you. Something finer and more wonderful than you have ever had given to you before. Something alive that you and I have made, or is it you who are giving it to me?"

And he had wondered if he would ever see —It. And then It had passed quite out of his mind in his passionate waiting for the next letter.

Now, here he was, home—all but home.

He opened his eyes for a minute. The banks went gliding past swiftly, and the river had lost its immensity. The villages seemed close at hand, not villages any more, but little groups of homes quite close at hand, each one with wonders and everlasting astonishments of its own. He was nearly home, nearly there, and he was different. How would she take it, this difference in him? How would she bear with the strangeness of a man who has seen too much and who comes back to the world and everyday life with difficulty?

His eyelids dropped and he lay back a long while, pressing the tiny packet close up against him with his folded arms. The cable was there that he had got afterwards. Afterwards, after all those letters he had waited and longed for, since he had been like this—different. The cable had said, "Your wife and son are well." And, when they read it to him, it had meant nothing.

Since then, letters from her again, tiny letters, though she said that she could have written more if only they would have let her

try. Such tiny letters to hold all the love she filled them with! It was when he began to read them again that, bit by bit, he had come out of himself a little, had begun languidly to look at himself from the outside again, had tried to view himself as she would see him. They had broken up the lethargy, her letters. As he read them, he had ceased to feel nothing. He had come enough alive to wonder what she would think. How much would she mind his being—different? Would she understand? Could she understand? Could anyone understand who hadn't seen and heard?

"He is here," she said, "and he looks like you. He is alive—think of it!—something alive and quite, quite new that we have made together. He is pink and crumpled, and when you kiss his head you thrill! And I lie with him and look at him and drink him in—and wonder! But I'll share him, oh, I'll share him with his father."

He knew her letters off by heart. All day long, even while other people's real things passed before his eyes and he looked at them

like living pictures, all the time her letters were there, too, underneath. They were always there. And the little sentences kept repeating themselves in his poor tired brain.

"I've waited, oh, I've waited for you both," she said, "and now you're coming and he's here. Since he came it's a different world. It must be the same, of course, yet everything is different somehow."

That was the phrase of hers that stuck. "Everything is different, somehow."

She used the same word as he. So the world had changed for both of them! But would she, could she, understand *his* difference?

He lay quite still. More words of hers came floating up to him.

"Don't think till you come home again. Leave everything; let it go. He's waiting for you just as I am. He drinks you in from me, he drinks in love of you with every drop of milk I give him. Believe me, when you take him in your arms he'll heal it all."

And then again, "If we could come to meet

you—*we!* and when you left me it was only you and I were we!—but we can't come to you, beloved. I can't leave him, he's too young to travel safely to his father. We'll wait, you're coming back to us. You'll come. There's something waiting for you here, remember, something as old as man and woman and as new as you and I. You'll give me all your share in him—you'll give it me as I give all my share to you. And when you hold him in your arms you'll feel me there and all our nights of love in him."

And then her word—her last—in answer to his only letter telling her that he was different.

"We have a son. Ours, yours and mine. Remember. The clasp of his fingers will remake the world for you."

The radiance of the sunset was on land and water. Flaming clouds melted and fused and turned to greys and pearls. The sound of her voice was in his ears. "We're waiting, he and I. He drinks in love of you."

Canada was before him, great and spacious, full of life and possibility. And a new life lay

sheltered, waiting for him, a life grown out of a great love, his life and her life mingled and made manifest in flesh.

Healing lay somewhere in that great expanse of land, perhaps, or in the clasp of tiny unknown fingers.

The old captain, passing for'ard, noticed that he was smiling as he lay back in his chair.

THE END