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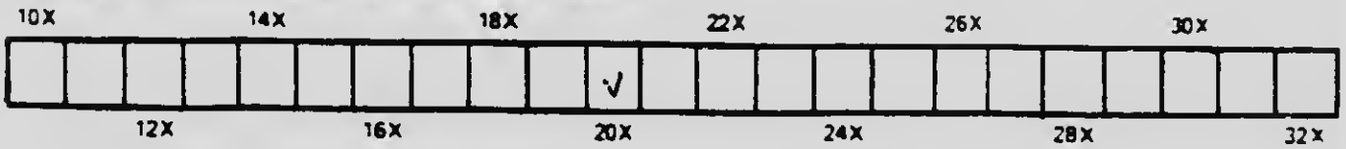

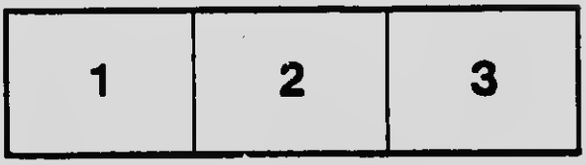

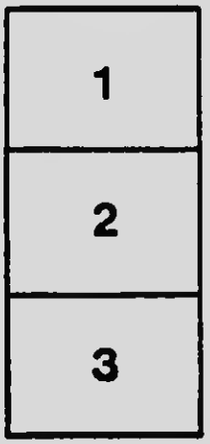

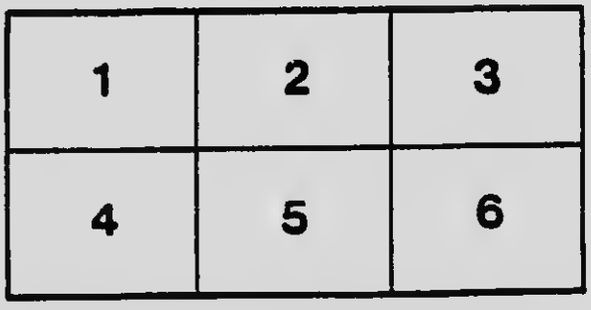

CHN. STEWART, ALEXANDER C.

1752

THE DISCARD

THE DISCARD

Being the Historical Remnants of a Rough Neck, Translated and amended ..om the original Canadian Vernacular and done for the first time into collateral English

BY

PROFESSOR A. C. S.

Fellow of the Democratic Society of Freebooters, Associate Member of the Literary Outlaws and Honorary President of the Fools of Truth, etc., etc.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

"I fancy mankind may come in time to write all aphoristically."

"Indeed, Sir, I have not read it all, but when I take up a web and find one end of it pack thread I do not expect by going further to find embroidery."

In the grinding, heart-scorching days when Jack and I, in misery's companionship, were loafing in his drug store, he for want of customers and I for want of a job, when the boys across the fish-pond were blasting each other to pieces by the 100,000, all the way from the Swiss Sentinels to the Flanders Flats, when Jack's outlook and ambitions, and my own, were shrunk from a comfortable competence into the next meal and a shelter for the night, when we were cursing Fate and Fortune and the Financiers and our own follies with round, mouth-filling oaths—John, who is continually developing some deal or revenue-bearing proposition, proposed and kept prodding at me to Write a Book by way of a forlorn hope of capturing a red herring and giving the gaunt-eyed Spectre Hunger the Merry haha. Jack—Black Jack (as Bill the rough-neck, who knows that game and stud, etc., calls him)—kept his drug store principally for the purpose of paying rent to the fat, level-headed fellow who owned it and lived around the corner in a brown stone front and back, and who used occasionally to drop in and talk real estate, finance, and more recently, economics and Victory Bonds. But Jack thought of

other things besides drugs and rents—often—and he knew that I had written some *modest* "Volumes of Verse" that were so "'eavens 'igh" they went over most people's heads, and so simple you could not tell whether it was art or artlessness. So when he began talking of writing a book I said "Well, haven't I done that?" "Hell!" cried Jack, "poetry doesn't make a book, I mean prose, plain stuff that doesn't go off half-cock or wrong-end-to, or miss fire—just every-day junk that everybody will read and understand." "Jack," said I, "You seem to have the whole layout planned to suit yourself, but am I to have no choice or say at all, at all?" "Now, K.C.," said Jack (K. C. are my initials, though they don't mean King's Counsel any more than P.C. as they put it over in the Queen City means People's Counsel), "don't get mad and I'll tell you something: if you could jingle rhymes like Dudhard Flipling or Nobby Nervous you might get somewhere, but that junk of yours—well, it may be poetry alright, and I think it is, but nobody gets it, and you have to admit that it don't get you anything." "What in blazes business have——" "Now, just a minute—Fanion and I were talking the other day and said he, "Jack, why in Hell (the Captain like Uncle Toby has the Flander's emphasis) don't K. C. get out and write something real, that infernal stuff of his is too deep, it's dead waste, nobody wants to spoil time getting into it. I spent half an hour the other day on that last book of his and I haven't—honest, I haven't got it yet." "I'm sorry about that, Jack," said I, "I'll try next time and invent verses like those blue and white powders of yours, which can be diluted and drank and left to work out

their own destiny." "Never mind about that," answered Jack, "you'll have to admit that he has the average intelligence. If you don't get him, you get nobody. Cut out the metre, son, and write prose. Couldn't you write a book on your own business—Contracting and getting skinned, and going broke, and that kind of thing?" "Well, Jack, old top," said I, "perhaps I might, but even if I did there is not much thought in that kind of a subject." "Thought," sniffed Jack, "what do you want with thought? The less you think the faster you'll write—there is no thought in the 'Best Sellers'; who bothers about thought any more? Nobody wants to think; nobody thinks about anything except perhaps whether we'll win the war or whether real estate will come back. You write a book, don't bother about the thinking end of it, that's the last thing to worry about. Take it from me, thought is a dead one; the world never read so much and thought so little. Crack off two or three hundred pages of easy stuff, put a little pathos into it, that's what gets them, and gets the money. Of course, I wouldn't want you to write just like them, but 'Goner' and 'Jowles' and 'Pickens' and those guys have their readers crying every second page, wiping their eyes every minute, you bet. No one except a Cook or Scrubwoman, who have mops and aprons, sits down to read those fellows without a stock of noserags—that's the dope you want, a little different—but that's the dope. No one takes offence at Jack, he's one of the best fellows you ever seen—pretty wise too, on the square and all that, and wouldn't do anybody. Sometimes a customer off the trains (his store faces the

station at one of the C.P.R. Div. points) has to pay a little extra, perhaps, but that is coming to Jack for his speed. The Lawyer capitalizes his crookedness and the Contractor capitalizes his skill while the politician capitalizes both of these, so why shouldn't John be paid for his speed? He's the fastest druggist in Canada, I think, and can pull in more cash—for his wholesalers—in twenty minutes, while the transcontinental cuts and couples engines, than any pill-pounder from Halifax to Vancouver. Often he rings up a fifty in that time, that's how he pays his landlord, the Fat Fellow, and the Great Captains of Industry in Toronto, who drown in dust the Bronte strawberries and the Grimsby peach orchards as they rip along to Buffalo and Booze in their big $6,000 cars. Fast, yes, and wise—well, he had a fortune—once—real estate, you know (or do you), then the war, then the soup. He didn't have a printing press like the Banks, nor did he like the "Big Interests," with their *promise to pay*, own a Government to clap him on the shoulder and say: "Boys, he's alright, his paper's O.K., chuck him your deposits and keep working." So, well, Jack lost something and found something. Our Great One used to say that in the wreck of his fortunes he had found his soul, but Jack had always a soul, tho' when the world was dusting down the toboggan slide to crash into 1914 and spill herself, he, like the rest of us, had but little use for it. Souls in those days were as cheap as lives were later, and both in each case were slithered waste and broadcast by Pretentious Incompetence—at least that's the way the Great One sums it up.

The strong "Necessity of Living," the elusive red her-

ring and dog fish labelled "Best B.C. Salmon" going up, up, and never coming down, set me thinking over Jack's pathetic proposition to "write a book," and I began a computation of how many tears and red noses it would require to liquidate my overdraft at the Bank of Shamilton—$25,000, or by the time I'd realize $35,000 (this stuff piling up at a wicked rate just at the very time you had an arm broken and were not in shape to knock it down). I began to doubt whether I could open the floodgates of the soul, and whether there were any tears left after what had been shed for the boys who had marched away so gaily to the Sunrise Glory and Night. It struck me too that tears were not a thing to bank or Bailiffs and Bankers leave tears to the undertakers and those who are hungry and "heavy of heart," and besides the salted drops in vogue just now were "Patriotic," "Crocodilian," "Flavellian," and didn't appeal very much to me, so I concluded that if I were to start scribbling with my dry objective and my cash subjective perhaps I'd better aim at a smile or two rather than fall to pumping brine to scald the world's wounds not yet past the smarting stage. Now for a fellow like me—tho' not prone to tears—smiles and laughter are difficult creations; laughter was pretty well ground out of me on the farm in the old days, when as a lad of fourteen at eight dollars per month I worked for old Hen Mean from 3.45 a.m. to 9.30 p.x., washing done at home. I'll just say this about Hen and dismiss him—he's dead. Being therefore rather serious, not to say dignified, my race running to violence and war, laughter and smiles were scarcely my cronies; besides, when one has worked for forty years and you find the shelter that

you call home, and the tools with which you protect it, hung up in the "Financial Pawnshop" for 25% of their value, and the war and interest playing merry hell with your equity, a "Cap and Bells" hardly fitted my condition, however much they might synchronize with my wit. Had I been an exponent of Passivity or religiously inclined, I might have had aid and comfort from the "Judge that no king (nor crook) can corrupt." Methodists and some Presbyterians seem to make that stick sometimes, or if I had been a heeler, "and like a scurvy politician seemed to see the things I did not," I might have obtained ease and redress that way, but being by instinct, training and example, just a plain working man, I cursed and carried on, crumbling slowly and indubitably to wreck—like millions of others—So this was serious enough.

You have guessed, astute reader, by this time that writing books is not my business. Real writers compound their plots and set their marionettes shuffling as per schedule, due to reach, after much eddying (not edifying), given points, at a given time, and place—usually the 350th page or thereabouts, but these honest-to-goodness boys and girls never unveil their Motif at the outset. They don't tell you that they need the money and that they are out to pick your purse thro' your emotions, but I tell you candidly that I expect to touch you, but I intend to do it by appealing to, and exhibiting a little sense, and let us hope it will not prove a slip or a slither.

I need the money (till the system bursts), that's sure, and tho' I am as I've said, naturally serious, I won't stint you of an occasional smile, and tho' mainly I'll be

as sedate as Bill conducting Divine Service on his Battleless-ships, I'll not balk at a grin or two if in the end it enables me to hit the corner of King and James at the famous "Gore" and tell Monseigneur Quell of the Bank of Shamilton to go to—well, he knows his merits, and where he is overdue, and I think when he gets there that there will be a big bunch of the "stampeded Nobby-never-sweats" ready to give him Welcome Home. These things and Jack's proposal kept running thro' my head, where, being idle, there was plenty of room for them to exercise, and I began to think about books, slushy books, Ghenty's kind, mushy books, Gonner's kind, gushy books, Elsie's kind, crushy books, Elenor's kind. I had read a little before I was put to work and some after that occasionally when the Plant was stacked (this refers to prose, of course; you don't need to read or know anything to write poetry—look-'em-over in Garven's latest Anthology, the Necropolis of the Rhymers), and I was familiar with some of the great writers of Antiquity—"Nick of the Woods," "Nick Carter," "Nick the Dare Devil" and "Nicholas Nickleby," and a few thousand others. I thought I knew the Bible pretty well; we used to read it at home, and as I had scurried thro' Henry's Commentaries, Boston, Baxter, Bunyan, Thomas a'Kempis, etc., I felt fairly safe there, but when the Great One began to talk about the Alexandrian Schools and "The Fathers," etc., and began to lug in what the Swiss Chap calls the "Dialectical Clatter" of the Germans anent the Old Book, well, I admitted I didn't know anything at all about it, and had better subscribe myself as far as Hebrew Literature was concerned a dunce.

In this country, Canada, we don't run much to "Classical Stuff"—witness our diction—except in wheat—we are too busy growing Railway and Power Charters, Politicians and Real Estate, tho' once in a while we get a master like Gadfly or P. O. Poddle, his running mate who can with a fair memory and some Cobbler's skill, upon the worn shoe of Literature stick a passable patch. You see how my mind was running upon books, and sometimes jumping the track, badly ballasted, I guess—but no matter, reader, when we hop off on to the ties I know where the jacks and dogs are, and I also know how to use them, so unless we go down the bank we'll get on again without wiring for the auxiliary. Still, I was undecided till the Dr., who is a friend of mine—an LL.D., D.D., etc., and who knows more about divinity and the Staff of Life than any chap floating around in Canada—said to me one evening, "K. C., could you write a novel?" He knew how my poetry had fizzled out, so I presume he just wanted to encourage me. "Yes, Dr., I could." "Well," he replied, "Why don't you do it." This set me off again because the Dr.'s an authority, and his question meant something and besides, when one is pinched—and it looks like a gold mine, an elevator, a milling or munition plant (no just accident)—you do not require the impress of authority to launch you forth. I like the Dr.; he's a bright chap and a good old skate—tho' at present herding wolves (they need it so it's all right), and he's a Presbyterian, and like Shakespeare's fat fellow, can "sing Psalms or anything," and he's as sedate as Balfour deprecating coercion or the Devil reading Saturday Night Editorials on *Anarchy*.

The Dr. is solemn, also, as becomes the tail of his kite, and when he opens up to lay down the law to Dad Burden or the ancient Frostner, or the Bank Managers, skinning their marrowbones on the sharp edge of a margin with wheat sold at $3.05 and none to deliver, he can strike a pose which has the boys, whose collars button at the back, faded forty ways—the secret thereof is that the Dr. is Irish. He is a son of Ulster, where they have the Devil's own opinion of the Pope and Home Rule, and will fight for peace without a consideration. Ulster, you know, is that few acres in the North of Ireland that equips the U.S.A. with Presidents and Policemen, Canada with departmental stores and the Bruise family, and England with one-quarter of the Irish question—the other three-quarters of that Question are put up in equal parts by the sore (not without cause) South, by the Catholic Church, and by aristocratic English reactionaries of the Lansdowne type, tradition and training. The Dr.'s not a Home Ruler. I am; I've been married for twenty-eight years, and have wanted it ever since. But, anyway, the Dr. set me rummaging once more. I looked up innumerable novelists—the lame, the tame, the able, the clever, the splendid, the profound, the inspired. The last were not numerous so I dumped the balance and began to size up these and make comparisons. Bocaccio—Well, our folks, they wouldn't stand for that—have to be careful of that dope—we may be crooked but beloved—to acknowledge it—not in this age. A mistake plastered with repentance is orthodox, but an error with evident enjoyment and without tears—"Oh, horrible, most horrible." I passed the French masters over as being

too realistic—nude—our People like their pills sugar-coated and as the skirt shortens we lengthen the boot or decorate the stocking. Then there was the Spaniard, but he was a genius; where would I get off at—nothing doing. Then "O r English," lots of camouflage—smart chaps, those En h, they had the thing before the French had the word. In fact, it is a trick of our English brethren to obtain things for words and they are at it yet. Besides their books were pretty coarse, *i.e.*, *the Masters*, the *old ones*;—the late ones, with their profound or superficial morbidity—mud in suspension or cracking in the dried swales—didn't interest me. The old boys were pretty rough, the sousy squire, the farmer's pretty daughter, rape, reparation (sounds like '14), and the high bred fainting heroine—I cut all that. Tho' I admit that it shows good business judgment when making for market to follow the mob.

Looking them over from stem to gudgeon inclusive, none of them supplied me with a tip as to my style and method. Most of the stories I looked over seemed a case of tacking what-one-would-wish on to what-never-was, and if the maker at any point inserted something from life, he did it under protest with his hat off, admitting that it was totally off-side from his main lie, which served as a bait to lure on the reader. You see therefore that I opined a novel or story was not my specialty, and that I backed away. One thing I observed in my survey was that the writers of these things had the devil's own command of diction (he speaks all tongues and dialects), for they had more words and big words for one stunted runt of an idea than I had thought were in the whole

"English Monstrosity," the further they soared away from the truth, too, the more words they had, and the more apparently they needed to get back, some of them where I took the parachute didn't look as if they ever would get back, and I didn't believe it made a nickel's worth of difference whether they did or no. To cut this introduction short—it's altogether too long—if I was going to write, it meant that I would write *history*, and as history of the dead superior sort—The Gibbons, Froudes, Mommsen's Massivities—requires erudition, patience, skill and judgment, my history would simmer down to the things I knew and the things that I had seen—which after all might be a step towards truth, and worth imitating even by some of the great ones who might follow.

Now, as I had in the theatre seen people pay anywhere from twenty-five cents to five dollars to watch a made-up bunch of repeaters pull off a stunt of manufactured imitation, and as I felt sure I had seen in real life, sounder hearts, sillier dubs, smoother scoundrels and meaner villains than ever trod a stage, I concluded that if I could with semi-lucid language exhibit them in a book I could hold the reader for an hour or two without overloading his brain or putting him in a torpor that would necessitate a doctor. Finally, having been around a few curves and over some settled dumps "within living memory," I decided to record a brief and truthful summary—with the co-relations and explanations necessary to elucidate and amplify them—of my patriotic efforts at "*trying to get in.*"

CHAPTER II.

"Obtained by bribery and maintained by fraud."

"He believed all Contractors were Thieves."

Trying to get in—into what—the Big Game—the War. I was not anxious to jump into battles—that's a cut-throat's game. All great men are on-lookers, no gentleman wants to be blown to bits or have his military person ground by a shell into bone-dust and fertilizer, and tho' I have been accused of ideals—unjustly perhaps—posthumous V.C.'s are not one of them. All the same I wanted to get into the Army. The Army's a poor stamping ground for bailiffs, tax collectors and lawyers—those gentlemen know how the world needs them and take no risks. A bunch of my fellow Colonels (I was going to be a Colonel—any rank below that being punk pay and dangerous) beat it for cover, and there was no real reason why I should not have been a Col., except that I was not, and had never been a political heeler. Of course, Cols. were jostling each other off the pavements between the Chateau Laurier and the Shirks Building, and up to Parliament Hill, but one more wouldn't have made any difference. I hate like vengeance to digress thus early, reader dear, but as my whole history (histories like loves, hitting bumps and running bias) will be a digression (like "The tale of a Tub"—Swifts). You'll just have to light another cigar and—figuratively, of

course—follow me down the side-line, there's generally less dust and more flowers there as any country booby knows.

As intimated at the beginning, I am, or rather was, a Contractor—one of those chaps who make reputations for engineers, and *sometimes* money for themselves. All of my work, which is more than can be said for some of the big Operators, is still standing, tho' two or three big chunks of it are not yet paid for. One of these last was the Armouries in a City where Cols. were thicker than maggots on the back of a meadow sheep, and just about as nice—or to change the simile, thicker than the lobbyists were at Snottawa when Buster Bill, his Contractors, his Creditors and his Bank of Commerce wanted and got forty millions, "and that's going some." This Armouries was let (I didn't bid it) after a second call—by the Public Works Department, presided over at that time by the now Ex.-Hon. Snob Dodgers. He let it to a Crook, who was a friend of his, on "an understanding," which the ex-Hon. Snob can easily repudiate (perhaps), he's good at that. This understanding—I have the Crooked One's word for it, and also some little evidence which is straight—was that Snarl—the Crook—was to be paid one hundred and fifty thousand for the building and a unit price for the foundations of $3.25 per cubic yard for excavation, and $12.00 per cubic yard for concrete—these prices would make a total on estimated quantities of $230,000 or thereabout. Snarl, of whom I knew nothing till a trifle too late to be a real service to me, got a local friend of his, a Mr. Clown, whom I knew and who knew me, to propose that I take an interest in the work, each to put

up an equal amount of cash, I to supervise the work and, at a rental, supply the Plant, of which I had enough, and the profits at completion to be split in three equally. I was busy just then, in fact, I was mostly that till this job and another one and the War and the Bank tied me up tighter than an ugly mule that must be shod, and I didn't want any additional work on my card. I had some Four hundred thousand dollars' worth of construction on my hands, and, naturally, some of it in my head, and, as a matter of fact, I was piling up a world's record for speed in a Grain Exchange Building for some smooth-tongued gentlemen, whose promises were, as it proved, much more liberal than their payments—so, as I've said, I wasn't hankering to add to my load. However Snarl and Clown were insistent, and just as mealy-mouthed and beggarly—both then and afterwards—as were the Wheat Bulls in April, 1917, and at last I asked them for their plans and Contract. They had the plans but said the Contract was still in Snottawa, and was unobtainable till a Deposit Cheque of fifteen thousand dollars was forwarded to the Department. I asked them how they had been awarded a Contract without a marked Cheque, and Snarl said there was a cheque endorsed by Major Leanhard of the Trans-Penitential, but that it was a "frame up" in some way between the Minister, the Major and himself, and that a real marked cheque would be necessary.

Sometimes a man will go a long way before he tumbles over a straw and breaks his fortune, or his neck, or both. I didn't know Snarl, but I knew the other chap; I had sat in with him at the club a few times, and had him

sized up as a fellow who knew the value of his money. He was to put up, and did put up, his five of the fifteen thousand dollars, and I didn't figure he was throwing it away; I had their *price*—minus the *understanding* that was sprung on me later—the building looked like a cost of one hundred and eighty thousand, adding ten per cent. for contingencies, the margin looked like thirty-two thousand dollars, which was big enough and seemed safe. The Bank of Shamilton put their O.K. on a cheque for fifteen thousand dollars, advancing ten thousand to me, as Snarl, "with big tiesup on the Trans-Penitential," could not cough up, in fact Snarl never—tho' he wheezed and sneezed continually—by any chance coughed up any cash, his job was to make the other fellows cough up —well we did it. The Contract, following the cheque, came up for signature and it was plain as a pike staff—one hundred and fifty thousand was the price *including* the foundations—some joke. The Department too had founded a new Firm name—"Snarl, Clown and Sport"—something that I had never heard tell of and did not want. The cheque we sent was signed "H. J. Snarl & Co.," which name the tender bore, and I've puzzled often since as to how they coined the name, and where they got it. The above cheque, too, is missing, it never came back to the bank nor to us—maybe a fire hit it; such things happen at opportune times, especially in the trail of the Ex.-Hon. Snob.

However, here was the Contract, and here were we up against a sure loss of thirty thousand dollars, no man whoever came down the pike could build it for a copper less. I had never been mixed in any flim-flam game,

had never paid nor been paid a crooked dollar, had never started a job I didn't finish, and even if I got out right there, which I should have done, I was stuck for ten thousand, unless I could make Clown come across for one half of Snarl's five thousand.

The up-shot was, the other fellows, still swearing and attesting that this crooked thing would "be all right," that "Dodgers knew all about it," and that we would be "paid on the understanding," that I said to myself "here goes, I'm stuck for my five now,—ten if Snarl gets clean away. I'll put a kink in this thing, by Christmas, and be damned to it." Well, I began to speed it up—Snarl had a rotten name, and I had to stand behind all the orders—steel, stone, cement, brick, etc., in order to get deliveries—and it was some real taste of Lucifer's demesnes, especially with Clown and Snarl clamouring for salaries, which was Snarl's mode of cashing in—well, well! still I kept the job sizzling, and in December I found that the Government appropriation for the year was exhausted and we were still unpaid for October, November and December in addition to the ten per cent withheld, which is usual on most work, and the Bank of Shamilton was carrying us for thirty-five thousand dollars, and one needy sub-contractor claiming more payment than was due him and making things delightful with Clingstone, the Chief Accountant at Snottawa. This particular item was sure coming to me, for I gave this contract—against my judgment—to Mr. Stables at the urgent request and smooth solicitation of Mr. Skarrick (afterwards Colonel on the outer peace rim of the Great War). One is ready to admit that when you get trimmed after stultifying yourself that you are properly served.

To revert a little—about the start of the job—when all Snarl's friends had told me he was a crook, I had a fool solicitor draw up a working agreement wherein it was specifically stated (that is as the legal men state it, which is in terms of Fog) that all cheques, etc., were to be entirely signed and validated by myself, countersigned by Clown—and I had written the secretary at Snottawa and had his reply of acknowledgment and assent that all payments from the Government were to be made directly to the Bank of Shamilton, so I thought I had the thief headed off. Despite this precaution, and despite the fact that the first estimates were paid as above requested and agreed, Snarl was able to obtain from the Department on two occasions two cheques, from one of which he stole a thousand and from the other five hundred. How he got the cheques from the Department is more than I know, nor could Clingstone explain, tho' my own opinion now is that after Snarl and Dodgers quarreled, and "the understanding" was off, that even then the Ex. Hon. Snob had helped him to get these cheques, feeling sure (knowing him so well) that Snarl would swipe a part if not the whole of them, and hoping that Clown and I would put him out of his way for a few years at least. One thing is clear and is very well known—among others to a judge, a member of the house, and to a man who is not a member but hopes to be (this man saw the paper, and is a thoroughly decent chap, but he admitted to me that it was the first time he had ever been tempted to steal) that Snarl had something on the Ex. Hon. Snob, that it was documentary, that Snarl was shadowed by private detectives who finally got the Script,

and then Mr. Dodgers told Mr. Snarl to go to hell. Snarl must have had the Minister going pretty hard and saddled so tight that he was galled, as was mighty clear when he granted me an interview in connection with these Armouries. I had pointed out to him that it was culpable for his Department to let work to a man like Snarl who was no workman but just a common thief, and that Clown and I were stuck for thirty thousand on the building solely because Snarl was thirty-seven thousand below the next bidder. That Snarl's misrepresentation to Clown, and thro' Clown to me, were only possible because the Department had permitted Snarl to peddle the Contract on a bum cheque, that therefore, the Department should see to it that Clown and I who did the work and staked our credit should be paid at least the cost of the building, we being willing to lose the three thousand, seven hundred, the amount of Snarl's knavery and theft and also asking nothing for supervision. The now Ex. Hon. Snob seemed not at all interested in equity or fair play, thinking of other things, I guess, and made this characteristic proposition in his own trenchant vernacular. "I'll tell you, Sport, I'll pay you anything you say for that building if you'll put that old son-of-a-b—— in jail for me." I had had some Contracts and offers shoved at me in my day (difficult and dirty ones, that's usually the kind that no one else wants—even friends), but this was a new one, and as filthy as it was new. I stared at that sweep with his one loose and one indefinite eye for a second or two, and then told him quietly that if he wanted Snarl put in jail that was his job not mine, and I didn't take the trouble to bid him

good-day, tho' that's the last time I have seen the dirty dog. I had had several interviews before that, and there is much more to this story. I tell this much of it to show how I was hooked when the war burst in August, '14. At that time I had the building almost finished, that meant six months ahead of the time set in the Contract—take note of that you wise ones who keep well to the rear of the appropriations—there remained some little fitting of storm-sash, etc., but the building was ready for occupancy and was occupied by a depot Batt., with my consent at the request of the local Colonel for an even six months prior to the date due for delivery. In view of this and the fact that the price was impossible and the loss serious—also in view of another fact, namely that Clown was refusing to stand up under his load (Snarl clear away with some three thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars cash) and was actually—imagine the fool's presumption, bringing an action against me in which was implied maladministration of the funds and collusion betwixt myself and the local Bank Manager, implying also that Old Mac, my book-keeper, now sleeping in France, good chap, had misused Clown's power of attorney not only while he legally held it from Clown but after this gentleman returned from his travels and had withdrawn it—all of which after an hour or two in Court was shown to be nonsense, when they cried quits and gave us their bill of moral health signed—tho' we didn't need it. I say in view of these facts, principally the first two, the government occupancy of the building and the impossible price, I thought, and still think, that we were entitled to a rental or bonus on the building for the six months'

use of which the government through speedy work on our part had been able to reap the advantage.

So with a hope of obtaining something from the Militia Department that might lighten the mortgages that Clown and I had to give the Bank, the Bank's solicitor, an M.P.P. for a Manitoba Constituency (at that time), and myself journeyed to Snottawa to lay our case before the Minister of Militia, Major-General Sir Slam Bruise. Slam is a big chap, and he knows his own size pretty well—see how silent he's been since they ditched him—he had a big job and was working at it, and making it go, and on that account he deserves a chapter to himself, and having explained not fully but fairly comprehensively I hope why I went to talk matters over with the Minister of Militia, I beg to conduct you, if you are interested, bold reader, into that whirlwind presence and Chapter III.

CHAPTER III.

"And the word of Samuel came to all Israel, and Israel went out to battle against the Philistines."

"A soldier he whose martial stamp
Made Canada an armèd Camp."

"An eye like Mars to threaten and Command."

Slam is a son-of-a-gun, no that's not big enough—he's what the huskies from the Gatineau Valley used to call a ring-tailed-snorter. I had met him a couple of times—introduced at a luncheon, you know, where you are foisted up with smiles and flung back with frowns in such a perfunctory hurry that the devil himself couldn't remember you no matter how much he loved you and laid for you. Also I had heard of him?—who hasn't—often—his press agents attend to that. Ever since the S. A. War, when Joseph (it's a great name) put a hole in the Pauline doctrine of "diamonds for Boers"—and for a good while previously whenever there was a political storm brewing or bursting or petering out, Slam upstage was helping with the thunder, and surely he's an artist for the big noise. He made more rattle-te-bang crossing the Atlantic by his lonesome than was let loose by the armada that landed the first Contingent "ker plunk" in the Salisbury mud. Of course, the Censor—God bless him—drew his veil over the Army, but he couldn't hide Slam—might as well try to hide Chimboraza, Etna or Vesuvius. He is, or was, a great illumination, that light through broken

contact exploding *out* in the Cabinet has left that purblind bunch scuttling around framing up makes-shift and pulling double errors in the dark ever since.

Slam made so much noise and belched so much fire that nobody except the Finance Department really knew what he was doing. All to the good he was, he's big, and has a big head, and naturally the biggest thing in it was himself, and next to that the army, and next to the army in size was the proclamation he issued when "His Boys" went overseas to get their introduction into the Science of "Muddling Through."

I've wished that Slam had asked me to help with that, I mean the Proclamation, of course, any lumber jack could have helped him with an axe, the infernal thing was like Ophelia's father's whiskers. Doubtless Genius always feels illimitable like a spring steer, or Bill Hohen in '14, or Dad Burden till his Consort speaks—but, all the same, I wish he had asked me for assistance. Slam's too original, he couldn't imitate the boy who carried the key of Europe's capitals "on a soldier's thigh." No, no,—Napoleon made a noise, and, as he himself said, "the more there was of it the further off it was heard"—but he made it with sense and cannon. Slam tried it with "words"—Vide Hamlet—and a printing press, and produced on the face of his friend Skarrick a convulsive grin which has kept that article licking its lips ever since, trying to straighten its face. Blast him, he started alright. "Soldiers," but that was as far as he got—but what odds, soldiers need paper sometimes, they don't all use safety razors. Slam's special difficulty however was—and it's the trouble of most of our chaps who travel over to the

isle of ancient forms, traditions and privileges—that he was a little too stiff in the neck and knees to work, well. My Lord Duke abhors a Boor strutting around and over his Egyptian and Indian antiquities like a mechanical toy, he's apt to wreck something, bump into ancient shrines or such and smash them.

In Slam's thundering presence My Lord Duke felt like the old Maid when the terrier and the tom cat start ructions adjacent to her what-not, old relics are liable to ruin. Of course, Canadians are not all kinked with democratic rheumatism, heaps of them have become domesticated "abrawd," beribboned, acclimatized and formalized, all but their revenues—the rough necks back in Canada are still sweating to furnish these.

Anyhow Slam slammed around some—he was Canadian Minister of War, and was not out to let Kitchener get away with anything, and he had some working-man's views upon the "Ypres Salient," while the "Morale" of burying men in the mud before they were dead, didn't appeal to a chap who was bred in a country of sparse population. Slam's view-point was of course Colonial—one gets that alright. You have to be trained to that "intensive" European stuff before you arrive at that divine, abstract and lofty "self-immolation" (of the other fellow) where human lives don't count.

This last idea is not my own conception, *i.e.*, I didn't think it out myself, but it's what I've heard our Great One say, and I thought it might look well at this point and help to fill up; I have it figured out too that since Cervantes covered his trail with Cid, Hamet, Benengeli and Shakespeare, told the world where it got off at under

so many aliases, that we have never been able to put our finger on the real Bill to this day, that I, in like manner—tho' not in their class—ought to have some alibi to get out from under in case of necessity, so I have chosen the *Great One* and the *Philosopher*, and I herewith make immediate declaration that I do not hold myself responsible for anything they may say or any opinion they may express or put forth. Of course, if friends or the Government (which is the Big Interests) agree with said opinions, I not being particular as to how "I have honor thrust upon" me, will maybe accept—by proxy— as it were, whatever recognition and commendation are bestowed. But if the Censor, for instance, or the Director of Public Safety, or the Secret Police, or any other tyrant or tool of oppression or repression take issue—with the Great One's doctrine—then I say, My Lords High Executioners of the Public Safety, I introduce the Great Ones that you may exhibit your skill in detection and earn your money. I introduce them so that you may expose what is wrong and emphasize what is right, I introduce them so that you may have an excuse for the perpetration of your office, for what's the use of a bar when there's only two per cent. or what's the use of a Hangman when there's neither capital punishment nor murder. I trust and most devoutly hope My Lords High Executioners of the Public Safety, that I will be permitted thus to pay you my respects and offer my felicitations due, in ample measure, to you, who from an obscure birth and illiterate tribe absolutely devoid of statesmanship and political vision, have, despite these, become the friends, confidents, protectors and sole supports of Privilege, of Monopoly,

of Wealth and of Power. I humbly beg, my Lords High Executioners of the Public Safety, that you will not adjudge me fulsome or unduly laudatory, when I offer you my heart's and soul's devout wish that your services to the above may end only with their lives and your own, and that when death shall arrive—excuse me mentioning death, My Lords—he's a dogging wolf, too, and has many of your Lordship's qualities, that is, he is peremptory, arbitrary, final and incontrovertible—so there is in a way relativity in my mentioning him—get me, My Lords, I hope—when death, I repeat, shall arrive I hope and doubt not that The People will see to it that you, with your illustrious Patrons and Godfathers, shall be suitably remembered—remembered, as Edwards, who knows the fitness of things, proposed to remember the notorious Dan. "God Save the People." Once in a while I like to let loose and fulminate—see Carlyle—against the unknown and the Beasts of Tophet and Outer Darkness. One loves to take a crack at the indefinite and indefensible (I mean that it has no defence)—it's so easy—don't particularize, fire a few generalities, assume a modest but dignified measure of indignation, and you've got some of the famous scribblers down to a hair. That's the way to get the credit—and the cash—for being a reformer—without hurting anyone or getting anywhere.

Apart from that, even in my own business, constructing railroads, dams and buildings (for which you couldn't collect), we used often to fulminate, when things went wrong mostly; so that the habit sticks, I guess, and with us, as a rule, the extent of the vocabulary was in inverse ratio to its strength. We used mostly adjectives, cradled

and nurtured down the Gatineau, and which, since the Canadians fought in South Africa and France, have become World's Classics: Canada's contribution to internationalism as it *is*, and you bet the effete oaths of England and the continent—Turkey being no competitor—compared to ours are as chaff to number one hard. However, this is off-side, and has nothing to do with the world and a war minister on fire. My friend and I had broken our fast, or broken loose over in the Pantheon that the Trans-Penitential had erected to the Liberal Giver of Great Gifts. We had got past the German waiter with the Parliamentary bomb in his pocket, and the lady who knows your hat better than you do yourself, without being blown up or going broke, and had crossed the bridge where the monumental bases sit bare and desolate, waiting for the genius that is still unborn, or mayhe for the nonentities already born—these things resting with Fate and her half-sister Accident. Anyway, we hit the Shirk's building. Some building for a Government—the hall hadn't the area of one of Jimmy Whalen's dredge spuds,—and it struck me that narrow partisans and peanut politics would feel at home here, and my trepidation grew sensibly less. If the lion could reach his den through this cubby hole, well, pshaw! he wasn't so much after all. We squeezed into an elevator about as big as Charlie Jenkins' proof-chute. "Going up!"; and I began to get leary again. Naturally, one gets busy mentally when you are about to bump into a Colossus—not the "baby-faced" one either—with a world war on his hands. I figured that maybe Slam didn't come up this way; that, perhaps, they lifted the roof off or swung the five-storey

front open for him, or that there was a real entrance somewhere, and that we were using the soiled linen hoist.

Bang! "Mawlisha Depawtment!"; and a smiling orderly: "The Minister?" "Yes." "Yes, gentlemen, this way—his secretary, Colonel Squinter"—or Look-'em-over—"Just a moment—names, please,—Minister busy, see you right away." We sit. Numberless Sons of Mars passing out and in with an air that intimates that the army corps they command are closing the gaps after a great victory, and burying their recent dead just round the corner. A half-hour's wait; then—"This way, gentlemen, please." Along the hall, through two sets of doors—Slam: "Well, boys, what do you want?" There he was in his shirt sleeves—and the shirt, khaki, of course, and riding breeches—he's no Highlander—long boots and spurs. Wells—the mental acrobat and voluminous word-magician—disquisites upon "spurs in the trenches," etc.; perhaps they do get dirty there, but they looked o.k. on the Minister's boots, and were clean and bright—and the Government were responsible for the carpets. There were a battery of stenographers in situ, and they looked to me like young Minervas "stalking with martial step where Mars might quake to tread"; but they had neither shields nor spears: rather they were like Chivalry who "exposes but the sheen of a bare bosom when flung back her cloak"—"gallant, gallant, girls." One of these who sat on Slam's left front had an Irish name—"Oh, my Norah Criena, dear!"—and a sharp eye; and, privately, I don't think there was anything the matter with her ear nor memory. I know her real name, but I'll not presume on that account. She has the history of my

past life on her files; so, num's it. "Well, boys, what do you want?" Perhaps he thought we wanted the command of a brigade or a division or something like that. Slam was ladling those things out about that time as if in desperation to get rid of them, and I've been sorry ever since that I didn't forget about being busted and hit the War Boss for an army corps, and maybe I'd have beaten the real estate warriors and newspaper fighting men to it.

Dang it, I always was slow, and my friends have always said I had too much modesty; so I let my one real chance of Military Preferment—that's the right term, I think—slip by and disappear for ever.

Certainly it didn't strike me just then—I was so infernal full of that thirty thousand dollar deficit and cheques marked "N.S.F." (short for "s'nuff, ya!"), but something new to me, you bet, and it hurt then and smarts yet—I was waiting for the M.P.P. to open up and get busy and tell the War Man what we wanted. He seemed to be "gettin' het up," as the Yanks put it, and the Minervas were raising their eyes, perhaps to locate the invisible spears and shields, and, though I am not a craven, I felt that as like as not, if we started putting our hands in our pockets in modest embarrassment, Slam might think we were out to bomb him and and let William win, and would pull a Ross rifle from his boot leg or somewhere and try it out on us. Also I had read in the Canadian *Rossners*—vide the Public Prints—that he carried the army and military destinies of Canada in the palm of his hand, and I felt sure that if he ever made a slip with so much high explosive in his paw, he

being a soldier, might survive, hut I would not. Praise be, my Ambassador and Plenipotentiary found his voice, and told Slam, "in legal mode and form," what we wanted. Some of his "boys" had occupied our building, etc., as I told you before, and that as there was a loss we thought his department might pay for its use. "Nothin' doin', boys! Nothin' doin'!" thundered Slam, "I won't pay a damn cent; I won't recommend a damn cent!" You see, he could assume the rough soldier's exterior—having the spurs and pants—to us sordid civilians. "Pay you for that; you should be damn glad you were able to do that for your country. More like the thing if you were out raising a battalion to get into the war than coming here trying to get extras on a building that is housing gallant boys going overseas to defend freedom. No use talking, not a bit—not a damn cent—won't recommend a cent. Good-day." And he rose with a martial air of dismissal and shook hands with my highly-humbled plenipotentiary. I hadn't said a word till now; but when he came around from behind his desk to dismiss me with a handshake I looked the son of a Ballymena grandfather in the eye, and clamping his political paw in a grip that had carried me many a time up thirty feet of line, I said, "Well, General, I didn't come here solely to look for loose money; I came to offer my services with a Pioneer Corps." He looked me up and down, and I had his fingers yet, and, said he: "That's the way I like to hear a man talk; you bet I'll fix you up—I'll give you something. Write me a letter with the formal offer of your services, and tell me what you can do." "Very well, General. Good-day." "Good-day; I'll look after you." And he did—for a

minute. An orderly, the reverse order of the two sets of doors, the hall, the laundry chute, the peanut entrance, and the street. I was still short thirty thousand dollars, but I was headed for France, where Capital and her horrors were being blown to hell and altruistic ideals were tickling men's souls as the lice were tickling their epidermis—though the authorities and Big Interests were planning to kill them both—when the war was won. It didn't seem to me just then that there could be in "the varsal world" patriots who, with compressed air, were pumping brine into dead hog and swiping millions out of it by shipping it overseas to the fighting fools. Freedom was in trouble; she seems mostly that way, poor girl—it's a chronic feminine condition—but whether or no about that the lady was in distress, and it was up to every fellow to beat it to her assistance. Money seemed a small consideration, "weighed in the balance"—blast those Jews—but it was demonstrated long ere the finish that money was a big matter—in fact, the whole matter—and that the patriotism that lasted longest was the best paid. The proof-reader says the sense of the last sentence is involved, but, hang it! I'll leave obscurities to the commentators. He said he "knew what I meant, but the public—" "Public be damned," said I (great, these quotations!)—"if the public are not as wise as you, I miss my guess," made him mad sure; so take note, Mr. Censor and My Lord High Executioners of the Public Safety, if anything objectionable crops up in the balance of this history, this scamp, because he's sore, has probably put something over on us. Enough, let us proceed. Here we were upon the street—scintillating Sparks Street

—by this time. The M.P.P.—Miserable Pleni-Potentiary—went off to lunch at the Club, and I beat it like many another to the Pantheon of Great Men to indite my letter of service and subserviency to the War Lord. A stenographer and sixty cents—two thirties—did the trick. I hadn't much to say; I backed up my calendar a year—a year's big at forty-seven—gave my age as forty-six, cited some few jobs I had done, referred him to some millionaires, gave the names of a couple of Colonels—I thought, then, Colonels meant something—and dropped my destiny into the letter box, lit a cigar, slowly and reflectively, and began to look around the Pantheon.

CHAPTER IV

"The qualities of Statesmen are reflected in the condition of the country."

"Who drunk with wealth and with corruption blind
Slaves to themselves, and monsters to mankind."

There are some remarkable "old ivory effects" in the Pantheon—in the lounging room where you rest and recover, coming back from the Bacchic Temple; but, being something of a builder, and knowing how much "vain trimmings" Engineers and Architects with "an eye" are liable to impose upon you, I concluded the ivory was imitation; and if one wanted to see the real solid stuff, close up——that outside of the British London Magazines —Parliament Hill had an exhibit which, for size, had anything beaten to a frazzle that I had yet beheld, though even at that, part of it was plain bone and a percentage of it caked bran and sawdust. Imitation doesn't appeal to me much, anyway. Chaps who have to work don't, as a rule, run to veneers. Nature and natural things are unashamed and wear no cloaks, so workmen get a mental poise in that direction. I had seen a few of the world's fairs and stuck around when the Niagara was hooked—a part of it—and turned into the pockets of the Concessionaires, and all the lath and plaster temples at the Chi. and the Pan couldn't have lasted a minute in the White Horse Rapids;—when the

river was harnessed it was weight of rock against weight of water, and no skimping the avoirdupois. However, I wasn't worrying about imitations just then; I was running my eye over the clean looking boys in clean looking uniforms and wondering what my wife would say when I got home and told her I was going with the rest. I was thinking, too, that I'd have to get the surgeons to pick up a dropped stitch in my flank, and, being an artist (as I since suspect at, looking a long way ahead at the wrong time), I was planning to get about twenty-five thousand cracked on my life and let the insurance companies and the doctors take a chance. It wasn't sporty, I know, for I had a sure thing; if the surgeons put me out, the insurance companies paid off the bank, leaving a clear shelter for "Mamma," and an unencumbered working outfit for the boys if they came back. If they didn't put me out, why, I'd have a solid patch, I'd see something of the war, and when that was over the world, "after her spree," would go back to work, and I could turn in with the rest and maybe even things up. So I was a winner all round. I was ruminating on these things and some others when I went down to the grill to dinner, and a single glance at the bill-of-fare called for concentration of mind and no misses, or I'd have to wire Peg for enough money to get home. Anyone who can pose as a reckless spender, a luxurious gourmand, and a princely plutocrat, with only a ticket and a ten dollar bill between him and Toronto, is fit for a soldier. I came close to aiming at all three and I might have made it, when in came a chap I knew, a doctor who was an M.P. I had met him west in the Kam and Manitoba

Clubs (he didn't know I was broke now), and of course he wanted to sit in—he had done that before—and for that privilege was willing and insisted—I hadn't ordered yet—on paying the shot. Of course, I am a democrat, and believe in the Freedom of the Individual, so we dined—at his expense—about five beans and no booze, and talked over the war to date, the Russians, the French, our great army to be, the old imperial army that we had buried (the only imperial thing we had, it seems to me), the Canadian War Boss, and endless junk, all of which seems rather hazy now. I know the soup was fine and the baked potato O.K., the doctor's chat discursive and amusing—he was the best of hosts and entertainers and I didn't miss anything—but somehow while I talked to him and watched the crowded grill, the glittering lights, the animated table groups—some of them with the ice pail and its sparkling occupant—I could see a little farm house not far north of Lake Ontario, where an old couple, who had done battle with the world for sixty and seven years, were sitting quietly about this hour as twilight fell and the gray birds were drowsily chirping in the cedars by the road, while the crimson faded in the west, and the deepening glow in the eastern sky began to silhouette the big hill beyond which lay the church-yard where slept so many bright ones of my school-boy days who had gone early home. I could see my mother with her needle—she had learned to use it in a country far from here—and dad with his pipe and his workman's hand and shoulder—not young, but stalwart yet—and I knew that to-morrow night I would be there. I had read that day—some cobbler's nonsense, I guess, but it

was in print—how an American correspondent standing by a German officer watching a French division advance in a charge singing, reported the Hun commander as saying with a sneer, "They are singing now: they will be crying for their mother in a few minutes." This was passing through my mind just as the doctor had expressed a fear that perhaps the Germans by their long preparation, reckless disregard of human waste, and so on, might win. I struck the table with my fist until the dishes danced and the near-by people glanced swiftly our way, and exclaimed, "Never, by God!" The doctor flushed, saying hurriedly, "I didn't, you know, old man, mean that they would; that's the last thought in my mind." "And in mine, too, doctor," said I; "sure, I know how you feel; we're so devilish slow, and there's so much to do, and we've been individualists so long, with every man for himself and hell for the hindmost, that it will be Satan's own job to beat us sufficiently into the sense of communism and collectivity necessary to make a unit of our strength. It will cost us millions of lives, but we'll get there." "You bet you," said he, "and you've just said the very thing that a couple of millionaires broke off coming down from the hill an hour ago. One of them seemed to think that they ought to get out and dump their resources in a pool in order to expedite matters, but my other friend said, 'Pshaw, Ted, this is our chance to make good—we're entitled to a margin, and a big margin, for our money and our brains;—we're perfectly safe, our people will never stand for the German coming out on top, they'll fight to the last man first,—they'll make all the sacrifices necessary,—you don't need to

start out demoralizing the whole financial fabric; all we have now and all we can stack up—and it will be big—till it's over will be needed after the war. Leave altruism to the people; it makes recruits and will lick the Germans, but take it from me it's no damn good in business.' Teddy was not convinced, but he'll go with his kind in time. I could see that, but both of them decided we'd get there, and that made it look serious, and naturally one has doubts on everything—if he thinks at all—and that's why I said they might." "Who was your other friend, Matty," I asked. "Well," he replied, "I don't mind telling you, because I know you will keep it"; and he gave me the name, and I have it yet. We finished our meal, had a smoke together—in silence, mostly—in the room with the old ivory pretences, observing the endless stream of athletic soldier-looking subalterns and the frowsy, mercantile, coarse-jowled Majors, Colonels and Generals. Certainly most of the guys above the rank of Captain showed in every move and feature that they were "such in deed as were never soldiers"; they had nothing on "Mouldy," "Feeble," and "Wart," except what the wolf and the tailor furnished. After a few visits to Snottawa, I knew they were chiefly military politicians, placemen, parasites and plunderers, chaps who could skin most anybody but a Hun, and whose war-like activities consisted in swaggering where Pistol tore the ruff, and in heating it to and fro between the Capital and their unrespective cities at the "urgent request," "express command," or "abject solicitation" of the minister, the premier, or the imperial authorities, as the lie whipped them and their humour dictated, as they retailed noisy

falsehoods to dazzled listeners. War on the other side of the sea might be what Sherman said it was alright, but with these chaps right here, well, it was worse than that. Here they were "the cankers of a calm world and a long peace," wastrels who had grown rank and run to seed on the dung-hill of commerce, the furtive ones, the tricky ones, the good mixers, the fellows who had taken a financial or an election chance, and got by. Chaps whose spurs were instructing them in the goose waddle, chaps whose belts would have made sinchgles for artillery horses, or the wheelscrapers team with which we used to slither out the cuts on the C.P.R. Every one of them was smiling; at least, those who were not smiling were laughing—war was a high holiday for these ancient boys who "stood in," their pockets were bulging with contracts—contracts for shells, for ships and more shells—shoes with paper counters (in which chivalry was shod)—wooden ships—torpedo targets—steel ships riveted with smooth-all—that wouldn't even reach the sea, uniforms with abbreviated tunic tails. A manufacturer told me of a fortune made on one order by docking the tails one inch—such is the efficiency of big business. Mighty interesting it was to me to look them over and see some chap clap a guy in civies on the shoulder and step aside for a minute;—because I had seen some contracts let in my day, seen them let long before the tenders were open. Old Man Barry and Old Man Ross had put me wise to many things while I was foreman and walking boss for them, but, being young and a good deal of a dunce, I thought maybe because they had been cleaned up they were sore, and when they talked of being held up for

sixteen thousand for one guy—a chief justice or something of that kind since, I think—it seemed to me pretty stiff stuff. Of course, they weren't in big, a *million* or so maybe; but afterwards, when I struck headquarters to bid some work—"big stuff"—in the days before the sharks and crooked politicians skinned me, I found that the deposit cheque was not the only cheque required. Certainly they preferred the real spondulies printed in four figures; it bunched close and was easier counted, and then there were no come-backs, and it would not be necessary for any institution to have partial fires—"fortunately extinguished without calling the brigade," which looks suspicious and isn't a real tidy way to get out,—folks still smell smoke even after a commission whitewashes the premises and fumigates the incendiary. The real nifty manipulator has a safer way than these: he is a part of the contracting firm and has a private service of the conduit that runs from Snottawa to the job, and in that way gets his without noise and in comfortable security. Ah, well, Jack Canuck is a tolerant chap and hates to keep his mind packed with muck;—give him a job and enough to squeeze through on and he'll keep hustling. All the plunderer has to do is to don the off-hand air, "Hello, Jack old boy; you're doing fine, eh?" and Jack will hold out his horny paw, and in the good fellow forget the fraud. Often I believe Jack is wiser than he lets on, because he just laughs at the solemn legality which claps "the goat" in the pen and lets the main operator get away. Jack's not vindictive; he's not laughing at the goat, to be sure—he know's he'll get the best of care, and get out soon—but he's laughing at the

principle, "poor, simple soul"—not by a good deal. Our philosopher often claims that Jack is the primary source of corruption. We have debated that close to the point of dispute, but though I have a great deference for the philosopher's opinion, I say no, because you can't naturally grow corruption on the soil. If you lose a horse or a cow or a hog or two—before you swap the first or a butcher gets the others—they are buried, and, of course, manure, since the land's wearing some is ploughed under. In the orchard the shoats clean up the culls and windfalls—if the forty below country doesn't buy them at seven beans a barrel—and anything they miss the earth absorbs and does, in a manner, automatic house-cleaning. Doubtless "The Mortgage" against "The Deed," "The Lien Notes" against "The Implements," and often a "Chattel" on the Stock, makes the farmer "meaner 'n a skunk"—but he's not a thief—you can't steal things from your neighbour in the country and get away with it. Some rube in a cow's breakfast and lugged cow-hides with a chew of McDonald's as big as a pigeon egg in his [illegible]—up at the line fence—wonder to his neighbour, "Say, I'd Bill Pengelly get his extra binder—looks like the Massey-Harris Og Hicks had down on the fifth. Hicks ain't got no binders to sell that I know of. Bill must have borrowed it, eh?" And the whole thing would be out—no, no. But in the city—where privileged corporations have their legal machinery—why, Durphy, who is merely president of the company and "is responsible to the board and the shareholders," will buy you a drink—at the club—or let you buy one, and talk to you like a human being while

at that very minute he has an unprincipled firm of shyster lawyers planning to skin you on behalf of his corporation. It's great stuff being "merely one" in a gang of swindlers—often being that same "merely one" has saved many a jesuitical scalper from a piece of lead —nickled. The worst of it is that fellows like these—not so dead rotten in themselves—adjust their consciences to the crooked skill of their lawyers. . . . "Nine-ten for Toronto and points west." "Good-bye, doctor." "Good-bye, K.C.; remember me to the boys at the club; see you up there some of these days"—"Nights, you mean, doctor—good-bye." "I guess so, good night." "Baggage, sir?" "All right son, just a grip, I can carry it; here's a shilling." "Thank you, sir; good-bye, sir." "Good night." Down stairs through the inclined tunnel, and in a few minutes The Sleeper, where you are shot like a corpse, feet first, towards Smith's Falls.

CHAPTER V

"Which not to have seen would have discredited you travel."

"The aproned Mother dear
Her fond maternal air."

"Shall steep me in Elysian Reverie
A momentary dream."

To assume finality or determination on anything under or above the sun—and since the said sun is our centre, and is spherical, everything must be located in either of these two directions from it—is to assume—an assumption—that is merely assumed. The preceding sentence means nothing, has no relativity to anything I know nor to anything I charge anyone else with knowing; but it's alright, and sounds like the translation of a German Professor helping Bill to get out from under the responsibility for the Great War, and serves to open this chapter. I noticed in my examination of their profound and erudite lucubrations—ahem!—that great numbers of our Dusty Immortals burst in at the beginning of a chapter with some philosophical observation, some scientific puzzle, or even a sex problem; or when dope of that kind came not readily in fast flowing numbers they took refuge in the description of The Morning, The Weather, The Landscape, The Golden or Gray Dawn, The Sweltering Noon, The Drowsy Evening, or The Purple Twilight, ad infinitum. That, to me, seemed their equivalent for spitting on your hands and taking a hitch in your trousers

before you fall to work. Certainly if one wants to cinch the ordinary reader he should follow the ordinary route, but I don't want the one and I disregard the other, so I only pull off this bunk to show that I know how to do it if I choose. Truly I admit I'm a little short of adjectives for that kind of special highly-coloured breakaway, but I know where there are lots of them, and, as no one has any patent on the use or manufacture of "our English tongue," it's a case of help yourself. Besides, it's not, after all, so much the words you use as the way you use them. The Queen Anne's Wasp showed "how ten dull words oft creep in one low line," though, with all due respect to their Highnesses the Literary Incinerators—Critics, to wit, he showed it in many other lines not specifically debased for that purpose. It's a pity Pope died so soon. Had he lived now he need not have made lines like that; he could have picked up any Canadian anthology of verse and had his point proved a darned sight dirtier than he was able to do it. Some guys like "P. Poddle in a pot nine days old" may think I'm "reacting." No, no, Dear Dead One, crusty as German-fried and stale as a Flavellian egg, if I had ever pulled anything you could appreciate—except a cork—you wouldn't catch me writing a history like this. I think more of myself. Excuse me, dear reader (though why they all write "dear" beats me); let's get back and get on. And, by the way, if your head is full don't blame me; talk it over with Nature and your progenitors. After we had been launched into Smith's Falls feet first, and yanked out head first—back on the train now—I fell asleep, and, of a surety, didn't wake till I awoke—about Myrtle, "famoused"

in my records for one Italian killed and Walt Mason. I know all that terrain thereabout, and got up to look it over—what could be seen from a smoker window while doing what I could with soap suds and a safety. I like to get through first. It's great to see the rotund rich ones keeping an eye on their diamond cuff-links and collar buttons while they wash and shave, glaring around occasionally at the waiting others as if they should fall to and act as valets. Turn me loose in the porter's bunk of a morning, after the Negro Mulatto Quadroon or Octoroon has arisen and chanted his morning orisons to the great Canadian Pacific Dispenser of Life, Liberty and the *Pursuit* of Happiness. Turn me loose therein, O Fate (after it is aired, of course), to see the near autocrats clumsily perform their ablutions with the bored and inept air of boys who never did a hand's turn for themselves since they were born—and for a very considerable time previous to that. Imposing! I should say—imposing upon themselves and upon each other—and then beating it off the train, never even noticing the porter, though they pull their travellers' grip from his grip—excuse me—and then hiking it for Child's or Charlie's, or some other equally famous and gregarious (not now) nickel Palace, to load up on one of Joe Flavelle's near-chicks ("dubbed with unhatched" shell), "Sand-Hog Coffee," and a "Sinker of Toast." Not much to blame, at that, for, after the C.P.R.'s presumption—the Company winks here, by proxy of its highwaymen, of course—that you are an "Incognitoed Prince," and that it is against the Company's interest—which is Canada's, also, and your own—to get off their trains with anything beyond your

baggage;—no traveller can afford to spend more than fifteen cents till he has worked another day. And, right here, I'd like to remark that of all the Artists in Suggestion the Canadian Pacific Railway has every Professor that ever practised it backed off the map into the abyss. They suggested to a Canadian Government —when you and I were young, Sophrony—that the country was their's, not the people's. That worked, and they got the most of it. They suggested to the Government that their interests were the C.P.R.'s interests—(or vice versa; it's one and the same thing)—the Government was *en rapport*, and reacted to that suggestion. When they got through with the Government they suggested to the People at Large that any pickings said people might run up against in the way of wheat, ore, or cattle, etc., was also their's, because of business initiative and the risks they took with Government Charters, Bonuses, Guarantees, and Cash, and that these pickings aforesaid were to be returned almost immediately if not sooner, to the said Company at the said Company's nearest freight or ticket office. The people, of course, were a large subject and hard to hypnotize, but persistence and practice finally broke down the subject's power of resistance, and that suggestion was put over, and it sticks. Al. Dumas wrote a yarn one time about a gink named Balsamo, who was an expert at this art, but Al.'s operator was a "sucking dove" to the C.P.R. Balsamo, on one momentous occasion, nearly forgot his magical power, the C.P.R. never forgets. Still, they're a great outfit; look at the way they slushed our soldiers to the seaboard to save Freedom and boost their dividends,

to make Slam Bruise a Lieut.-Gen., Shaughnessy a Lord —Oh. Lord!—and Beatty, a lawyer, President of the system. This last looks like a military move; the working work is done; what they require now is a skilled Court Champion—or a kind of legal steam-shovel—to throw up Statutory Redouhts, Parapets and Field Fortifications to defend them when the assault—that is coming—is launched upon the swag. I shouldn't run off into these irrelevant rhapsodies—a cobbler should stick to his last, the ploughman shouldn't look back (colloquial rendering of "No Man Putteth," etc.)—there's a lot of proverbs and maxims anent this that would turn the famous Sancho dizzy, and furnish his immortal master with enough wisdom to fill up a summer's day; but not for mine; I have neither the art nor the audience—"fit, though few," vide the regicide, vide Johnson. Ah! here we are—Toronto and Sanctity. I love Toronto; it's a great town. I peddled bread here once—in a part of it—it was smaller then—thirty-six years ago, about the time that the great Goldwin Smith was fulminating against the encroaching smoke cloud. Well, Commerce didn't give a rip for the abstruse one, so here we are. It's a great city now, and looks its best from ahout ten miles lakeward—at night. In my bread-waggon days the famous corners bore their famous names. The C.P.R., in the fulness of time, and our representatives, blotted out the Government landmarks down there as it did in many another direction. Old St. Andrews stuck—the Scotch are great stayers; but they'll move—if the "Lord so willeth" and they are paid for it. The College, intellectually subservient, brow-beaten, and overawed,

backed away over the hill—like the native Irish before us Ulster squatters—that Mental Stuff seems always to recoil when the financial breakers thunder against it.

The College, with its intellectuality, will probably move again soon to a segregated area, as it were, with other vices and abominations. Mental Freedom or other Freedom—if there's more than one kind—I leave that to the disputants—will find, I think, that her "Souls be nourished in the wilds, deep in the unpruned forests, 'mid the roar of cataracts," etc. But, anyway, there's much change. Legislation, too—such as it was—has shifted, Joe Flavelle has that—such as it is—in his front yard, where he can keep an eye on it. Prohibition has put the other corner out of business. With prohibition there is more left to pay for Post-cure. Yes, it's a great city. Willie Briggs, "the venerable Book Steward," with his Scotch-Irish thrift, sharpened in Liverpool—erected a million dollar monument to himself out of a "few tousand ducats" and the Methodist Church. Fine old chap, William; and knew mighty well how to make primal superstition and human vanities commercial commodities. I'd like to rummage through the old burg for a day or two, and look them all over; one could browse around and dig up enough world's wonders in a small way to make a book all by themselves. But the shade of J.R.R. might get peeved and start out "revisiting the glimpses of the moon"; so I'll not do it just now: I'll just pay my respects to Bill McKenzie in the shape of a nickel for car fare, and slip up to the corner of Bloor and Brunswick for breakfast. So, indulgent but sober reader—how can you be aught else—here am I having

a real fill up, with my sister Catherine as hostess, cook, waitress and entertainer, and she fills all four roles with the adroit Irish uddress which she inherited from our mother. She is desperately Irish, too—with the exclusion of Home Rule, to be sure—though Catherine never saw the Emerald Isle. She is an expert chauffeuse also, and drives her own car—all our family are bloated plutocrats, so ten o'clock sees Peggy—another sister, *the* sister—Catherine and I and Molly—still another sister, the eldest—whom we pick up at the top of Balsam Avenue, skoodling along the Kingston road in our Henry-o-la-la, headed for the little farm and the Old Folks. The blooming car—that is, the tonneau—God forgive us!—I drove a six once for a while—is full. Mother wanted a couple of climbing roses and a few pounds of Parisgreen—the price is rising. Daddy is not in the "beef ring"—family too small—and the butcher waggon won't leave the sixth—so there's a piece of fresh beef—boiling beef—the boss loves to pick a bone; he was trained to that in Ireland. Mother still has in her mental nose—there are mental eyes, why not noses—the whiff of the Irish Sea's fresh herring—so here are half a dozen salt ones; also some sausages of doubtful derivation but handy at a quick call and unexpected visitors. There's a couple of loaves of bread—the Claremont baker calls but once a week—and a paper bag of buns, the kind on which the baker dabs three currants and sticks them with a beaten egg and a brush, I've seen them at it. There's a dozen bananas not nearly so green now as when they started on their travels; also a tiny sack of sugar—bought wholesale. There's a new electric stable lamp for Dad

when he goes out to see that things are all set for the night, a bunch of *Saturday's* Sunday papers, and a parcel that must be nursed, some silk blouses to be embroidered by Mother, who is an expert at it, even with her sixty-seven years.—Ah! We jiggle past the "Painted Post" and Danny Mann's reticent yet luxurious suburban home—Falling Brook.—The brook's there alright; I've seen it often. My Lady lived here long before Dan owned it, and fenced the wood and the brook and the sheer cliff in, right down to the lake. I used to wish—I was very young—that I could fence it in from the whole world, from Heaven even; for I had Heaven enough with My Lady's eyes upon me, wonderful how she did put it over—but, oh! those piney woods! I'll bet Dan in *his dreams* is often slithering down the pines and flinging pile trestles across the creeks and muskegs so's to hustle his steel down and overtake the bonus. Dan, you see, was a working man; but Bill, his brother bandit (Manitoba Free Press), has real vision that beats Dan's methods forty million ways. He threatens to go broke—enough said. Go to, thou military fool; *our* Bill sacked a capital peacefully in a private car without a single soldier. Of course, Bill is a Grand Elector: he elected the "Keeper of the Keys" and the artist who knew the combination, and he doped the watchmen before they could ring in an alarm.

Highland Creek—where Bobby Stevenson lived—knew Byron better than the professors did. Down the hill, ah!—we get a mental sniff;—what, again?—of burning telegrams and a reputation singed—but saved—up the hill, phew! "See, Molly, there's where Mrs.

Parker lived, she helped to clear the woods hereabout she told me that in one day she had flung over the lake bank to the Toronto sloops twenty-five cords of beech and maple. Some of her grandsons were at St. Julien—pshaw, the Hun couldn't fizz on that breed—nix! Here's the little spring; let's taste it, Catherine, and give the Ford a drink. They used to keep this well in good shape when the toll-gate stood here. Lord, Catherine, this thing's boiling; not much wonder Henry bubbled over into Sweden when he builds things like this; Iceland was what he wanted,—got it, too, I guess." "K.C., what nonsense you do get off," said Molly. "Wise men are experts at it, Moll," said I. Peggy smiled; she has no choice between Molly and I, but stands neutral. "Come on," cried Catherine, "that's enough water; it will be just as hot and as hungry in half a mile. Turn it over once and let us away." So I crank the car and settle my feet down among the parcels, and away we go trundling round the reverse curves, cedar-hidden, over a badly founded bridge and up the Rouge Hill, and then—well, the most infernal piece of main road within twenty miles of any city in civilization. The road resembles the responsibility for the war—nobody will own it. Pickering! Ah! Where another three thousand six hundred of mine is going galley west, I can see that—a story in itself—a little one—a farm—good-bye! Peggy looks sideways at me, and Mollie glances over her shoulder; but I "moult no feather"; and Catherine and the Ford scoodle on. A mile or two further—boyish stamping ground here—by the ruins of the old mill and defunct dam, the ancient willows under which we used to undress

and dress—straw hat—"erowned first"—duek breeches, held up by a pair of Dad's amputated gallusses and a cotton shirt. Heigh-ho!—past all that. Suddenly, dead ahead, the Big Mill—the flume, forty-five feet up on its left rear, still spurting curving jets on the green and slippery spillway planks, the aneient timber structure with its elapboarded exterior—gray, but still wholesome-looking, bas an air of modest rural business simmering round it. To the left, here, and we make the jog. To the right—gir-r-r. I pull my feet from among the Parisgreen, the roses in their earthen pots, and the pareels, hop out, and open the new wire gate; gir-r-r! along the searp that Billie built—he's safe—in Salem—and home. Home! It's meaning is precise, but its loeation varies. When I say home to my friends, they know it is where my wife and the hoys are; when I say home to my wife, she knows it is where my mother dwells; and when I say home to mother, she knows it means a eertain distinet and localized piece of Ireland—wbere we never had a home. Mother is at the little gate—waiting. Motherhood must always wait—sbe saw us eoming. Catherine is smiling vivaciously; she has delivered the goods, ineluding her big brother. I'm ashamed to say it, but they're all proud of me. What a hell of a mess after——. Peggy is busv. "How's daddy, maw. You're fine. Doesn't he look well." This last for me. Peggy is partisan and prejudieed. "Just in this morning, mother," eries Catherine, "so here he is." I kiss my mother, who whispers "God bless you, son"—a "tear and a smile in her eye." Mollie has passed on, and is stooping over some flowers, her

handkerchief crushed in the heel of her hand. I can kiss my old mother without stooping—much; she is five foot nine and a quarter without her shoes, and is light and quick on her foot, though she weighs two hundred and is sixty and seven years. Light, and quick, you bet. Of course, hardly as quick as when I was ten. About that age I began to develop the native Irish talent for argument—arguments, like charity, begin at home. Her hair, greyer—how long is it since I saw her last! Quick? Well—it used to be so very dark—I could run at ten; but at the argument's end—a little whiter, I think—I always felt safer with a few yards handicap. Mother! mother, dear! And a thousand chaps—young chaps—who had known just these very things had gone —west—since the sun rose.

CHAPTER VI

"Plain but not sordid—tho' not splendid, clean."

"Of woven exhalations underlaid
With lambent lightning-fire."

Up the stone-bordered, flower-lined path into the house and through into the kitchen. "Everything shining and in order, mother," I observed. "Yes, son." she replied. "I haven't so many at my knee now to disturb things; sometimes I wish they were more through other." "Well, you have half of us here just now, mother; maybe that's enough for a minute." "Maybe so; and Willie's always near at hand." And she gets busy. "Your daddy will be in shortly," to Kate, who is bursting strings, folding papers, and setting things away. "He looked for you to-morrow." Molly, with her housekeeper's instinct, has dropped a stick or two on the fire and has borrowed one of mother's aprons, which reaches to her toe, and asks "What are you having for dinner, maw?" "Here is enough," cries Kate, "you're thinking what you are going to have for K.C., Mary." Molly just smiles at me, and mother laughs, quietly, and says, "Oh, there is no one else here to-day: Maggie, you'll set the table, dear, and let these two do as they like, and I'll show K.C. where to dibble in the bushes before they wither completely after dunnering over the Kingston road. Here, son, here's the old spade your father keeps for his garden; and take this old feed pail—a bit of shorts will do no harm—and there's

plenty of soft water in the cistern—the well's a wee thin' cold." So, as she directs, I obey—stumbling among memories—and the roses are planted, one on each side of the bay window that looks south to the sixth—where she watched me walk away to the big city long ago. "I'm glad to know they're all well. Jeannie will be bothered about her boy; where is he now?" "His hunch are still at Sewell, mother." "Do they expect to go soon?" "I think that depends upon what happens in France, but he may go with me yet." "Are you for off?" "I think so, in a few months, perhaps." "Does Jeannie know?" "Not yet." "Aye," said she; then, after a pause, "that foolish old man, your father, would go himself yet; he was saying last night it's the only place for a man. But what could he do at his years? But you'll be useful—is it to build bridges and things of that kind?" "Yes, that's it, I think." "Well, the soldiers must have bridges when they go the other way, and, dear knows, it's a driegh road—it's a pity of the women and infants in all lands. Here's Maggie," she whispered, "did you tell her?" I shook my head. Then, continuing so Peggy could hear her, "Well, no doubt, you'll be needed, and you'll be there to do what you can. Who'll be with Jeannie while you are all away; because the youngest boy's going, I know that." "Who's going—where, mother?" cried Peggy. "Clifford is going to France; he told his grandfather last week; and K.C. is going—they'll need him at his own occupation." "You and the three boys," cried Peggy," "No, no, K.C., you're mad." "No, Peg, not the three; Barry will stay with his mother and his little chap till we see, at least." "But, K.C.,"

said Peggy, " you're too old—a grandfather." "Now, you know, Peggy, you didn't want anyone to even whisper 'grandfather,' and here you are,—I'm only forty-seven till August; not much wrong with that; I'm not going to fight, just to look on." "Yes, I've seen you looking on before," cried Peggy; "let the thieving English do their own fighting. Why should we do it for them. If they and the other lazy loafers would work for a living, and only had a living, which is more than most people get, there would be no one wanting their jobs; but England has piled her little island up with the plunder of the world, and what she hasn't got at home is within reach of her ships, and now her beer-guzzling cousins that she blowed so much about are determined to get it. I wouldn't send one single Canadian soldier—for those English dirt—not one." Peggy was blazing. "There's rights on both sides," said mother; "it's sometimes hard to judge, but K.C. knows his own mind." Here Catherine with a suspicious moisture on her eyelashes, came round the ear. "Peg's perfectly right, maw," she flashed. "I know them and their brassy cheek, and the w'y as things is done at 'ome. I'd let them go to it; maybe it will teach them a lesson in modesty." "How is it?" I enquired, "that you girls, who have had English men and women working along side of you and for you for years are so desperately unamiable towards them?" "I know them," flared Catherine, her eyes hard enough now. "I know them—give them that much"—and with her thumb and forefinger opened and no more she indicated the amount—"just that much, and you couldn't live with them. K.C., you're a fool. What about your

business?" "I have none, Catherine." "But aren't you going to work any more; what about your plant and horses and all that?" "The banks," said I. "What!" exclaimed Peggy, who thought that I was rich, "the banks!" "Yes, the banks. I owe them $24,000; and with the loss on the grain exchange and the armories, falling prices, and no chance to go to work, it means only one thing—by the time the war is over,—I'm licked up." "Well, son," said my mother, quietly, "you can't have less than you had before. You weren't born to much." "I know now, mother," said I, "why no difficulty ever daunted me." "Nonsense," she answered, and continued, "it's a pity that since you were to lose it, that those who needed it more than the Government and the speculators didn't get it; that's all I have to say. If it leaves Jeannie without a roof to shelter her—and, mind, she's not young now—it's a bitter bite. Does it mean that?" "Just that, mother. I never hid behind a skirt but yours." "You were a very wee boy when that happened. Can you clear yourself?" "Yes, I owe only a few trifles outside the bank." "Thank God for that; you'll still have your name. Katie, there's something burning. Is it the sausages? There's your daddy, Maggie; he's waving at you." Away fled Peg. Molly hadn't burned anything, and Catherine was calling from the kitchen. "Everything's ready, maw." Mother picked up the feed pail, poured a last few drops on the newly-planted rose bushes, and turning to me, said, "Come on in, son, and sit down and have your bite; you'll always have that, anyway, thank God, in this country." Molly came out and caught me by the sleeve. "I knew

this morning coming down that you were set for France; and never mind, K.C., about the rest," and she went off again to the kitchen. Father and Peggy arrived chatting easily. The Boss reached out his hand, saying in his hearty voice, "Well, boy, how is everything on the upper lakes—busy? I know they are all well, or you wouldn't be here. Any work?" "No, not for the minute, dad; I'm going overseas." "You should have been there with the first; I'm glad to hear it. Maggie says they are hardly dealing right with you on the buildings." "The letter of the Contracts, dad, I guess." "Maybe, but one was a fraud in the first place, and I never cared much for the gentlemen on the other; they were too smooth, and licked their lips too often." "Maybe it does signify something of the wolf, dad." "Every time," said he. "Come, men, and Maggie" called mother. "You'll not change things by talking there. Come in, Sam; they're all hungry after their jaunt down." Some lunch! Mother fried the eggs for me herself. She told the girls she knew exactly how hard I liked them. At that the Boss looked across at Peggy, without a smile. Peg sugared the cups and smiled an aside at Catherine. Molly bent her head to inspect a dish of preserved cherries, and Catherine made a nose at me, where mother couldn't see her. I wore an air of conciliatory approval (I was beating the cold storage bandits to it now) as mother passed me the plate piping hot with the eggs done to my turn, bless her dear heart. I was the firstborn, and had some rights of priority, maybe; and, well—suddenly I could see another scene far away where a little four-year-old in from school—you went early there—sat on a stool

by the hearth where a peat fire was glowing, with a chair for a table, while his mother—how tall she was, how glossy black her hair, and how deeply grey her clear eyes —spread for him the little delicacies that the touch of mother hands makes so infinitely sweet—little things that she had purchased by the swift, patient, stitch, stitch, at night under the hanging lamp when the said little fellow, weary of watching the gleaming needle, the glistening floss, and the deftly changing hoops, had fallen drowsily asleep on the stool by her side, his head upon her knee, while her sweet, low song—the banshee's wail in it—"We must go, dear, we must go, dear; there's a knocking at the door," was crooned softly into his sleeping ear. I could hear the waves beat upon the beach and see the breaking surf,—why, the very brine of the Irish Sea was in my eyes. "Devil take you, Molly," I sputtered, "you are worse than Peggy for scalding tea." "Now," said mother, looking across at me, "that's clever; if an infant burnt itself as readily, you'd find fault with it." "Why, mother," said Peggy, "the tea's not very hot." "Maybe not," replied mother, "but he's not so well hardened to it as you—he's not so often at the tea pot." "That for you, Peggy," cried Kate; "no one must pass remarks on anything K.C. does; he's always right." "I'm sure," said the Boss, "it's a very important affair. When does Karl's battalion go overseas?" (Molly was born in Ireland, but knew the power of silence). "I was just asking that," said mother, "and he's not sure. Jeannie will have her heart full when they all go. Lord send that it is soon over." "The Lord is not bothering about us, mother," said I. "The German Emperor has him hooked." "Ah, your

nose," replied she; "the German Emperor's no more a dunce than you are. I wouldn't believe half the lies they print. Surely he doesn't think that his folk are fools; they're not fighting that way." "No, but they're acting that way," said dad. "They'll be cured of their indecency in time," said I. "Yes," snapped Peg, "when England gets help enough." "You never saw England, Maggie," said the Boss. "Nor do I want to," shot back Peggy. "But," continued he, "K.C. has." "And much good it did him," said Catherine. "You see a great deal when you do see it." "You've said it, Katie," I put in. "And I've seen France, the Citadel of Freedom, and while this last few months I've begun to doubt of Flags and Nationalism and Political Divisions of all kinds, I'll strike a blow for France and what she represents, if I can"—"and" asked my father "what about England." "Well, sir," replied I, "with things as they are, and threaten to be at home, with plunder rampant in the nominally free countries, with a grotesque combination like Russia, England, and France coalesced in the name of Freedom, none of which countries—not even France—can show a one-half approach to the standard of general well-being that obtains in Germany, with Italy hedging for the biggest bid, I feel—well—like a man without a country." The Boss said little; he's bred from generations of North of Ireland Orangemen, and for them there's only one way when Britain is at war; that is, march against her enemy; and, in spite of my summing up and summing down, my anger at the flag-waving thieves and the cynics and cynical plunderers—that's the way I look at it, too.

Afternoon passed, evening fell, "dewy eve," etc. There's

no dew in the city; the smoke tarpaulin sheds the most of it, and what filters through is sizzled by the hot breath of business; and, anyway, the watering carts anticipate heaven's tardy moisture. Commerce cannot wait for divinity to act. The crows, the black thieves, scalloped leisurely by to their cantankerous rookery (robbers always quarrel) in Somerville's Woods. A few grass cattle from the back fields sauntered en silhouette across a little knoll between the house and the fading west. A boy in a buggy passed the cedars, whistling after the mail, no doubt; or, maybe, there was a girl somewhere of whom he had sang all day, and who had, perhaps watched an hour to see him go by, and to whom he would call cheerily, "How's everything, Nell?" and pass on, while she would answer, "Fine, Will; are your folks all well?" and Billy would call back, "Yep; good night, Nellie," and be answered with a "Good night, Billy." And Nell's mother would call from the kitchen, "Was that Bill Proctor went by, Nell?" and Nell would counter the mother's vigilance with the maiden's vigilance, "I think so, mother. It looked like his driver." A thin cloud came grayly up a little south of where the sun had set, and Peggy—she has lived in the city a long time now—asked me if I thought it might rain. Dad looked up very quietly, and said "There'll be no rain to-night." I asked Catherine how much gasoline we had. "Surely," said mother, "she's not here without enough gasoline"—and continued, "There's a few eggs in the pantry, girls, if you want them." To be paid for, of course—worth paying for, too. "Very well, mother," answered Molly, "I'll put them in the car." "I'll get it turned round," said Kate. "Watch the bank, Kate," called the Boss,

as she and Molly went out. "Yes, Catherine," I called "If that bird cage of yours takes the ditch like Molly and I did with the big bus near London, I'll not catch to-morrow night's Vancouver express." "You're going to-morrow night, then," said dad. "Yes, sir," I answered, "and I'll let you know, and you, mother, what's in the wind as soon as I hear." Catherine had the Ford facing south. She and Molly were seated and Peggy was walking down the path. We followed. "You'll need to water the roses often for a few days, mother." She laughed a little and replied,"tell me something that I don't know." Peggy was in the car now. "We'll be down Sunday, daddy," called Catherine. "Maybe you'll bring Sarah or Aggie with you; Ethel will be looking for them." "Yes, likely," said Kate. I took my father's workman's hand. "Good night, father." "Good luck, my lad," said he. Mother stood with her elbow on the gate-post; one hand—the left one—beneath her apron. It was cool after the heat of the day. "Good night, mother," and she gave me her cheek. "I'll see you again, son; give my love to Jeannie;—and never mind the big gate, your father will close that in the morning." And we skoodled away, the Ford snarling like a pup with a root in its teeth. As we turned at the sixth I could see that mother had lit the lamp; it shone like a star that had strayed from heaven. Coal oil at 40c ought to be guilty of some glimmer. I distinctly heard the Boss call the old dog, "Cappie! Cappie!" He had forgotten —Oh, Dad, and you so punctual—to feed him at supper time. The kitchen door opened—is that mother standing in the light? It was.

CHAPTER VII

"As natural as
The undisciplined sea."

"The Devil was an Agriculturist."

"At once an Idiot and a Sage."

In the preceding chapter, two days back, "evening fell" without breaking—it's an ancient trick of hers. In this chapter—"lucky seve'"—"morning broke" without falling. (And here, at this point, I might interject a remark that heaps of business men also break without falling; in fact, are often like the Irishman's wall, begorra! "which was higher than it was before it fell.") Just here, as I ought, I'd like to run a flourish about the Sun climbing slowly—and, yes—majestically, up out of the spruce and tamarack swamps, where he had been bunking with the jack-rabbits while the moon ran her night-shift—at time and a half—she's a union worker, so all the rhymers say, though I don't bank much on their clap-trap (excuse this lunar intercalary)—and lighting the rugged grandeur of the nickel and copper cliffs ("potentially rich beyond the dreams of avarice") in the vicinity of Sudbury —train running a little late—shining gloriously in (angle varying with the curves) through the dining-car windows, where the waiters, having stored away their bolsters, bedding and blankets, and all other appurtenances of last night's siesta, have the stamped linen, stamped

silver, and all and sundry of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's feeding utensils—in this particular dining-car, spread out dazzingly for the especial purpose of adding to the Company's revenue, and, incidentally, for supplying the wants and caring for the comforts of the passengers who have sufficient money to travel *and eat* upon this tiny part of its world-girdling system. The Sun—what things he has seen! what things he is still seeing!—outside this dining-car. The C.P.R. is much, of course; but not all. Oh! Sun. Oh! Daily Miracle. Your bright illuminating beams light up an otherwise darkened universe, and lay its vast interminable eternities open to the philosophic eye and mind. Thou, O Sun! wert blinking down in babyhood when the far first page of history wast turned, and now, when thou art an ancient antiquity, with some few spots—blackheads, perchance—upon thine ample disc—pardon me, face—thou art still revealing and seeing things, even on this little dust-mote of thine illimitable sphere. Bright-eyed, benevolent, art thou, old top, "shining on all alike"; that is, if people would only stand out in the open. But even thou, broad-visioned, luminous, omnipercipient as thou art, hast not seen, nor canst thou tell, through what devious channels, under what secret auspices, by whose gracious permission, by what official connivance, for whose collective or elective benefit and advantage, our nickel from the multi-millionaire-making mines of Sudbury was furnished at the surreptitious bidding of commerce to our commercial rival and especial (while the war lasts) economical detestation and abomination—the Hun. Despite thy brilliant rays, old blinkard, darkness absolute and com-

plete—blackness as of Egypt, Tophet, Erehus, or the Soul of a Profiteer, enveloped that transaction—as death envelops the planet that jostled (Heaven knows how!) from thy commanding influence is hurtled off into profound and limitless space—timeless, lightless, and extinct. "Yes, waiter, some corn-flakes." ($56.00 per bushel; figure it out.) "Eggs, sir?" "No, my lad. I had this year's a few days ago." Well, well! "Bacon?" "Yes, about half the hundredth part of a slice—the smell, as 'twere. Josephus has made the hog too precious to indulge in more than the perfume." Here, mentally, I strike a tangent, and think Pythagoras may be all right, and that the devils that took an unwilling header into the brine with certain famous and notorious—though untitled hogs—are reincarnated, and are now posteuring the dirty swine to get even. "Yes, son, a pot of tea and some English jam." "Cornmeal muffins, sir?" "No, boy; bring the toast I had coming down ten days ago. I want no new acquaintances this a.m. I wish to revel—without the distraction of strangers—in my thoughts—they are tenuous and I may disport me unhampered—and debate the question why we, who grow so much fruit and have the Arctic for an ice-plant, have to import—and pay for—English jam." "Very well, sir, thank you"; and the waiter is gone. Fine lads they are, and will prompt you in choice of eatables by the hour, when there is not a second tip in sight. Two roughnecks—which means, usually, chaps who work for a living—come in from the tourist cars up ahead. They are early. The tired business man, in silk pyjamas, is still resting; (idleness and wealth are physically always on the verge of

exhaustion). These boys probably slept with their boots on,—to the "great content" and narrow escape of their fellow-passengers. The D.C.C. halts them at the first traverse; they are frowsy-headed, vigorous, and alert, and look as if they could pull a saw, throw a tree, spin a log, or ride one through a piece of white water. They wear shoe-packs, mackinaw-socks, and belted black jumpers, evidently as hard as nails—devils, I'll bet, and can turn a hand-spring and swing a 150-pound girl clear of her feet in a hoe-down—and be decent to her, too; might crack off an oath or two, but no suggestive, double-edged dirt such as I have heard where the long-stemmed glasses bubble as if a fairy diver were down in them seeking the "Invisible Spirit," and the palms curve earthward—bingo!—with lascivious asiatic luxuriousness, and the dress suits cover a multitude of sins, and the ball-gowns cover—what?—well, you've seen the skirt hooked up towards the shoulder hiding——, Biff! These ginks—I know thousands of them—one myself, if you've guessed it right—these fellows, well, I've often thought if they could just stand close up to the scallywags for whose fool, foul luxuries they sweat—not perspiration, soft sybarite, but *sweat*—and, like the soup my friend Billy Perkins tells of, "lots of it", they'd dwarf the scene of the XVI. Louis and his astonished sansculottes into a secondary consideration—vide Carlyle—when Privilege trembling permits him abroad again. Great men, these! Canada will some day realize it when they are gone. "Hello, K.C.!" thus salutes me Mr. Goodfellow, ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Slash-Catch-An-Skin-Em,

Lawyer—! Ha! Farmer, oh, ho!—who does the plowing. I dunno; Sheep-rancher, dear, oh dear!—where does he hold forth in the "lambing season" or the "shearing ditto"? No Autolycus can foozle this boy out of his Grocery money. No, no! Lt.-Gov.'s choose their seat for a season, so he sits down—big, debonair, social, frank, and a good fellow, the West is full of them. "How are you, sir?" I am polite—the C.P.R. insists upon politeness to those who patronize it. "Fine, sir, thank you. Bridging any creeks now?" "Idle, just at present." "Why haven't you a farm? the land's a sure thing always." I glance at his hand holding the menu-card —soft and white, though a little time-dried—and think of one I grasped the other evening, and laugh heartily. "What do I know about farming?" "There's plenty of chaps who know it all, and they can be hired. You understand finance; that's the principal part." "I'm not so sure of that part either." "Well, the farm's the thing, and when war hits the world you're safe." (In the mud and water to your waists, night on fire, with the bursting shells hurtling inaccurate death—young lads of the gallant hearts and noble ideals, forgive us our safety!) "My father is a farmer." "Where?" "East." "A hundred acres?" "No, just twenty-five, more or less, as per the deed." "Pshaw, I've a dozen sections and a watered sheep range. That's the way to make money." "The boss seems to have enough. He and mother are very comfortable." The ex-Lt.-Gov. grew reflective. "Well," said he, "of course, big business has its worries. I've just been east raising hell with the Government about the wool embargo. Certainly, the

manufacturing interests of the east have the west hornswaggled, but they'll see. Look how the prairies are rolling up the recruits."—(Lord of the Universe, will this accounting and balancing pass muster before thee?)—"They've got to loosen up and give us what's coming to us." "That's fair enough," I agreed. And he went on, "If we didn't fight them every inch of the way there would be no west, nothing but buffalos and Indians and the Hudsons Bay—after the war, and maybe sooner—we'll talk business to that bloated, lazy clique who fatten on the prairies they never saw. Just watch." The ex-Lt.-Gov. is so definite, conclusive, and awe-inspiring, and has been such a spectacular success as politician, lawyer, financier, and farmer that a chap who only knows work can but acquiesce, poor dunce, and listen. The fog of custom and good fellowship cloaks in its heavy mist the brawling brook of bubbling generalities, and the ex-Lt.-Gov. is so absolute and sees so clearly—on the level of his own dining-room floor—that it would be a rotten thing to drop him into the cellar, among the roots and stuff, or hoist him up on the ridge-roll, where he'd grow dizzy; so silence, which is not always assent, seems permissible. The rough-necks rise to go out, limber as eels, their shoulders burly, their trousers bagged at the knees. They have not shaved since Sunday, and it is now near the week's end. One big fellow, with his right hand, hitches up the black-belted coat tail, exposing an herculean hip, and drags forth a blue and white dotted handkerchief—dots a little dinged—a black plug of Sir William McDonald's dope—splendid basis for baronial honors, God wot!—flips out in a forward, easy curve,—

the rough-neck, agile and clumsy as a bear, catches it with his left hand, winks at the D.C.C., takes a bite of it and wipes his moustache—which still shows that he had slept on his left side, and steps forward in his shoe packs, light as a panther, and indifferent to the rolling of the ear. His mate feels for his bandana, first in one hip pocket, then in the other, then in the three outside pockets of his black, fuzzy coat; finally he raises a hand to his head, but his hat is where he slept. He grins an enlightened and enlightening grin, brushes his mouth with the back of his hand, nods to the D.C.C., and then, as if he had put off doing what shame had withheld him from doing, he shoved his fist into the pocket of his felt trousers, fished up a quarter, dropped it into the ready hand of the waiter—they are tolerant and cosmopolitan, those waiter boys—saying "Here's a quarter, kid; buy yourself a cigar. So long!" and followed his chum. The waiter puts the coin in his pocket, tumbles two unsoiled, unfolded serviettes into the cloth he is changing, smiles at his chief, and prepares for his next victim—still smiling—at the rough-necks' reverence for clean things. The Ex-Lt.-Governor of Slash-Catch-An-Skin-Em, and I also, departed towards the rear, the honorable gentleman reserving his waiting-gentleman's tip till the final meal of his trip, because, he said, "you get better service that way." For my part it always seems to me that I am waited on by so many attentive boys that if I copied him there'd be nothing to it but tip the whole staff. Besides, since my decline, and the war, I pay as I go. At the worst I can jump a meal, without worrying. I believe in heredity. My people were born about '44.

But to change a little. The Canadian Pacific is a great purveyor of literature, so great sometimes, that one gets fed up, and to break away from the persistent, smiling importunity of their Israelitish agent, I beat it for the smoker and a cigar, where I listen to the boys—not very young boys, at that—telling their eternal, infernal "stories." Some day an expert in degeneracy will lay bare the reason why in this country of ours, wherever three or four Canadians foregather in leisure and idleness, there's always the same iteration of fool, foul yarns —sexual, mostly, and indecent, principally. There must be a cause. I leave it to the Stanley Hall type of research; it has me beaten; because even the new arrivals soon get into the ruck and retail their pointless dirt with as much shamelessness and effrontery as the native born. I've seen county councils and gatherings of that ilk, presided over by prospective M.P.'s, where this stuff seemed to be, as it were, a final decoration for duties nobly discharged, and a preliminary test of fitness for national honors. Jack has a big visitor who can tell a yarn, but his tales have enough wit to make them wholesome. But, enough. I mention this, not as a purist or a prude. I'm no more of either than Emperor Bill the Pietist is a Christian, or John Bull the Disinterested Poseur is an Altruist, or the Critics who will criticise this history, and paragraph,—Authorities.

CHAPTER VIII

"But this will not endure nor be endured."
"Good Lord! how the lawyers began to assemble."

"Dream of thee sometimes as a home
Of sunshine he had—seen—and lost."

"Then, then the canvas o'er
With feverish hand I pour
The lava-waves and storms of my wild soul
Blazed to expiring life
Dreams,"

"The sweetest part of travel," saith an ancient, "is the coming home." I wonder did that gink have a mortgage on it—a kind of hell's halo! what was his occupation, condition and country? I know not. Let us hope his felicitous phrase came, as it seems to have come, from a full and satisfied heart. As a statement of the ideal it gets me. I like the domestic loves, affections, kindly faces, sweet solicitudes, etc., etc. The place "where every stranger finds a ready chair," the "happy fireside clime," "sweet, sweet home." Paine was evidently an idealist, homeless in the streets of New York, while he listened, shelterless, to the singing of his song; and poor Bobby, the dazzling derelict, whose bonnie Jean was—pardon me, ye, his worshippers (of whom I am one)—in the domestic instincts, faiths, virtues, and services a far greater than he; what did home, which he hallowed, mean to him. And the Immortal waif and World-Stranger, Goldsmith—ragged, unkempt, in his

Anglo-Saxon garret, polishing in the cold, dark London fog the love and light-reflecting facets of his Celtic gems; what had he of home save "memories brightening as they close." "Your station, sah"—it is midnight now—murmurs the son of Ham, fitting midnight mentor this cheery black man. Well, his race has been, and is largely the world's slave. From that what color does humanism and cynicism deduce. Perhaps his cheeriness, health, and vitality are a refutation of Power and the Superman of whatever flag and brand of chain. I wish I were one-eighth negro. "Thank you, sah, this is the fifteenth time I've brought you up." I'll bet he has me totalled in his ledger at about ten dollars, the smiling scamp. "Good night, sah." The "h" is nearly an "r." "Good night, George." A half-mile walk; the air has the superior tang. Angels! Some of Lucifer's gang lost in the Arctic are heliographing Heaven in desperation—they do that always, endlessly; but day for them, like hunger for us, cuts the spiritual connection. The stars are brilliant—rot! Get thee behind me, thou draggled-tailed mongrel of descriptive vapidity! What human who looks at midnight up towards the sky, while labor—bohunk or other—in its fetid, stinking shirt, in which it sweated all day, lies in these wooden shacks—only bloodless profit would consent to build them—with one-eighth-inch of plaster, a punky, porous sheeting of mill-run, one ply of builder's paper, and seven-eighths skimp of Manitoba sheeting between it and the outside world; what human, I ask, knowing these things, has a warranty to stack his blathering vocables round his doddering ideas of the infinite stars. Hell! we've had enough of that

punk—be quick, thou pert expert of the polished sleeves and trousers seats, scissors and lank cheek, thou fevered easy-chair traducer, or thou missest something,—"said I well, old mole!"

The mountain—rechristened yesterday to the deep and infinite amusement of the red gods—by a race whose progenitors were still by a few million years unborn when the monster-peopled tides, scored deep and lasting their chronological recession on its emerging ribs—frowns quietly and cynically down on these inhuman, unscrupulous makeshift shacks, so thoroughly known to the doctor, the coal baron, the bailiff, and death, savage hovels leering with decrepit list in insult to man and to God. Excuse for shelter, these, even in a summer night, what will they be in forty below and a gale blowing? But what of the shacks or the inhabitants thereof, so the soil be frozen deep enough to stick and hold the exploiters' stakes. Mr. I. R. A. Skunkwon, amassing fortunes (on paper) and luxuries from physical ruin, has this soil sold, resold, estreated, foreclosed, and bedevilled, "generally all over" scabaceous, financially scrofulous, till it is barmed and festered and permeated and rated one hundred per cent rotten or vitriolic (as far as life and living are concerned), at "one thousand dollars per foot frontage and cheap at that"; and this in a city where there are no insane asylums—yet—unless the whole city be one gigantic cell—and with the world practically unpeopled from here to the Pole. "The earth is mine and the fulness thereof," saith the Lord. He spoke too soon; the real estate men have beaten Him to it. Sacrilege, you can swear that, without perjury!

Home! Jeannie is waiting, and opens the door; she knows my step, has marked it now for thirty years almost. Once it was ardent; yes, often it was late; sometimes, long since, now—night-fellows—unsteady; but she knew it always, and that it never came unkindly nor without respect. "A cup of tea?" "You bet, old lady." "The train's a little late," "An hour, isn't it?" "The doctor was asking when you would be home." "Yes. How's the little fellow?" "Fine; he's a dear baby; he's sleeping now." "When did you hear from Sewell?" "To-day; there's no word of him going yet." "Carl will be tired of that stuff; young fellows want to be in the thick of it. I'm going myself." "I thought so." "The boy's father must stay; and it looks as if they'll need us all." "Here is the tea; what did your mother say?" "Mother! why, she said about what you've said; there's not much to say." "No, not much; when will it all end?" "In a few years, maybe. Meantime, mamma—it's a mean thing;—we are all alright to-night." "Yes, it's mean. There was a battalion went through to-day and one to-night." "Yes, they're slipping them across fairly fast just now; men are pretty small potatoes for a minute." "Oh, yes, Carl says he's getting a week's leave." "That's immense. When?" "In ten days." "Good, that will be about right. When he comes we'll call in the surgeons and have this lesion stitched; if they make a good job you will sit clear—so long as someone consents to sweat for the paper you own." "You didn't get the department to pay for your work?" "No; they've become suddenly honest at the capital." I couldn't tell her of the quid pro quo that the Honorable

the Minister Snob Dodgers had demanded. She would not believe that anyone could insult me without having his bean smashed; she does not realize that "prolonged endurance tames the bold," and that at forty-seven, with declining vigor, anger thinks before it strikes. If one could only stay young and poor he could tell them all to go to hell, or the pit, and walk away whistling to the shining lands that lie just over youth's horizon. But age and the system and the hunger—fear, and the little luxuries, sap insidiously the self-reliance, weaving numberless and semi-invisible bonds, such as cob-webbed the sleeping Gulliver. "You're tired, dear." "No, not yet, Jeannie; loafing in a sleeper all day; nonsense. I'm glad to see you looking so well, mamma." Of course, she looks well—like a matron certainly; some of the old, or rather the young, color in her cheek; not "the withered freshness filched from motherhood," for her arms have been full and her heart also for many years, and now both—oh, illimitable heart and arms!—are full again with her little grandson who is asleep in her bed (his cot is mostly for display, I think) upstairs. One of the felicities of growing old—yes, she looks well,—grey hair and glasses, are the divine disabilities with which the years and Heaven, in sacred scantion, crown the grandmother by the grace of God. What yattering idiot or idiots, in the world's foolish infancy, stole that phrase, "the grace of God," and applied it to a hirsute savage with a gouted club, and, with the addition, "King," made it meaningless. Meaningless? Not so. It has a meaning—and a result. Behold! The shapeless, shattered ones, the light laughing lads—that were so, shortly since

—are being buried in their blankets by squads, platoons, battalions, divisions, army corps, army groups; and the papers flame in flaring headlines, "Big Victory," "Victorious Advance," "Belloy Retaken"; or hidden away, in clever camouflage and small news note, "some unimportant ground conceded by us" on the Flanders front, "Strategic straightening of the line"; or, flaring again, "Germans Advance with reckless disregard of Human Life," "Failed in their Objective, which was set far behind the lines we still hold." When lying is the only method by which it can be reported, is not the whole colossal slaughter a lie? I think so. But ask these, the Toiling Patriots, the men who are jubilant in a thousand glittering hotels this night over a contract closed—with a million margin, absolute—and who drink, in the wines of France,—her vines were never so impurpled as now, success to the entente Allies and our Ultimate Victory—which means, as it should, British Supremacy and Commercial Domination, for our day at least. Ask these gentlemen, uniformed, General-ized, whose souls only are lousy, who contribute generously to the Red Cross and Patriotic Fund—from their plunder, and call it square—ask them! Lies? Not by a damn sight; they know it is real, and they "are doing their bit"; and any guy, not necessarily a pacifist, who does not yield assent to every action of a rattled Government riding the whirlwind—while in the dust-cloud, looters (conscienceless and brainless, mark you that!) become millionaires overnight—is a traitor to his country and to civilization; while the little holdings, always on a margin (else how could idlers feed?), are licked up by the con-

flagration, melted into pig iron, consolidated, centralized, handed over and stamped as positively and irrevocably our property, by the brand of the Big Interests. Poor fools, poor fools; wait! And thou other poor fool, who art plundered of thy small store trifling, gathered with such infinite pains, flayed like another Marsyas—(thank God for the Greeks); doubtless thou wilt stand shaking in thy double nudity—great stuff, eh!—puzzling thy dazed wits over thy lost hide and the Financial Paradox, till—well, till thy suffering and anguish have become intolerable, impossible, and thou shalt bury thee deep as per Enceladus. But thou, though buried, shalt quicken, like all sown things; and when thou shalt stir —and sigh—drawing in thy vasty breath,—illimitable, immeasurable,—and the mountains heave, toppling in response thereto, let those who swank upon the lofty, glittering pinnacles take heed and have at hand, if they can get it, a first-aid outfit. "Come and look at the baby." "Don't wake him, you goose. I'll see him in the morning." "But he's so sweet." "How could he be anything else? I'll see him in the morning." "Dear little love; God bless him and keep him." "Good night, mamma." "Good night"; and as I closed the door she was in her chair, close beside the bed, not looking at the shoe she was unlacing, but at the little chap who lay asleep, moist-lipped and tranquil; and her murmuring as of old, "Dear, little love, sweet wee boy." It's great to get stretched out on your own especial bed—youthlike, "weariness can snore upon the flint"; but, let us say, medium years or middle age likes down or a faked Ostermoor. We grow localized as to bed, and brain; the orbits,

once far-swept as a comet's narrowing ever to that inevitable eclipse and that lonely, dreamless couch. Drowsing, I wait for the shock of the air-brakes and, through the mind-lightnings that flash faintly on the dusky horizon of dreamland, heard—no, I saw—set amid a purple sea, which beat with terrific fury at its moveless base, a gigantic "Fearful Monument, the Wreck of Old Opinions." It went down, toppling like a flaring Pharos ceasing to light the sea that swallowed it. I saw the armies, muddy, lousy, rise from their zig-zagged burrows—the sleek rats scuttling over the soldiers' soggy boots—salute each other, hailing each the other, shouting, "Thou, poor fools, art not our enemy; our enemy is at the rear and within ourselves. We go to tell our wives and children, our sweethearts and mothers, the wise governments and patriots of these things;—forgive us!—and farewell." Then Mt. Blanc, a gigantic sergeant, with chevrons carved from the glaciers on his stupendous arm, and in his own thunderous voice, bellowed so that the world shook, and the multitudinous guns crumbled into slag heaps, "About turn; quick march!" And these, departing, the second armies—shadowy, mangled, mutilated, shapeless, ghastly, ghostly—rose up, in ragged interminable ranks like a cornfield (continental) that had been pastured; and shivered, a broken, mute adieu—while from the whole world drifted, like a storm, the wail of women reft,—and sank again into the soil. Then another voice—not the still, small voice; but a voice as of Oxford or Cambridge and their farthing-candle sisterhood—cried out angrily, "Thou vain, half-educated rough-neck; thou son of the woods and wild places;

hearken unto our wisdom; and despise not our authority. None can have a vision in the Vernacular!" The purple seas reappear, storm-whipped; the Monument rearises; night or the censorship or sleep—it is a dream, son—covers them with a veil.

CHAPTER IX

"Let not plunder dignified
Under specious titles hide."

"Though trusted long in great affairs
He gave himself no haughty airs."

The glittering inanities—speculative, visionary, or theoretical—"crack their frail cases" like imitation pearls, and show themselves empty, valueless, useless—mere shining husks in the Dr.'s presence. The guy who talks to him with inaccurate data will come a cropper, "o'erleap himself" like "vaulting ambition,"—as William hath it—and land in the soup and mortified exposure. The Dr. is one of those chaps who "is a great observer," and who "looks quite through the deeds of men." He has dodged the college cow-man—that is, the university moulder of minds—the expert roper, the orthodox breaker and rough-rider, and is still a loose one: suspicious, tameless, unridden, with a vision wider than the mental prairies and mountain foot-hills where he has swept with unyoked main and unwrung withers since he was first able to boss a herd. Only sudden death can prevent him being famous with the world, as he already is with those who know the workman's finish on a job when they see it. The quality of his skill is so original and accurate that, if I gave public specimens of it, he would at once be identified and lose caste—though he is no snob—through the fact that he is a neighbor and friend of mine, and was actually, per-

haps carelessly (every great man has his lapses), one of the accessories before the fact in regard to this very book which the reader is digesting—with the aid of diapepsin, maybe—as fast as he can. Here let me interject a word to you reader, whether fair, dear, intelligent, perspicacious, lazy, superficial, or foolish. I do not beg you to read this book—though I know you will. I do not ask you, I do not expect you, to continue the perusal of my still-to-be-celebrated work beyond the moment that your head is full. And now, since we understand each other in this particularly particular particular—some English, eh, what!—and since you have bought it (you wouldn't be mean enough to borrow it), which for me and the publishers and pulp and paper lords and autocrats is the main thing, and since you have my permission to lay it down or fling it in the fire at the first intimation of your skull cracking, let us proceed. "'Tis evening, and the half-descended sun tips with his golden fires" the city hall monstrosity called a tower—by default of speech; it tips also the anglican steeple containing the chimes that call to "meditation and prayer," every seventh day, the Elevator worshippers (of privilege and monopoly), the real estate wild-catter and the swindlers and the gamblers therein, and some few humble adherents, laborious and reverential, who slip their small donation in coercion's silken bag, falteringly and shamefacedly—quite unconscious that they could make it larger and more ostentatious if swanking effrontery, with its sluices and riffles higher up stream, had not already done it for them. It—the sun, as per preceding—tips also the flag-pole of the Exchange Building and the lions' heads (made of sheet

metal and hollow, like the heads and hearts of its president, vice-presidents, secretaries and legal retainers) which decorate the cornice. It tips—still the sun—also the mountain top, in whose giant abdomen, "navelled like another Nemi," lies the celebrated loch from which our city drinks, and where, surreptitiously, Bill, the violent of speech, and myself beheld the Swedish nymphs "bathing their limbs where nothing hid them" to the angry sanitary disgust of Bill and to the unloosing of language that would make a fluent river-driver or shanty-man his worshipper for ever. It tips also the Elevator tops through which flows, to the making of many millionaires, the wheat from the western world. Yes, the tops; but that's as far as it goes; the sun, at whatever angle or altitude, never penetrates the reinforced concrete interior of the said mysterious Elevators. Once in a while a twinkling star of Government peeps in at the door, but the dust from the cleaners biffs it in the eye, and exit star into the tenebrific waste of the Nova Scotian night that enshrouds Snottawa. But, "by heaven," thunders the Smithsonian-Davidian-Dodgerian blank-firing battery—organ of the ex-Honorable Snob Dodgers (who is, methinks, a scion of the Artful's family, highly specialized, developed, and practised, and should know); "by heaven," thundereth the above bellowing for the ex-Honorable Snob, "these elevators and the manipulators" —(hornswoggling and screening thieves)—thereof and therein—except they be mine—are the damnedest, most abominable, most infernal iniquities—except they be mine —that were ever permitted—except they be mine—to plunder, exploit, and destroy the honest, hard-working,

laborious, generous, simple-minded farmer—whom I love so well. And further, by heaven, and by earth and by the prairie gumbo," thundereth the above (for the ex-Honorable Snob and for his right-trusty and well-beloved henchmen, feudatories, partisans and altruists), "those dominating devils from Dalhousie, colleaguing with their ilk across the fish-pond, their bleak, blue noses dripping condensed fog on the ribbons, etc., which hath been granted them for their adhesion, collusion, defusion, and self-abasement, to, with, in, through, and before, an effete, degenerate, and parasitical aristocracy, shall find that I, Snob, of the one indefinite and one unfixed eye, with my feudatories, etc., aforesaid, shall, through this elevator bunkum—except it be mine—gather into my ballot box—and, O Lord, let Thy servant be satisfied!—the entire Western vote. And ye shall see, ye haligonian and hell-born cod-fishers! that I, Snob, and feudatories, etc., artists, manipulators, and shifty side-steppers, missers by a noise of high Commissionerships, shall, in the day of retribution, cast ye out utterly, and shall sit in judgment upon you, and shall say to all that politically-adulterous, lying brood which compounded a felony and committed a whoredom with that Jezebel, the recalcitrant Liberal abomination, 'Depart from me, ye cursed! *I never knew ye!*'" Commend me to the Scripture and King James's translation, for the genuine, and to the Smithsonian-Davidian-Dodgerian papyrus (smacks of fossils, ha!) and the Franconian Cocks' Teehee, for a rattling imitation of real—invective. Apart from this there is no doubt that the Tory party—one wing, a draggled wing, reminiscent of the chicken coop and a wet

day—under the ex-Honorable Snob are out to carry the country—if they can. Their slogan is in type they know the efficacy of—simple things; as witness a famous trifle, "You gotta quit kicking my dawg aroun'." So these have their's—primal, elemental, synchronized and civilized, deep as death and high as heaven.

One, two, buckle my shoe;
Put me in power, and I'll skin you.

But here we are. The Dr., LL.D., D.D., Petrius the Banker—local net of the Great Chartered Fishermen whose seines cover land as well as sea; Barry, the young chap and myself, sitting in the library, fifteen by fifteen; things in Europe looming black and blacker for us talking things over. The Dr. has walked in in his slippers; he is no formalist, except for truth; so, you see, he's odd. His slippers (half the world's knowledge walks in them) are the wild hideous plaid—insult to Highland tradition; plaid is for the posteriors mostly—of Scotchmen; hut for the feet (Irish or other)—fearful! "Lord in the day of judgment try 'em!" But they are plaid, with felt soles; and such as were sold once for a nickel each (subterfuge, how sweetly foolishly-human thou art!) at Dullworth's Dumping Emporium (unpaid labor and sweat somewhere) before the war. The feet inside of those slippers, in wool socks (not Llamma cottonized) are working like an infant's; the regulation, fashionable style of factory foot-gear has not yet atrophied nature's and his mother's bequest. His hands, small, white, firm, well-knit and nervous, are clearly a workman's in the last generation. He is not big physically—standard-medium, only—till he begins to talk. The head—well, Moore's

head, a most poetical one; was, and is, a puzzle to phrenologists and blunderers of that breed. And the Dr.'s—this is absolute—is a puzzle to, well, to Ancient Frostner, who figures world-trade in one cent dimensions; to Dad Burden, whose political rocking-horse (though silently on the Government rag-carpet) is jiggling on its wooden legs, with its sheep's-skin bridle burst; to Smart Mean, the rising—(uses Fleishman's, I guess)—young statesmen, who polotices from the pulpit to the chagrin of perishing Liberal castaways (struggling for a hand-or toe-hold), who cannot even "assume a virtue," and to the disgust of religion's, privileged caste of the upturned eyes and rotund tummies; and to the delight of the devil, who does so much admire a devout hypocrite. To these the Dr. is a conundrum; but to Jack, from whom he buys his tobacco (though no one ever sees him smoke), and to me, who has fraternized with the pick and shovel boys, the sand-hogs, some judges, a few professors (the infinite Ira among others), elbowed many politicians—no kings as yet (and small chance now)—"lights out," "cease fire"—the Dr. is just an open book. With us, and perhaps with Petrius the Banker off his job, the doctor sinks his subjective censor, unclasps his volume, and lets the breezy gusts of converse ruffle the leaves as they listeth. Petrius, (local net), is a native Canadian gentleman, something that you don't trip over in this Canada of ours—now, you rough-necks, don't flare up and cut loose a Gatineau-valley inundation of profanity to prove that I'm correct. You don't have truth thrown at you every day for a two-dollar bill, so take your medicine and meditate; and this gratis: for God's sake, don't get it into your nut that a

banker, a barber, a tailor and a shoe-black—Jew, Greek, Jabberer, and Jew—make a gentleman. Gentleman is a thing of very opposite derivation. In England, they are begotten, swaddled, nurtured and polished on the imported virtues, riches, luxuries, and arts of the world. In Ireland, they flourish indigenous on buttermilk and potatoes, with an occasional herring by way of attic salt; and therein, perhaps, eugenics—though hunger may squirm a little—might take a header into profound, abstruse deduction re the Irish exportation of the hog. In Scotland—I couldn't forget Sandy!—well, those boys are mostly bankers, ministers, church or other,—worshippers of Burns; ha! pawkie philosophers; and they went "over the top" so often, singing, "Didst thou see—and hear—that, O God?"—the Plough Boy's songs that there's little left of which to make gentlemen. But still, I think—though I'm neither anti-Rothschild nor anti-Isaacs—that there's hope in the gentlemanly direction for "Puir Auld Scotland" yet: because the Jew, worming up the alley-ways of all nations, furtive, insistent, irrepressible could find "no resting place for the sole of his foot" in Caledonia. Not intimating that he is a dove; he seems rather a vulture and sticks round the carrion; though whether that is his fault or ours, or the result of suggestion and the wailing propaganda of his ancient prophets, is more than I can determine. The world is out to solve some big problems, and will look into this also if she gets time, and commerce does not once more clamp her in the sweat-shop. Let's get back a little. Of the young lieutenant—dubbed thus by the great Winnipeg mushroom military-text compilers—there is not much to say.

"Liberally educated," that is, took what he wanted, leaving the rest; has a quirk for mechanics and a thirsty desire, desperate as a drunkard's, to see, get into, and lay open the interior of a new machine. New things—machines, whether mechanical or mental—rouse in him curiosity that pushes reverence for paints and specialists aside; can listen in this company and speak briefly when he wants, having always, despite his mechanics, a clear-cut appreciation and quiet tolerance of human wits and weaknesses. He is in uniform. A few young fellows like him and numerous old fellows, round-shouldered with the world's burden, but huddled into catch-as-catch-can uniforms, are "on guard at the elevators," and serve as an excuse for Colonel Small and Major Smaller to draw their pay and—field allowance and—ration allowance and—motor allowance and—transportation allowance—though both are industriously prosecuting, in uniform (it looks so cute and becomes the patriot) their civil occupations. Doubtless, if they have a mishap and crack a leg or their skull—delicate trifles invite fractures—they'll get (God bless the Government) an allowance for that, too; and possibly, if they have pull enough—and it does look mighty strong—they'll get a "total disability pension" and a job like that good patriot and gallant gentleman, Rabbatt—accent on the last syllable, please. But perhaps they will show themselves superior to such petty grafting; there are several ways of plucking a goose and of cooking it after you have it plucked; also there are numerous ways of making payments if you are unscrupulous enough. One way, to illustrate, is for the disburser to pay the creditor cash and have said creditor endorse a blank

cheque, disburser retaining same, filling out the amount later, and passing it on to the Government for liquidation. Careful, boys. Don't get peeved. Affidavits can be produced when asked for. Great men, really great men, pay small attention to rules and laws. Caesar liquidated his high jinks expenditures in Spanish bullion; that was the Roman-Caesarian way. He also, with some swords and legions, recruited regularly, liquidated imperialism into the rich fallows of Freedom. He set a high value on the use of cash, and showed to many an apeing student who has followed him since that cash is the best interpreter of law. Napoleon liquidated Josephine's extravagance from his Italian army's war chest. He never had any debts of his own to speak of; so you see he was only a soldier and a decent chap; but you perceive the parallelism, disregard of the law, though it might be offered in Nap's extenuation that women will drive a man to almost anything—drink included, where there's no prohibition. The idea of this disquisition is that the great, being examples to mankind, it follows that they are imitated by the near-great, the Churchills, Augereaus, etc., they in turn by the near-near-great and so on down, through the mediocre, the small, the smaller, and the infinitesimal, till the very atoms and dregs of humanity are corrupted, bedevilled, diseased, putrescent; in plain language, rotten as Billy be damned, a heap of sweltering maggots, each maggot maggotted—like Swift's fleas—till imagination not "destruction sicken," and you pick up your immediate load at the very spot where you laid it down and go on again. Which brings us to the end of this discursive chapter and the opening of the next.

CHAPTER X

"They deem it rank and daring treason
Against the monarchy of Reason."

"You have exaggerated the fiction that fed you till the simplest minds see what a fraud it is."

"Well, K.C.," said the Doctor, "things are going badly with us in France." "No, Doctor," I replied, "you know better than that; old Lars always has to heat and hammer the steel before he dips it gingerly and waits for the straw color, when it is plunged in sizzling and pulled out cold, and ready for the rock." "Perhaps, Dad," said the Lieutenant, "the Doctor is not familiar with tempering a piece of steel." The Doctor laughed merrily—sometimes he talks cynically, but he never laughs that way—and replied, "Not physically, perhaps, but theoretically I know the old metaphor. No, we're not sufficiently beaten yet." "Well, Doctor," said Petrius, "how long is it going to take?" "How long? A few years." "But, Doctor, the world's finances can't hold out that long." "Petrius," said I—I like to shock a banker, even if he is a gentleman, which so few of them are (excuse me, boys)—"finance cuts no figure in this game. Your institutions have paper and a printing press and there's no end of pulp wood. Forget it." "But there's the gold reserve to cover the note circulation, and it must be maintained at the legal ratio." "What is the legal ratio, Petrius? Sixty per cent?" I asked. "Par-

don me, Petrius," said the Doctor, "the ratio is merely arbitrary, and can be legally increased or reduced; so that means nothing in the present cataclysm. Besides, our internal debt can be pyramided without end, and we have perhaps enough gold and goods to maintain our credits with the neutrals for years." "Even at that, Doctor," said I, "this same pyramid, is it not an inverted one, standing on it's peak on the mere crust of credit?" "The metaphor will pass," said he, "in a way; but credit is the real foundation of all exchange; the medium, whether gold or aught else, is worthless except for convenience." Petrius began to show us, as the interested ones and their dependents have done for ages, that gold and her silver sister have the stabilizing virtue of maintaining rates of exchange between national dealers in commodities. "But," asked the Lieutenant, who is no economist, "are not the goods the nations exchange the fundamental bases of even the gold values?" "Lieutenant," laughed the Doctor, "it is evident that you know nothing of finance; how could commerce take her toll unless she had gold and paper?" "Yes," said I, "if she tolled like a country miller she couldn't store it all, nor could she discount next year's crop before it is grown. Finance, as we know it, Doctor, is an exploded fiction; the big guns in France have blown it into the abyss. What I would like to know from you and Petrius, one a banker and the other a student, is how and with whom are we contracting our immense debt?" "Well, K.C.," replied the banker, "we are paying it for shells, for ships, equipment, uniforms, blankets, for food for the armies." "There you have it," said the Doctor, "you see what we

are paying for." "Come, Petrius," said I, "finish; to whom do we owe the debt?" "Why, K.C., what are you after? Undoubtedly we owe it to the men who furnished us with these things." "Come, again, banker," said the Doctor. "I want information; specify, not individually, but in a general way, to whom we owe the money? That's what you want, K.C., is it not?" "Something like that, Petrius; let's have it." "Well," replied Petrius, "it's not difficult; the banks, the trust companies, insurance companies advance the credits——" "In the way of notes," I interjected. "to the great manufacturers, munition makers, food-stuffs companies, and with these credits——" "Promises to pay," I interjected, again. Petrius laughed kindly. "You forget the gold reserve and the responsibilities to the shareholders and the country." "No," said the Doctor, smiling, "K.C. has not forgotten these; let's get on." "Well," continued Petrius, "these loans, until they are repaid, constitute the debt; and as the transactions in this cataclysm—yours, Doctor—are tremendously large, the debts are correspondingly immense." "Nonsense, as I see it," said I. "But, Petrius," exclaimed the Doctor, warming a little, "if I loan you a bushel of wheat or a million bushels of wheat and repay the one bushel or the million bushels, as the case may be, is not the debt cancelled?" "Surely, Doctor." "Well, then, where do we get the debt?" "Because the loans, as I have already said, are not repaid." "We are getting on," laughed I, while the Doctor continued, "Let's take this loan which you have made to your customer. Let us say it is for wheat or shells, it's quite indifferent; did you pay for more

of these than you received?" "Doctor, you're joking." lnughed Petrius. "Fnr from it," answered the LL.D., "did you pny for more shells nnd wheat than you received?" "We couldn't lonn to a customer of that kind very long," laughed the banker. "But," this with some show of impatience, "do your customers pay for more of these than they receive?" "Certainly not, Doctor." "Very well, now; they then resell them?" "Undoubtedly." "Do they sell nt less than they paid for them?" "That is not business, sir—you know—pshaw, it looks foolish for me to tell you this, but you know a customer makes a profit on his transactions." "Let's stick to our lnst," said the direct Doctor; "do they sell at less thnn they gave for them?"

"No, sir." "Very well, now. Having sold, do they collect?" "Well, Doctor, yes, in the main, though their sales nny he uncollected for a time; this is one phnse of the extension of credit." "This, of course," said the Doctor, "is not a court; you are neither under oath nor compulsion—fnte and free will for the moment nside" —laughing a wicked laugh, which may be classed as either douhle-damned or divinity Doctor's. "But let us get on. It's not an argument; it's not even a discussion; no one here cnres a button whether we do or do not dispel an illusion. Surely thnt's agreed?" "Agreed." "Very well, now, let's drop the extension phnse of it, that's nir; they collect, thnt's business." "Yes, sir." "And they repay you your loan?" "The loan is repaid." "And the debt, whnt of the debt at this point?" "Sir," said the banker, "there's a fallacy hidden here somewhere." "I think there is," said I. "I'm positive of it," said

the Doctor; "let's discover where it is. To sum up, you loan a million, say; your customer buys shells or wheat, either or both, it's labor in any case; he sells them and collects and repays the loan. It's a simple process. Now, a step further; to whom does he sell it?" "To the British Government, of course." "And they pay him?" "Well, Doctor, we're being asked as a Dominion to do our share of the financing, and we are extending credits to the Imperial Government by furnishing them with our wheat and shells." The Lieutenant butted in at this point. "It looks as if there were a hole in your collections here." "No," said the Doctor, "we are still correct as far as the payments are concerned." "Perhaps I'll get it later," said the Lieutenant. "Now, then," said the Doctor, "we had your million cancelled a moment since by the repayment of the loan. But to clear this credit extension of the Dominion to the Imperial Government, what happens when the Imperial Government, getting wheat or shells or both from your customer, is unable to pay, or in other words asked you to defer collection?" "They give their receipt for it." "Yes, and then?" "The receipts are deposited with us." "Cancelling your loan, as far as your customer is concerned?" "No, not exactly; the customer is still responsible." "But," said the Doctor, "it is clear, is it not, that it would be impossible to collect from your customer; he expended the credit you gave him, secured his wheat and shells or both, turned them over to the Imperial Government, took their receipt, which he handed to you; the Imperial Government have the material; you have the receipt; your payments must come from them; there

is no alternative. As a matter of fact the receipt is your security and the Imperial promise to pay." "That is the position, but we still hold the customer." "Well," replied the Doctor, "I am going to loosen your hold upon this customer, if I can." "Impossible, Doctor." "Well, let us try. This customer, having carried through this one transaction of a million on your credit, you having the receipt therefor does he cease business at this point?" "No, Doctor, the operations are continuous." "That is, you are from time to time making additional loans, and from time to time obtaining additional receipts?" "Exactly." "What, at a fair estimate, would be the ratio of your customer's assets to the amount of his transactions—for a year, say?" "Very small, of course; possibly less than five to one hundred." "So that, as far as security is concerned, you have only the Imperial Government. We may eliminate the customer. Are you agreed?" "Legally, we hold him." "Doubtless, but he is eliminated in fact." "I don't admit that." "You cannot collect from him." "There is, Doctor, in addition to his assets, his profits." "Ah, you mean his profits on the wheat and shells?" "Yes." "How much, approximately?" "Ten to thirty per cent; sometimes more." "Where are they deposited?" "They are included in the receipts." "Which you hold?" "Which we hold." "Very well, now. Included in the receipts also is the bank's profit on the loan." "Yes." "Does the interest cease when you get the receipts?" "To the customer, yes; to the Imperial Government, no." "We are at this point then—tell me if I put it wrong—that your loan of a million, loaned for a year, let us say,

comes hack to you in the shape of the Imperial Government's receipt for one million, plus the bank's profit of 8 per cent., plus the customer's profit of 20 per cent., a total of one million two hundred and eighty thousand?" "The figures are right, but the profits, of course, vary." "Well," replied the Doctor, "I took (except for the bank interest) only the average of your two figures. The variant would be higher; am I right?" "It's a surety, Doctor, that you nail one to his statements." "My dear fellow," laughed the Doctor, "as we set forth at the beginning, this is no court; you may make any correction in your figures of speech or profits or interest that you choose, and we will proceed on that basis. Did you make your statements too hastily; do you wish to make any change?" "No, Doctor, it is unnecessary; the figures are near enough." "In the big centres they'd be grotesquely low," said I. "The bigger the higher," laughed the Lieutenant. "Then, as we are agreed," proceeded the Doctor, "let us see if there is a way out. If we *sell* to the Imperial Government, *we* have no *debt there*. We have, in fact, a balance in our favour of two hundred and eighty thousand on a million dollar transaction, interest accruing on the whole till it is liquidated. Yet we are piling up an enormous debt—it's millions now and will be billions before the war is over. How is it being done, and to whom do we owe it?" "As to owing billions," said the banker, "it's absurd, Doctor. How could it be repaid?" "I'm not interested in the payment just now," replied the Doctor, "but I'll make a prophecy at this point,—it will be billions; not many, of course, because a billion takes a deal of spending—

but I say it will be billions, and that those who think they earned it will make a desperate effort to consolidate and collect. Now, another thing—though its anticipating—let me say that these billions will not be spent, are not being spent—they merely represent your own and your customer's profit on the material consumed and blown away. Let us pass this for a moment and resume our elucidation, and progress a little, if we can." "If we can," I repeated. "Our time is our own," said the Doctor, and continued, "We see that the Imperial Government's debt paid immediately or suspended and drawing interest is a credit and not a part of our debt; therefore, the indebtedness must be elsewhere. Mr. Banker, we need your help. Where is it?" "Doctor," replied our financier (and he's all right and knows his business), "I was so hazy in regard to its location at first that I had better study the subject before I offer further apparent information." "K.C." said the Doctor, "where is it?" "I know very well where it is," said I. "Tell us, please." "The debt is due from ourselves to ourselves; if we pay, we are poorer by the amount we disburse and richer by the amount we receive. If we don't pay we are poorer by the amount of the default and richer by the same amount. What saith the financiers to this?" "Ah, the financiers say this: the debt is due by a majority of the people to a minority of the people, i.e., to the said financiers. So your paradox is dissipated." "The fate of all paradoxes, Doctor, is it not?" "But," said the Lieutenant, "since you have stated to whom we owe it, will you not show us, Doctor, how it is incurred?" "I will. When the war started, certain of our citizens

had Capital, that is, Reserve Funds, Notes, Gold, Mortgages, Promises to Pay; that's what every security means in the last analysis. Do you dispute that, Petrius?" "Not at all, Doctor." "Are you agreed, K.C., and you, Lieutenant?" "Go on, Doctor," I answered. "These promises to pay, it is understood, can be changed for commodities, or even for another promise to pay. Now then, the country goes to war; we require all the material that war uses; it is unnecessary to specify it. This material is in the country; that is self-evident, or we could not supply it. So far, clear. We do supply it, retaining enough to feed and clothe and shelter us. The army consumes our food supplies and munition supplies; these are gone, destroyed, lost; we can give them no more than we have; we cannot, for instance, feed them this year on next year's crop. We can supply only to the limit of what is immediately available, and we do that. But this material must be mobilized and delivered. Who does it?" "The trading and carrying companies," said Petrius. "Quite right," said the Doctor. "In what way?" "Their factories, their railway and steamboat lines." "Still perfectly correct. Who operate these lines?" "The employees." "Well, you see," said the Doctor, "that we are getting back to that indefinite thing known as the People." "But they must be paid," said the banker. "I have taken care of that," replied the Doctor. "Not yet," said the banker. "Petrius, are you drunk or asleep?" "Sir!" replied the banker, "I don't like your remarks." "Well," retorted the Doctor, "are you drunk or asleep?" "Doctor, I don't like your remarks."

reiterated Petrius, hurt and angry. "Oh, well," answered the Doctor, as if it were a petulant child he addressed, "I withdraw them then, *but* I do not wish to be controverted on a question of fact that every child should know. I say I have taken care of that when I said we retained enough to feed, clothe, and shelter ourselves." "Pardon me, sir," said Petrius, "the form confused me." "It's nothing, my good sir," said the Doctor; "let us get on. We are now at this point: we have sent our army, we have fed and supplied it. Those at home have worked and have been fed. But—" "Yes, but," I repeated. "This is the point to which we have gotten. That having done these things, we are in debt for doing them. The wheat, through it was grown, mobilized and delivered by the people; the shells, though mined, smelted, moulded and delivered by the people, have been the means of piling up an overwhelming debt. How? Your customer, Petrius—we start with the loan again—gives you his note, his promise to pay, for your note, your promise to pay. With these promises to pay, given to the people, in the amount, mark you, necessary to feed, clothe, and shelter them, that is, facilitate the exchange of labour, they furnish the materials to the Governments, Imperial or Dominion, who reimburse your customer with another promise to pay, and, in addition, they promise him a profit, and this profit represents the debt, to be redeemed in a commodity by the people when the profiteer shall present his paper. Does it seem clear?" "Not quite, Doctor." said the banker. "Well, let me put it in another way. The Government makes nothing. Is that clear?" "Admitted, Doctor." "The Government keeps nothing.

Is that clear?" "Certainly, sir." It's function, then, is to receive the material from the people, and see to it that your customer, it's agent, gets a toll or profit out of the process. That profit constitutes the debt. You are still dubious, Petrius?" "Yes, sir, I am." "Well, let me put it still another way. The Government collects from the majority and transfers it to the minority."

"I don't follow it fully." "Well, let us demonstrate it still another way. If the Government took this material direct from the people—and, mark you, the people must be fed and housed and clothed or you can get nothing—and threw it directly into the sea (and war is the sea), could there be any result save waste?" "I can admit that," said the banker. "But," asked the Doctor, "do you wish to deny it? I want no unwilling concessions." "Doctor, it is self-evident." "And there would be no debt incurred in this destruction?" "None that I can see, Doctor." "Very well, now. Can you, then, satisfy yourself that our debt is due to anyone but the middleman, your customer (with a trifle to yourselves, no doubt), to the profiteer." "Doctor, I'm satisfied, but I'm afraid we're hooked." "Yes, old chap," said I, "we're hooked—till hunger kicks loose the traces. Doctor, did you ever see a real, downright balker and kicker out loose?" "No, K.C., I haven't." "Yes, Doctor, I have, and I'll tell you something; it cost more to make them work than they earn while they will work." "Well, that is apt enough. You, of course, are thinking of the overload; but there are limits, you know, to the power of paper." "Yes," said the Lieutenant, "it seems to me that the debt merely means the power to

feed on next year's crop—when it grows. But what will they do if the crop does not grow?" "K.C.," laughed the Doctor, "you know what they'll do." "Yes," I answered. "They'll dine (heartily, let us hope) on their promise to pay, their commodity in suspension or course of arrival." "Dad," said the Lieutenant, "you are joking; but I'm serious. If the food vendor says, 'Sirs, I respect your promise to pay, but I have not the food to exchange for this paper,' what then, Doctor?" "Your father has just said it; eat the paper." "Come, Petrius," he continued, "let us go home; it's eleven-fifty. Good night, all." "Doctor!" "Yes, K.C." "Don't forget to jolt the Honourable Lieutenant-General Slam. Good night."

CHAPTER XI

"Dispensed with and tossed idly by."
"On the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports invite."

I didn't hear from Slam, though I had thought the army wouldn't stand to wait for me a minute when they knew I would come. To be honest, I thought that infernal army of ours needed a few workmen who weren't out to holiday, but to lick the Hun. I knew fairly well how it was scratched together and officered by real estate sharks, busted jewellers, newspaper trimmers, grain scalpers, friends of politicians' friends and friends of theirs, punk engineers out of a job and glad to get away from the bum work they had done, insolvent "rising citizens" (per the foot-pedalled "Special Daily Booster") —you know, the kind that hit the town, "to look it over," accompanied by one grip, decide to locate—and run an account with the struggling local haberdasher, instead of sending for their trunk, "just to encourage business." Certainly, our army was made, as Kelly used to make the pancakes—in a hell of a hurry and stirred with a stick. Kelly—this was in a construction camp—used to crack into his batter odd job lots of "left-over" corn (canned corn) just to get rid of it and clean up. The party heelers were the job lots, or giblets, the canned stuff; the good citizens, like myself (and they were batted all right) were the batter; and Slam and the government (let's not forget the government, though he did) was "the

stick," or what my mother-in-law, as dear, as good, as kind a Scotch woman as ever lived, called the "parritch spurtle." The jiblets, joblets, or heelers (it's a mixed metaphor, anyway) still kept sticking out like the corn in Kelly's pancakes: the devils were so light and had so little specific gravity that they naturally came to the top, like scum or froth or the grease (before they made butter of it) on Chicago's hand-made river, in a Sam Browne, leggings, and spurs—occasionally upside down; that is, the spurs. But war, and especially battles (there were lots of ginks in the war who were not in the battles) is like Kelly's bohunks, a hungry guy (shuffle the plurals and singulars for yourself and then eat), and a few corn pebbles or carbuncles or a chunk or two of hog-rind won't stick in his throat. So heaps of these boys in the Sam Brownes and leggings, "poor useless souls," got away from the schools by the help of their friends and a few beans, stuck—they had plenty of courage, witness their graves—to the batter, as it were (pancake again) and went down the interminable crane-like sink hole of the ravening Mars as Niagara, out of harness, gallops down the gorge. Some of them, "god wot," with spurs (Mars draws the line mostly at spurs) couldn't even cling to the parent, the foster-parent batter (pancake once more) too clear of the matrix—detached like,—fire has a shrinking, loosening effect, and as some of the corn on its passage to the bohunk's mouth from his plate (a granite one) on his knife, mostly, used to skiddle off and miss annihilation or consumption by falling on the floor and under the table, so some of the Sam Browne, unadhesive, non-stick chaps (greased politically, I guess),

travelling from the plate or depot on the sword of Mars —that's the weapon the old boy carves his beef and picks his teeth with—skiddled off (oh, mercy) on the way to his gargantuan grinders and gullet, and fell (gracious heaven!) into a staff job, a town majority, a salvage corps, or some other safety-first haven, where they became O.B.E.'s, D.S.O.'s, "gallant patriots," and "veteran soldiers" under the table—pardon me, on the fire-fringe —of the great war. Some of our officers (I'm not talking to you chaps who went over and did your jobs; you know what you did, how you did it, and what damn little thanks and appreciation you got for doing it—so count yourselves out), some of our officers ("Methinks I see them yet"), though that's only a mental vision; they are invisible, but all the same I shall see them; they are still as "safe as a church" that the Hun couldn't get at, and will reappear, jubilant, conspicuous, oratorical, rampant, with the "dove of peace" in their teeth—"Curse her for a white-livered fowl"—her feathers strewing like a hen roost, their swelling ambitious chests and their swords—slip there, *riding crops*—bared in condescending, heroical salute to an adoring, worshipping, punk-paper-prompted public. Some of our officers (well, well, I must be soldierly; I must not play capers with the K.R. and O.; *I* am a Capting myself, though the military mistakes at Snottawa tabulated me as a mere "Loot," as "Boob" called it. Still, the tiddle-de-wink majors, who drank tea so often (brave ones!) with the blushing girls, doing their bit in the Red Cross booths around the old Permanent Imposition building, and who quaffed champagne in the big hostelries with their visiting cousins (dozens of them)

come to bid them in fond embrace last tearful farewells, (years ahead of time), and allowed by the condescending hotel authorities grief's liberties and the run of the rooms—these majors said they made me a Capting, but, being punk workmen and their job being only a military veneer, maybe it didn't stick. However, that's a small matter; there were more Captains than there were jobs, and I'd just as lief be a corporal as a captain when I wasn't working at it. Well, as I said a little to the rear, Slam hadn't handed on my name as ousting Alderson, at least, that I had heard; and he hadn't thrown a thunderbolt my way, by wire or by letter nor military runner. I had got rid of the surgeons, who, after an hour and a half of chloroforming and cutting and restitching, had determined to let me come back instead of collecting from the insurance companies. So here I was, twenty-five thousand and accruing interest swallowing me and my baggage in a block, as the Boa Constrictor in the Swiss imitation of DeFoe swallowed the ass, and no military succor-nothing, but the infernal interest-bearing bowels, non-compassionate, and hell's and the devil's waste of purposeless idleness. I fell to cursing Slam (and, as Old Man Barry said, "Oh, didn't I curse") and his iniquitous bunch of uniformed imposters. He and the Government, of which he was the armoured head and front, began to look, *to me*, like the crippled skates that Harris lets hang on to fill up when there is a temporary scarcity of dead ones. Then I began to reason it out that perhaps Slam, in the fullness of his heart and the desire to be rid of my objectionable contractor's carcase, had promised more than his purpose, that he had not intended to remembe

me, and that I was no more from a military view than was the costly (eleven thousand per Batt.) creaking stuff that our boys creaked overseas in, and which was ditched for the Webb equipment. I concluded, also, that from a "military viewpoint" (the tiddle-de-winks stuff, you see, was hypnotizing us all) I was certainly a joke: I as yet could "salute" neither by numbers nor by letters. I couldn't "'slum" nor "form fours," wherein to excel you must first become—(not for Christian, but for fiercely anthetical purposes, merciless, annihilating, savage), "as a little child." Half a dozen chaps had written Slam about me: a Professor, a Great Man, an Engineer, a Lawyer, a Government Commissioner, an M.P., and a Soldier—one of those boys who are crackers in a scrap and cry "sick-'im." "Nothin' doin'." Pioneer corps were in embryo, but the chaps to "marshal them to knavery," or the trenches, or the excavating thereof or therein, were thicker than flies in an empty sugar barrel back of the grocery (you've seen them—no!) and just as busy, buzzing and dirtying every stave, hoop and sliver, and were pre-empting everything in their fly-cy way, from corporalities up; and to change the simile (and take a bath) here was I, like a loose scow, drifting, tugless, and every minute expecting to have my bilge ripped open and be sunk by the big cargo-carriers, "churning deep-laden by" and blowing off Government steam. I talked it over down at Jack's drug store, at the back, where we postulate and philosophize among the Latin abbreviations, bottles, demi-johns, and the inspiring reek of Columbia and Empire war cigars. Jack is a partizan of Slam's on a couple of counts, and he thought if I had

a turn at the school and was graduated by the tiddle-de-winks majors that Sam might be induced to take a second look at me; besides, when we were having our heads beaten off and the Gothic rats had gnawed Belgium to a tattered fringe, he was of opinion that they wanted workmen over there, fellows with the outdoor eye, used to handling men and getting something done, and not chaps whose vocations and training had fixed their entire mentality in the direction of living in the easy spots of life, getting safe away and letting the other fellow sweat for it. This was not, of course (and I'm making no apologies), so much a particular as a general summation—heaven help the army if it had been the first—but it held and still holds good. "Very well, now." The Winnipeg School, the little-child attitude, the dropping overboard all your dunnage, and landing on the rough shore of military instruction, nude, and at the mercy of the natives—that seemed the conclusion; but you must first apply to Colonel Small for his validation and soldierly benediction before you land, and butt around among the aristocratic directors of the killing companies. Man, desperate with the desire to get killed patriotically and thereby consolidate the swag of the profiteers, will descend to almost any grovelling depths. I passed the Doctor, a sharp, short chap, with a keen eye for the straw-colour of Scotch, and fit cannon-fodder. The Colonel knew my age better than my mother; she had made a mistake of four years, so with a sigh of relief—years don't seem so heavy till lifted with a pen—I find myself, not a grand-dad (bless your heart, little namesake with the yellow curls), but a young, fit rookie of forty-

three, mortgages suddenly in the background, an aspirant for a Lieutenancy, a Captaincy, Majority, and then, swiftly, after a half-hour spent as Lieutenant-Colonel, (too many of these guys) shot, not by a bullet nor seniority, but by overwhelming merit, to an army corps command, and then, like Pyrrhus and his imaginary conquests, finally Field-Marshal, Generalissimo, the Hun sent home (can't kill 'em all—where'd we collect the indemnity?) with his trousers dusted—and peace, and then the gray-haired lady with the glasses and her little grandson—and the Mortgage. Daun that mortgage. I was born with a horror of that and of snakes, which proves my nationality, and proves also something else —that the Irish are fools. They have neither snakes nor mortgages. But I'm not in Ireland, and have become dignified with the possession of a dispossession, never dreamt of by my indigent forefathers.

"You will report Sunday at the Pullman Block, Winnipeg. Your transportation, etc., will be furnished Saturday afternoon. The train goes west at eleven-thirty." "Thank you." Ha! ye gods! I'm in the war! War! Tremble! thou rapester of civilization, destroyer of Louvain, trampler and terrorizer of helpless, shrinking, budding womanhood (hooked to the plough in kerchief, petticoats, and wooden boots)! Take note, thou bloody superman! nurtured on the yellow, festering philosophy of Nietzsche, said philosophy spawned in a coward's fear, under the table where his husky frau (not husbanded like Xantippe either—Socrates had a courage and power that time and armies crumble against) had driven him with her broom, like the snarling cur he was.

Shiver, thou poor, docile, hypnotized nation with thy Verbotens!—begorra, did ye hear that?—lese majeste; now, wudn't that bate the divil?—fat, well fed, comfortably housed, obedient (too much so), yet soulless (except of the sauerkraut kind), without which soul, flesh, and blood will be these merely and found themselves upon the maw.

And thou, England! Mistress of the Seas and Benevolent Tax-Collector in many lands! thou flaming (yet shaken a little; the shock was so sudden and terrible), righteously indignant o'er "violated Belgium," o'er "inhumanities," "atrocities," "cynical machiavellisms" (thou having grown almost wholly beyond the need of these). Thou, England! rejoice in a new recruit, *and* in thy sturdy, stolid, unconquerable Tommies, who know how to smile and die, hating only, and scarcely these "'Ymns of 'ate." Sleep, gallant lads from the downs and uplands, from the cramping factories and the lungless cities where they tried so hard to crush the hearts and enduring souls out of you, and luckily failed. Sleep, wrapped in your indomitable memories, immortal, though unnamed, as the Thermopylean heroes. While the sun rises and sets upon this earth, while Ocean, fetterless, thunders his diapason of liberty against the white cliffs that you died to hold inviolate, the Seer, conscious, as you were, of the swanking incompetence that wasted you by the hundred thousand, turning your page of history, shall honour it with a heart-thrill and a tear. Carry on!

CHAPTER XII

"Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul."

"Blow till thou burst thy wind."

I wonder how many working hours have been squandered by scribblers in meditating the precise, proper, and effective beginning of each new chapter. It is idle, methinks, to attempt the computation, and would but stagger the mind were the thing accomplished, and, as at this stage of this history, the mind must be clear, stripped of its ancient cobwebs, where old ideas, like dead flies, hang mummified, awaiting Spring or Pythagoras, or the spiderous plagiarist, let's drop the speculation, plus the computation, and in a driving or driven snowstorm land at the Pullman Block (owner a friend of the Government—the Government dotes on friendly landlords) and pass our credentials to an orderly sergeant, who glances them over and snaps, "Report to-morrow nine a.m. at the Horse Show building. Good-day, sir." Back to the Royal Alex., built on the prairie model for spaciousness and productiveness, and register for the hundredth and 'steenth time. "Bath, K.C.?" asks the clerk; he knows me, and I'm not hurt. Phil and I have looked them over long before the C.P. saw his merits, and we are on familiar terms. Everybody is encouraged to make up to the clerks at the Royal hostelry; the dazzling glamour of the world-encircling system clothes its clerks, day and night, in an auroreal effulgence inside of which the con-

tractor, whole, half, or quarter-section farmer and commercial traveller feels as if he were one of the Company's rich directorate, and spends like them for a day, as said spenders' funds evaporate, as indicated by the slackening pace, the listless indifference to fifty-cent cigars and five-dollar dinners; the borealis wanes till only plain, starry night—prompter of solitary and profound meditation (with the furtive counting of cash)—settles over the "transient guest"; and he grabs his grip and beats it for a friend's room in a block somewhere (a poker game, with matches), and at midnight, in the Venice or other Allied catering-house, a piece of raisin pie and a glass of milk—if your friend isn't broke, which he usually is. But to-day that stuff is en somnolence. To-morrow, at nine a.m., at the Horse Show building, we begin the Circuit of the War Circle, which, if we are not blown to bits at some point of it, will come back—doubtless a few flat segments and even reverse curves in it here and there—to the point at which we began, "Peace on earth, good-will to man," and a mortgage to the bank. Well, I should worry; that will be the world's case as well as mine. So, I laugh a merry ha-ha-ha, light a cigar, give the house-central a number, enter the telephone booth (coffin set on end), the door of which is held obsequiously open and deferentially closed by a jaunty boy in uniform, and in expectation of a tip. Hello! Yes; that you, Annie? Surely, I will. Certainly. Yes, Bill—no one else? Six weeks, I guess. Yes; I'm up to learn the art of war. Well, I'm not—Pardon, Central! So devilish ancient. Five o'clock. You bet. All right, Bill, I'll be there. The boy with the cap and chin straps such as

we wore in the Tenth Royals twenty-eight years ago, opens the door—a nickel to him, ten cents to the busy Central—and I relight my cigar and stroll down the rotunda, and run into—gad! they're all here. Tommy Holesworth of the Forty-Sixth, the Battalion that was lost, *forgotten* under the Winnipeg Exhibition grandstand, snowed under, I guess, and missed (none of the sports that way just now, these temperatures putting the kibosh on the can-can, etc.). Anyway, this bunch was lost, and, when found, shipped overseas to England, looked over, and then knocked down, like a circus, and the separated pieces sent to France to fill the deadly spaces in the Fighting Firsts. Poor Tommy, a whole-hearted, wholesome-looking Sub.—he has a grave in France, now—what was left of him; Lieutenant Smith, an old Militia man, a busy, active chap—not young—well-to-do, but bound to reach France and take me with him. Nature had handicapped him at the instep a little, but compensated him at the heart, so with the courage of his Cambrian sires, he halted to the fighting front and fell there. Major Lamontagne, the rough-featured soldier, did his bit, went east—and then west, like a good scout. Major Whillier, second in command, but a game old cock (I won't expose his age), for when his Battalion was wrecked into reinforcements he went with his teeth set to the Somme as a platoon commander, and came back with two perpendicular strips of gold braid on his cuff. Major Donaldson, the loose-limbed chap, broncho-buster written all over him (that, is to any gink who had ever seen the foothills), but not so to the cavalry instructor, who, when the major went, as in duty bound by the regu-

lations which make the machine, to learn to ride—save the mark!—and when set upon a hack, stiff as the wooden steeds that Johnny Hill sells the kiddies, told him that his seat was abominable, which Donaldson, after a half-hour's jolting, candidly admitted, telling the instructor though, that if he "had a real horse he could ride it." "But," said the cavalryman, "there's only one other mount available, and its all *I* can do to ride him." "That cuts no figure," replied Donaldson; "those kind are my meat." He was passed as qualified. The Major resented his Battalion being shot to pieces by wooden "big guns," so he told them to go to—well, you can guess a rough-rider's phrase—and came back to Canada undecorated and untamed. Just now, however, disappointments and death are far away, as a soldier reckons time, and I am introduced by my friends to their friends, and am invited to their messes (a rotten word), and to forthcoming farewell balls and little private parties where "You can sit in without being hurt," and so on, and on, and on, in such a whirl of soldierly good-fellowship and friendship that I wonder why I had not always been here, and why in blazes I had ever been anywhere else; and for a moment I glance mentally back, at the quicksand, sewers (killers if you can be killed), the roaring air drills in the half-lit tunnels, powder-gassed, dripping, with shattered walls and deadly roof. The deep foundations, with the labouring pumps sucking savagely to keep even with boiling seams, the hollow boom of the muckers' picks scintillating on the post-glacial detritus; the giant coffer dams, with their cracking ribs, quivering to the shock and thunder of the White Horse Rapids,

surging savagely and in wild conflict past, with their flaring, intermingling manes. Ah! the wild swirl of that tumultuous terror against our creaking bulwark, death leering over the spray-drenched rim of it as he thundered endlessly past, and,—rolling up through the river's wild roaring, the submerged boom of the huge limestone ledges, torn loose by the indignant passion of the deflected waters. My gallant French-Canadians, and my fearless native devils, hymned into life by the roar of the great cataract. Their faith and their smiles for me—ah, boys,—you could not hear them laugh amid that thunder; their anxiety to keep me out of the danger spots. Comrades! nothing in this world can ever equal that compliment. Some of you—. Then Niagara, part of it, harnessed, and in distant cities by the light that we had wrung from the river's soul, with patient toil, with fearless and fearsome risks, with exultation and fierce oaths, with lives blotted out—ah! the schoolboy at his home studies, grand-dad with his pipe, and grand-mother with her knitting, the nursing mother with earth and heaven in her lap; lovers, too, but they didn't want our light—they had celestial beacons not of earth nor of Niagara, which was flowing endless millions into the vaults of the profiteers. "Have a cigar, K.C.?" "Bah, blazes! it's the same old game here as we had there. Sure I will. To hell with them, and good luck to it." "I didn't catch that," said Smith. "No matter, Smithy," I laughed; "sometimes I say things not worth catching. Some boys, these." "Ain't they a great bunch." "They look the best ever," said I "And they're just that," said he. "I've spoken to

the Major," continued Smith (the Colonel of this Battalion didn't count), "and there'll be a place for you if you want it; here he is; tell him you'll be one of us." "Not yet, Smithy," I replied; "I want to get in on the work I know." "We'll take care of that," said Smith; "they'll want all the chaps like you that they can get. He's coming with us, isn't he, Major?" "That's for him to say, isn't it, Smith?" "What do you say, K.C.?" insisted my little friend. "I say this, Smith, my lad"—he was younger than I—"I'll dine with you to-morrow night, and right now I've to catch a car for Canora Street, or some good friends of mine will wring my hand till it hurts." "They'll do that, anyway, if Smith's a criterion," laughed the Major. "He thinks you're some guy." "That's the right word, Major; I think so, myself." "To-morrow night, then, is it?" said he. "Yes, sir." "I'll meet you here," said Smith, "and pilot you up. I can do that, can't I, Major?" "I thought you told me," laughed the Major, "that K.C. was an expert at finding a way." "Not recently, Major," said I. "Well," returned the Major, "Smith will be here"; and, after shaking hands with Lieutenants, Captains, Majors, and Colonels (these last, very dignified handelasps, as became a civilian), Smith accompanied me to the stairs and saluted. The chap in the Canadian Pacific uniform, who sees that the revolving doors don't get dizzy, looked me over as I went out, wondering, perhaps, if I were a General in disgust and taking a holiday in mufti. I mounted the first street car, which had some time starting—the snow still driving or being driven; maybe it was that, or maybe it was the Pinawa channel

plugged again. Some engineers will build a *head* race and compute it's capacity to a dot, and forget to dope out how much *tail* race is necessary to carry the water away. I landed at Bill's. "Old Bill" suits him, though he's but my age (easy, easy, now; that, for you), one of the heartiest, trustiest, loyalest friends a man ever had. Solid in his dimensions, like his English forbears. John Bull from his feet to his neck; above that, there is a head, and in that breast of his there is a heart to which the Irish fairy bequeathed her ineffaceable magic when a son of the Emerald Isle had, with besieging blarney, adroit and loving eloquence, overcome the prejudices of a lovely English girl (she'd have to be that to please a Paddy), and made her his wife and the grandmother of Bill. Some welcome. I think Perkins must have some of the Highlandman in him, too. Catches you by the hand and pulls you in through the door; and Annie, his wife (God love her) takes the left hand which I offer, Bill still holding the other, and clasps it tight, because she means it. Storming outside and twenty-five below, but there were no frost nor perfunctory icicles in Billy's bungalow. Bugalows smack of equatorial regions and heat, but no bungalow at the line shaded by the palms (a snake or two curled, hidden by, close and alert, like Satan) ever extended a warmer welcome than I received, and which still awaits me there. "Well, K.C., old boy, how are you?" "The very best, Bill, as Mac says." (Mac's asleep in France, now, too, where so many maple leaves, shrivelled by war's hell-blast, were swirled by the death-tempest into the shell-holes and covered with clay). "The very best, and you're hearty, I see." "And Aunt

Jean, and the little fellow?" "Fine, Annie, fine." "Is Karl still in England?" "Yes, Annie, a month ago." "And Bill, my namesake?" (This is the schoolboy; he is in uniform now, a sore touch for his mother, her youngest; but what would you have?) "Bill has his stripes now, and is playing tricks with his Colonel's ear." "Where is he?" "In Toronto yet." And Barry?" "He's on the Guard, and we'll let him stay there." "And you, K.C., you're here for the course, eh?" "That's it." "Well, we'll see lots of you." "Likely; there'll be night classes." "Mother, how's the dinner?" "Every thing ready, Will; but let K.C. sit down. Marjorie" —their married daughter—"will be here in a few minutes." "How is she and the little girl?" "Tip-top." "And Ernie?" (Marjorie's husband). "Out on the road; he'll be in this week." "Great. I'll see the scamp." Ernie was a friend of mine when there weren't too many of those kicking around, and I had got into court and the poor-box temporarily. That was when I met Bill, who was court reporter, and knew the truth when he heard it better than most judges. "Here they are now. Mother, the dinner!" "Oh, Will, they'll have to take off their coats." "All right, all right, mother," and in they came. Marjorie and her little girl. The little tot kisses me; five years old, she is, and we are good friends. Her mother would kiss me, too, and has done it, but I only permit that when her husband is present. Marjorie, with the unaffected ease of the native Winnipeg girl, shakes my hand, crying, "How are you, old Sport?" She knows her husband, and I suppose by that standard sizes up his friends. She and I are in a permanent

state of hostilities, and if either stick their head above the parapet, the other snipes at him or her, as the case may be; but, as yet, no fatalities. The dinner is all set, ample and hospitable; a turkey (costing more than a hundred pound hog did in our youth) decorates, in glistening, bronze magnificence, Bill's end of the table. Bill has me on his right front, next the carving knife, where he can (no deadly intent; the contrary, indeed) take care of me. It behooves these English boys to keep their eye upon the Irish. Marjorie sits on my right, where, when hostilities develop, we can enfilade each other. Annie, full-bosomed, Juno-like, with "Thisbe's grey eye or so," sits at the foot, or other head of the table, to superintend the ceremonies. Bill stands up to carve —Englishmen have been practising the art of Turkey-carving (in anticipation) for a long time now—and raises the knife and fork over the quiescent carcase, remorseless. He pauses a moment, looks sternly at Annie, and then at me, and then at his hands, what part of them is visible, and suddenly breaks forth in his most solemn court manner (he has seen and heard sentences of all kinds imposed—death and acquittal (it's all right)—and knows how to wear a judge's awful demeanour). "K.C.," he asks, "do you see this?" "What, Will?" "This damnable thing," trying with his head to indicate the smoking jacket he has on. I feel that I'm on thin ice. "Yes, Bill, it's fine; I have one like it that the girls sent me last Christmas." "Is it like this?" he solemnly demands, looking down at his submerged hands. "A good deal, Bill, I think. I'm not sure of the colour." "Well," he hissed, "these devilish women," looking

very sternly at Annie, "gave me this abomination, and, because you were coming, insisted on me wearing it." "That seems alright." "All right!" he thundered, looking again where the carving knife and fork were retreating to the dugouts after the hands. "K.C., Sport, contractor, I took your evidence once where were involved some sixty thousand dollars. I set you down then, as a man of truth, but now, I know—you—to—be—an—in—fernal—liar." "Bill, that's terrible; take the blasted thing off." "He's so chesty," laughed Annie, "that anything ready-made is always too long in the sleeves for him. Take it off, Will." Bill laid the ends of the sleeves slowly and carefully down, on each side of the beaded brown one, let go the knife and fork—we could distinguish the unclasping movement inside the sleeves, drew cautiously back till the glistening weapons were fully restored to the light of the Pinawa Channel Power Plant, removed the disproportioned, braided iniquity, rolled it into a ball, and with a neat, deft, vigorous kick, curved it out through the archway into the sitting room, resumed his standing at the head of the table, placed his left hand on his hip, and, extending his right, shook his stenographic forefinger at his wife, who was laughing ecstatically, and, with the solemnity of Judge Mathers sentencing a man for life, exclaimed, "Annie, Annie Perkins—never—never again!" Then, picking up the fork and stabbing it into Stamboul or thereabouts, he pointed the knife savagely at me, and in a tone carrying with it the finality and permanent disruption of our friendship, he calmly said, "K.C., Sport, once my friend —I'M—done—with—you. What part of this bird do you like best?"

CHAPTER XIII

"One who could circumvent God."

"We are chaff, we are dust, we are dross:
We are eyesores, by God! to the great;
With our lives in our hand for a dollar a day
We build up the world and have nothing to say.
So what reck of a laborer's fate!"

Thirteen is declared a punk number; all reason scoffs at it; but superstition, based, perhaps, deeply down in the dim eyeles, when mind first began to detach itself from matter, is for it. I don't believe in the terrors of thirteen, nor of Friday the thirteenth, but, well, just as an illustration of those who do and do not believe in them, I'll tell you a little story. We were busy on a couple of bridges once (that is, the foundations), and one February morning George Otty, engineer of the Company for whom we were at work, came into the office, about seven a.m. (chaps like us are not business men, so we turn out with the boys), and remarked, "K.C., this is Friday the thirteenth." "Well, son," said I, "what about it?" "We'll be lucky," said he, "to get away without an accident." "Come, you dum fool," I flared; "get to hell out of here with that stuff. I thought you had some sense." Around the jobs, unless we had lady visitors, we broke off the English pretty rough. "Oh, all right," he answered, and neither of us—at least, I—thought no more about it. When one has a couple of hundred boys at work and the mercury is sticking *below* at seventy Centigrade or forty Fahrenheit,

and you're dropping concrete into coffer dams forty feet below water level, pumps bucking, and boilers dying because the infernal frost is so dead heavy the stacks won't draw, and the flues are plugged tight with black cotton-batten, and the fireman cursing the slacked Pocahontas, while all the time the concrete has to be warmed, nursed, and coddled, like a sick infant—your mind is not running to speculation on superstitions and cycles and rythmic recurrences and all these abstract inanities over which adolescence and neurasthenic emasculation goes mad. So I was sticking around where I always was when there was trouble on—that's how I missed a good deal of it, I think; never had much of it, you bet, and then only for mighty short spells. I never would stand for any ties-up, and the boys knew that, and acted on that understanding. Well, things were humming on the "upper bridge," despite the frost and one dead boiler (which was running again in an hour or so), dinner time had gone (workers dine at noon), and everything O.K. We had built on the job a one-storey, two-roomed office, and Mac held me there for an hour after we'd eaten to sign up a few hundred cheques for pay-day that was looming up, and about two o'clock I slipped down river to the lower bridge where we were reaching for the bottom of a sluffing, fifty-foot hole, with a second set of steel piling driven inside the first. I got interested there for a couple of hours, and about four o'clock I headed the little mare up the ice for the concrete; I wanted to see that things were shaped to tuck it away safely from Jack Frost and the stormy night. I was half-way up, that is, about three eighths of a mile. It was sure cold,

and I was speeding a little; and, though I had my nose in my collar, I saw a man coming, and as the snow was deep and only the sleigh track I had to slow up to give him one rut. He called to me and I stopped, old Minnie standing on her hind legs. "What is it, son?" I knew by his voice that something had cracked. "There's—there's a man killed at the upper bridge." (This chap belonged to the lower one.) "Do you know his name?" "No, sir, I don't. He's a new man, I think." That helped a little; not that I value one man's life more than another's, but your old fellows get wound around your heart. It's poor business, I know; still it never hurt me. I gave the mare the head she was fighting for, and in a minute was at the office. Otty, the engineer, was there, looking pretty blank, too. George was a good scout, and men were his fellows; he's buried himself in France now;—what a lot of good boys are there. Mac looked at me, his heart showing in a red welt across his forehead. Karl was there, just a kid, and he had his mother's Scotch jaw set. "Where is he?" said I; "have you called a doctor?" "In there," answered Mac, nodding his head past the partition; "the doctor's on his way up." I stepped through. The man, a good specimen of Swedish manhood, lay on the floor. It was still light, but getting dim, and I saw he had been killed instantly. A blow on the back of the head near the top had put him out. "How did it happen, Karl?" "No one knows, Dad." "Hell, boy, that's poor stuff. Bring the men who were with him." "Here's the doctor," said Mac and Doctor Cook—the "working man," I called him, because his big frame was always going at top speed—bustled in. "Good

night, K.C." "This way, doctor." The doctor has seen lots of dead ones, and, as I pointed at the wound, he stooped and lifted the triangular piece of scalp and dropped it, saying, "He's gone." "Yes," said I, "he went out with the blow." "Do you know him?" asked Cook. "No, doctor, I don't. This was his third day, just." "How did it happen?" "Don't know yet, doctor. But I'll know to-morrow. Call the undertaker, Mac, and notify his people." "Matt" (his foreman) "has gone to do that." "Where do they live?" "In the west end." "Married?" "Yes, a wife and two children." "That's a corker; they must be babies; the chap's about thirty-two. Who put him to work?" "Matt put him on; he has a chum here." It was quitting time by this, and MacDonald, foreman at pier eleven, came in to report that the concrete was housed and all set for the night. The doctor said "Good night" and went out, and Karl came in with a bunch of the boys (fourteen, all told), who were within sixty feet of where the chap had been killed. Not a damned man had seen him fall. So I let them out and away, and Karl and I went down to size things up. On the ice in front of pier seven, already built, we had just finished setting up a completely new travelling derrick, and this machine was to be moved across the river, about two hundred and fifty feet, to open up on pier ten, and we were sticking a few piles through the ice, not being very sure of it. We were using a short thirty-foot boom carrying a set of hanging hammer leads. Everything was shipped and ready to drive, except a gudgeon pin at the A frame top on which was collared the sheaves that carried the boom fall. A

mechanic, specially hired and specially paid, was pinning this gudgeon, and had made two trips up, fitting it—it was a piece of steel, temper-drawn, three-quarter inch diameter and eight inches long—fourteen men around and on the derrick were waiting for this boy—who knew this—to finish, and when he went up for the third time and came down and went away, saying nothing to anyone, everybody figured he was done. Barry at the levers couldn't see the mast head; the foreman of the piling gang, MacDonald, who built the machine, and Gillies my own C.E., were on the ice, and *could see*, but it didn't strike any one of the four that the mechanic was a fool. The outfit was waiting with a thirty-five foot spruce pile hanging about its balance on the second hoisting fall, inside the hanging leads, the ends of which just cleared the ice, the boom fall horizontal and perfectly safe. Now, to get the pile into position over the hole cut in the ice, it was necessary to "go up on the boom." Mat signalled Barry with his thumb up. He turned his engines over, and the boom angled up until the leads were six feet clear, when the collar slipped off the gudgeon and the leads dropped to the ice and began to slide slowly—the pile cramped between them and the boom—towards the foot of the mast. They buckled easily down, breaking nothing, till they lay flat. Fourteen men around the machine, with her crew; five of them, including Gillies, standing immediately at the foot of the leads, stepped quietly back; there was no rush, nobody hurried; there was no need, because it looked for a few seconds as if the leads would stand up. Anyway, they came down, slowly, and it was a minute or two before anyone saw

the Swede—he was dead—at the right rear of the machine, fifty feet from the nearest action. But there was a slip on our part; the boom had come down. So I instructed the Ocean Accident to pay their fifteen hundred dollars on his life—we carried that much—and I would add to that a thousand, and pay his wife immediately, or as soon as it could decently be done. Well, about the superstition. I looked the thing over, by a lantern, that night, and in the winter dawn next day. In front of pier seven, and ten feet clear of the rear of the derrick, there were standing on end, frozen in the ice, half a dozen one-and-seven-eighths eight-inch spruce planks, about six feet high. At the foot of these planks, four or five feet away, there was a piece of rock, one-half a cubic foot or so, evidently a concrete filler, frozen fast. It lay with a sharp angle uppermost; on it was a little blood, very little, and some granules of scalp, and a few strands of light hair. The thing was plain as day. The man had seen the boom slipping and had ran, looking backwards, and had landed with his shoulder against the springy planks; the recoil had flung him on the frozen rock, and had killed him—to validate in a ghastly way Otty's belief in the deadliness of Friday the thirteenth.

I've often wondered what day and date George went out. But, after all, the bulk of the people—and they all pass out sometime and somewhere—don't die on that day and date. Just a word about the liability as to the dead man. His wife, *through her lawyers*, refused the two thousand five hundred dollars. I felt that it was a big price for no fault of mine, and three days' work, poor chap; but they talked ten thousand

and afterwards five and then tacked around a year in the legal offing. I think, being decent, and offering quick and liberal settlement, looked too easy, and made the legal crooks think I was as twisted as themselves. Anyway, just before the last seance in court, the widow's lawyers, who were getting leary, came snuffling around, and wanted me to make a bid of two thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars. I wasn't haggling over the life of a fellow human;—and just an interjection here to show the mental meanness of these legal sewer-rats—during the year's legal operations I had been up for "discovery." Bah! I had seen nothing, and they wouldn't listen to my hypothesis. What could I discover? They were only out carving legal gingerbread, and nothing more. In any event, I was being questioned, fore and aft, truck to keelson, stem to gudgeon, from the rear wheel of the derrick to the steel head on the boom; and it's great for a workman, used to real things, to observe an attorney getting together the words and stuff that make matter, mental confusion and sheet lightning for themselves their *enemy* counsel, (whom they consult before coming in) the judge, the jury and the reporter boys —hell for the dramatic—and a striking story. Well, this lawyer was a bald gentleman, not old, either, with an opinion of himself so big that it could not live in a small city and had gone west with his hair; and he was ruminating and questioning and ruminating again, with pursed-up lips and gathered eyebrows, for all the world like little Bornlee (who since blew his head off) when he used to come out *close* to the end of the big coffer dam in the White Horse Rapids and tell me that

his chief, the great engineer, Mr. Priceless, who never came out, was very anxious to know "whether everything was safe?" The fool! Where would we be if it were not? They'd be fishing us up at the Maid of the Mist, where we got Eddie Dell and Art Lavigne, after they made the big jump, or at the Whirlpool, if we hadn't swirled through to feed the catfish at Queenston. Well, the lawyer wore an air like little Bornlee, puzzled, concentrated, and as brilliant as fog, figuring, I think, to get me hot, with his infernal creation of tangles and snarls. You know, in our occupation, we don't run to plots and complications, but are hunting always for simplifications and the shortest way out. Anyway, this gent was dizzy with his own dope, and was searching around in his mental aerodrome for one of his flying ideas, when he broke out like this. "You have three sons on this work?" "Not that I know of. "You have some sons on this work?" "Yes." "How many?" "Two." "What are their Christian names?" "Barry and Karl."

"Yes, and" (turning over his papers with the air of a tea-sipping sissy) "in which of these sons do you place the most confidence?" I stared at the wooden head until he looked up; and imagining, perhaps, that I hadn't understood his question, he put it again very distinctly, so I couldn't miss it. Lawyers often do that for the benefit of the uneducated. "In which of these boys do you place the most confidence?" "Why," said I, "You dirty, drowsy, ten-cent solicitor. I wouldn't tell their mother that; and do you think I'd cough it up to a peanut lawyer? And," continued I, to the astounded stenographer, whose pen had slipped with the explosion,

"Mr. Shorthand, you put it down just that way. I'd like to have a record of it." To chronicle a fact in connection with this gent—he wasn't a "bad sort," as the Doctor says of Snob;—he admitted that he shouldn't have asked the question. Well, let's hop back across the parenthesis. I'm used to cracks in the ice and the wind blowing. Are you? But let's hop back. I wasn't, as I say, splitting hairs, or hundreds either,—when I had them—over the life of a poor chap, but these fellows had passed out on a square deal; and I knew my lawyer would have a bill, and these guys would have a bill, and there would be court costs and all that court-spider stuff, and these lawyers and my own and the court knew that the contract was a fair size and legitimate picking. But I always called every bluffer, except Tom Horne—once—of course, Tom thought he had it when he raised a few before the draw, and the scamp had nerve enough to stand pat upon his error (heavier statesmen than Tom do that), and his mistake and mine let him away. Well, I always called, so I told the lawyer—very friendly, now, and solicitous for me, and all that—"No, mine amiable enemy, shoot your wad; beat it." Well, it went through. We didn't shuffle, although they did, and had Matt (the fool) as their witness and doing what he could to damage me; but I got even with him later. We yawned through the nonsense at court, and as our city was not big enough in which to develop a decision, they fixed it finally at Osgoode Hall. Great old joint, the Hall. Used to deliver bread to the caretaker there when I was a kid, and wondered often how in blazes all those boys with

the laundry bags, in the black and high priestly cerements, got a living and lived; wasn't enough bohunks, roughnecks, and rustlers to go round, I thought. Course, I was just a kid, fifteen or so, with a head full of books—but not legal books; the young mind opening skywards doesn' want to get down into the mucks and misdemeanors, the miseries and murders of the realms of law. Aside from this, I've a fair idea now how they get their revenues, and also where—part of it. To conclude, these lads, high priests of ju—stice (starts like Judas, and it's so easy to slip), they fixed it up. Judgment for three thousand, etc., etc. I paid my counsel, another four hundred—about ten dollars an hour; the widow got something over two thousand, and waited a year. With odds and ends, witnesses, etc., it cost *me* four thousand, and one poor chap his life. That's all.

Commerce, in the shape of a big compound engine, weight a hundred tons, handled by a driver in blue jeans and a peaked cap and stoked by a fireman, every inch of his hands and face black, except the nails and eyeballs, swishes the endless cars of golden grain across the bridge foundations where the Swede was killed. Boats, sea-bound—some of them never get there—"Smoothall" being damned rotten stuff for rivets—but sea-bound (the cargoes, at least), pass through between the piers while the big double-decked bascule stands nearly on end, leaning a little, as if to inspect them as they go out. Some of them, you bet, need inspection; it depends upon who loaded the cargoes and who built the boats. The boys who founded the bridge, the machine men, the muckers, the sand-hogs, the mud-slingers, are scattered, far and wide, drifting or dead,

never to be concentrated on one job again, upon this earth. Some of them ended in Flemish graves, shallow, indeed, but sloppier far than the deep foundations when the pumps bucked, and have "bottomed" their final excavation with their "job done," and have, oh, hearts! frail wooden crosses, and some immediate memories. But these memories will become less poignant and pass away with their possessors; and it is well that it is so, for I think that if all grief's tears had not by the lapse of time and the splendour of the Heavens been evaporated, dried, disseminated, even to the salt; that if the sighs of the world's broken hearts had not been wafted away and absorbed into the infinite bosom of the Eternal, that there would be now on this earth such black multitudinous tempest, such mountainous, overwhelming seas, that the very stars—gleaming shore-lights of God—would be hidden, extinguished, blotted out, and that, stricken level by the storm, beaten down, leapt upon, strangled by the thunderous surge, even Hope would be engulfed and disappear forever.

CHAPTER XIV

"The machinery of the Pagans is uninteresting to us."

"Thy auld, damned elbow yeuks wi' joy
And hellish pleasure."

"Jester in the courts of God."

"And gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

A onee-famous writer—now with the lesser immortals—whose mental lightning-flashes still dazzle the inner eye, and whose electric thrills still reach into the heart and set it tingling, wrote his famous book, in a manner, backward, like Hamlet's crab. Johnson, who disliked the book, wondered that people could read it; Johnson, like the rest of us, had his limitations and his loves. Heaps of us wonder how heaps of people read heaps of books; but, leaving this, Johnson was (excuse a workman's simile) a huge, staunch, clean-cutting Dredge, gigantic, ripping up from the bottom his tremendous mental buckets-full of long-hidden, submerged material and dumping it in colossal heaps, when it was not scowed away to fill vacant depths: digging a Suez or a Panama, as it were, for the deep-draughted craft to traverse a nearer though somewhat artificial way between the shining oceans of thought;—oceans ever restless, limitless, storm-swept, yet with islands interspersed whereon the unfilled heart in fond imagination loves to brood. This, in a crude way, was the great, rough, toiling giant Johnson, whom—leaving my simile aside—I love as a father.

England—though I believe the Cambrian sunsets had beatified him—has been forgiven many things because he was her son. A huge Dredge, delving immense quantities and masses of mental geological deposit; —the mind hardens, does it not? So I am safe,—but this great Johnson, this powerful and tremendous excavating Colossus, always worked with his spuds on the bottom and headed for the shore, with his consort or orthodox tug ever ready and within call to tow him to shelter when the hurricane of unsoulable doubts arose. Sterne, whose book he disliked, was not a Great Dredge, built of rigid oak or mountain fir, castings and steel forgings, filled with endless mechanical and artificial patents and appliances, carrying the accumulated equipment and inventions of centuries. No; just an unequipped, stripped, nude, swift, solitary Pearl Diver. He drifts far out to sea in his tossing coracle, shapeless, light, liable to overturn at the first blast, but he rides it fearless; and suddenly, far out, shoreless, he poises himself in his frail skiff, a kind of stronger bubble, palms together, head between his extended arms, toes perpendicular with the limbs, plunges, and disappears into the (to Johnson) unfathomable depths. But he comes up, at long length, with wild gasps, tangled locks streaming, eyes moist and shining, every limb tense from combatting the deeps, holding, in its coarse husk, his pearl (spherical stalactite of a sentient being's misery); and if you happen to be by in a coracle like his (a merchantman or man-of-war will not do) he, from the shell which he opens magically, extends his treasure towards you and cries "Behold!" Take note, reader, that the pearl-diver carries on his

gambols, beautiful but useless, imaginative, unutilitarian, uncommercial, far away from the channels of trade, where the deep-laden craft, loaded past the dead line, churn up the muddy depths with their powerful, steam-driven, fire-begotten, furnace-born flukes. The keels of commerce in its port, "which it has built," are always close to the bottom. Between such ports, these keels plough in coarse, indifferent speed the surface of the blue depths, their belching funnels trailing to the windswept sky, the black expanding volumes (disappearing) of their fire-consumed souls, labouring anxiously to port lest the storms and strange gods, which they know not, but fear, and which haunt the open, Nature-made ocean vastnesses, spirit them away, irrecoverable, to the pearl-diver's green and glassy silences. The keels that commerce builds never feel at home and safe, unless said keels are close to the mud, the silt, the parasitical city sewage of its artificial ports.

"Squa-a-d, 'shun!" "Now, gentlemen, everyone of you expects to be, some day, an officer. How can you look for a soldierly bearing from your men unless—Stand at—*ease*!"; the last word is cracked out like an exploding detonator. "Squa-a-d, 'shun! Not a move—not a move—not the quiver of an eyelash." The sergeant-major, hammering into shape the seventh squad (forty-eight of us) his cane under his arm, stands like a statue in front of us, as an example, absolutely still, save for his eye, which takes us all in with a withering, contemptuous glance. Every rookie, embryo generalissimo, thinks he is obeying the command to the letter, and is flayed with an anxious curiosity to see whether the other fellows

are O.K., and in a second or two, as the sergeant-major forsees, there is a slow, impereeptible variation of eyes right and left to ascertain the truth. Impereeptible! The sergeant-major is the god of trifles, and roars like an angry Stentor or a bull of Bashan. "What did I tell you? What did I tell you?" Every one now, though still as rigid as is possible for a civilian who beeame a soldier but yesterday, has his eyes fixed on the sergeant-major. "Eyes looking their own level and straight to the front." The rookies' eyes shift swiftly from the sergeant-major to stare straight ahead over the other six squads, and focus on the new Court House—illustrious stamping-ground of unprineipled architeets, contractors, shifty politieians, scandal, questionable caissons, and crooks. "Better; a little better," commends the sergeant-major. He's a good scout, and he feels (look at his nose) that its forty helow this a.m., and that some of the "law students," "divinity students," "medical students," and "insuranee agents," and lads from the superheated city offiees in their thin boots, llama sox, kid gloves, and Christys, are cold. "Fo-o-orm fours!" The shivering "raw ones" of the moving files leap at the command, —most of them—here and there a rear rank man holds his ground till there's a rear-end collision, and here and there a moving file gets the first pace to the rear, but takes the second one left instead of right, and there is a side-swipe. A moving file or two stand still; consequently, the adjacent stationary files get busy thinking they should move; (only half a dozen boys are sure of themselves yet), and in the twinkling of an eye, with the collision, the loose, dry snow, the slippery leather boots, men losing

their places and trying to find them, the whole squad are toppling and jostling and falling like an entire alley-way of ninepins. "As you were!"—(Heavens! where were we?)—roars the sergeant-major, grinning. Maybe it's the cold twists his mug that way; his moustache has by this time two icicles that refuse to respond to a cuddling nit; the freezing desk-and-office boys, strong for movement (no "Reds" here), flutter around like beheaded hens till at last, by lining up on number eight—the tall dark chap in fur cap, tweed overcoat, and felt boots—who always knows his place—they get back to a semblance of order, a few of them still swapping places and glancing apologetically at the instructor, and an odd one stamping or reaching furtively for a nose or ear. The sergeant-major, his upper lip rigid with the icicles and the lower one sinking into stiff inutility, says, not so loudly, "Hell, 'oys yer gi'en us a'ay—lucky 'er the rear skawd. Stand easy and 'arr yoursel's." Then you realize what it cost these boys to stand still, or partly still. They fall to stamping and jumping, slapping their arms, rubbing their ears and noses; and an odd one tries to restore circulation in his toes by squeezing them with his hand. They cut loose in a mad frenzy of action; the frosty steam enveloping them with its Arctic halo, the kind of halo that crowns Winnipeg in the January morning when the city shrinks cracking, into itself, and forty below, and the steaming concrete sewers reek their insult up to the icy heaven and the uninitiated nose. "Your beak's frozen, son. Get busy; put a little snow on it." "Snow?" cries frozen nose. "Holy Moses," shouts the wise one; "where the hell were you born?" "Better take the first

train south," cries a rallying voice. "Never mind, old top," yells another; "it'll be warmer where the Hun is." "Dammit, I wish I were there right now," hisses still another, both hands on his ears; "it's got this stuff beat a block." "Is this the kind of weather they keep in Winnipeg?" asks a boy in uniform. "Sometimes, son," I answered. "Where do you come from?" asked Number Eight. "Me?" said the boy; "I'm from Calgary." "Well, it's not summer there, always." "You bet it's not," said the boy. "We've got heaps of ice, but we keep most of it where it belongs—on the mountains—where we can look at it 'thout freezing to death."

Certainly, it's a bum temperature for this game, in these garbs, though a few, like Number Eight and myself, outdoors all our lives, don't worry much and look the other boys over to give them notice of a nipped nose or ear, and set them busy. The other squads, now we have time to look, are "warming up," too. A few of the chaps have uniforms, and the rest of us wonder whether they know the game, and, if they do, why they are here. These boys are looked upon as superior soldiers—until [illegible] making mistakes like ourselves, and it is apparent that they also are "raw ones." The secret is, that they have appointments in the Battalions that are being flung together over night, and have been told that they must qualify. Any doubt they may have entertained of themselves is hushed by their O.C.'s confident assurance. "Sure, you'll get by; we'll see to that." So here they are in uniform, neat as girls, mostly, and absolutely unafraid of the sergeant-major, the future, fate, or the Hun. Ah, you boys of the brave hearts, and a conceit as valorous, how often have I thought of you.

The action has quieted a little; some "stawff" captains, etc., are arriving. I, though knowing little of squad drill, unlike Number Eight, my right file—number nine, I am—have made locations in many countries and have sized up the field (Horse Show grounds), the number of men and the normal area (parade area) for each squad, and have selected four permanent points—two right and two in front—when I make the third each way our squad is about right for falling in. So I move into place, Number Eight and I, who knows "squad drill" well—and I often feel a friendly hand giving me the "right tip" or the left—and the rest of the lads line irregularly up, talking, puffing cigarettes—or is it frost they're blowing?—only guessing at it themselves, I think; and suddenly the sergeant-major, without speaking, makes an attempt at a line, with his cane; the boys shuffle up, and the sergeant-major, his under-lip loosened and in working order once more, waiting impatiently for them to get somewhere near the thing, thunders, "Squa-a-a-d! 'shun!" Not a bad performance, this time. The S.-M. smiles approvingly, looks as if he were going to order "Form fours," but thinks better of it. No chance, with Stawff-Captain Bawlten there, in his huge fur cap, collar, and gauntlets, and legs that are laughter for a Highlandman. The Captain is a martinet, a stern disciplinarian, and wants his rookies like his cocktails, to stand quiescent till the spirit moves him. So we stand freezing. Certainly these boys will make soldiers. Suffer and obey—until—I feel the frost needles pricking my nose and the lobe of my ear. "Stand at ease! Stand easy!" and the sergeant-major doubles down the right of the other squads

to where Stawff-Captain Bawlten is concentrating the other six squad commanders. The squads, especially the rear ones, are daneing again in honour of the Frost King, talking, cursing the infernal weather—it's sure cold—and I hear a voice wondering, "What in hell that guy in the fur cap is getting off." He is getting off something all right. Yesterday, arrangements had been made for the use of the different church basements for squad drill while the forty-stuff lasted, and he's giving location of these to the different squad eommanders for to-morrow. So our sergeant-major doubles back, gives the warning, "Squa-a-d!" onee more, and when the boys are nearly right, roars, "'Shun! Forn fours! Right! Quick, march! Right wheel!" and away we swing at a eraeking paee, out of the Horse Show grounds into the street, a one hour's mareh, in which we did four and a quarter miles, and got the order at the eorner af Portage and Main to "Dismiss!" for the day and report to-morrow nine a.m., at the Horse Show Grounds. The boys were warm enough now, outside the nipped spots; sixteen easualties, ineluding the ears and noses and a toe or two whieh kept their possessors out of that partieular elass; also some fingers that could be nursed. We had no rifles, and never had during the entire six weeks that we were "'shunned" and "foured" and "wheeled" and laughed at and instrueted into the rank ealled lieutenant. Number Ten, Tommy Diekenson, and I had quarters at the Y.M., a narrow cell with two cots. Fit dimensions for two fellows (neither of us young) industriously studying the art of murder, with a ribband, not a rope, as a reward of the killer's skill. Great stuff and a great study, and

we had lots of it. Tommy memorized better when he read the text aloud, and in that band-box of a cell, full of "verboten" tobacco smoke, war and the text thereof became a cloudy, roaring inferno which at times approached the intolerable. Tom was a good comrade and a devoted student (of several things), and a corker for the correct fold of his puttees and the poise of his cap; he was one of the sure ones, and got his later in the shape of a wound. He was a stickler on the saluting stuff, and when we went down to eat at the Ballymena boy's or the Venice, I walked always on the left to keep clear of the windmill, and save my muscle. He kicked at this a little, sometimes but deferred to my years, and stuck to his job. Fun! We laughed and chattered and studied "squad," and rehearsed "squad," and damned "squad," and smoked in that seven-by-fourteen death-devoted cell, till exhaustion overwhelmed us; and we awoke again for Tom's hasty, noisy monologue at the text-book, his morning cigarette (blast that morning cigarette in such a narrow hole), a gobble-me-quick thirty-cent breakfast downstairs, and a gallop to the Horse Show grounds, where, after the morning airing at forty below (it lasted three weeks and seems longer) we swung away to the basements for squad and more squad and squad piled on top of these squads again, in equal, regular layers, till the brain bubbled like toffee boiling over, till squad was dismissed, to melt away in the direction of light lunches, heavy flirtations, a smoke, a walk back, and squad again till——. Bang! "Coats and canes, gentlemen." The uniforms were getting thicker now; the tailors knew that, and some kindly friends and tearful mothers and aunties,

often—God bless their brave and broken hearts! And "Fall in! 'Shun! Left! Quick, march!" off to the lecture room. Heavens, that lecture room! That's where we mixed. Stawff-Captain Bawlten, twenty minutes late, thank fate. No number this or that squad here; we melted into each other and got acquainted, and cinched a chair each, note book on knee, etc., etc.

Some boys used to let their mates take the notes, one acting for two or three. Tom tried our's—once—and neither he nor I could decipher them. I can always read what I write (though, maybe, I'm the only guy who can, or cares to). "'Shun!" a roar of rising men and loosened chairs. "Eyes right!" Enter Staw-ff-Captain Bawlten on his ear—it was, I think, the biggest end of his head—looking for blood (that was an Imperial officer's business), staring at us hard and bloodily, as became red tabs and a martinet seeing red, with a red prompter at the pit of his stomach. Ah—he disappears, and we all sit down. The Captain reappears on the little stage (it's a basement), where the little kiddies in white dresses, blushes, embarrassments, and blue ribbons come shyly forth at Christmas time to recite broken rhymes to doting, smiling mothers and tickled daddies, who hide their pride behind bantering camouflage. Somehow a flame of inquitous, savage incongruity hits the mind with a sensation as of a furnace-blast. "Gentlemen"—the fur cap and gauntlets occupy the centre of the little table, where the cut flowers in their cut glass had stood at Christmas, both bearing, in a way, a relevancy, illogical, perhaps (think it over) to shorn humanity. "Gentlemen, I don't want to rub it in"—Captain Bawlten places

each hand alternately on his Sam Browne and with the other brushes back, from what head he has, his smoke-coloured warlocks—"I don't want to rub it in, but I must rub it in; I must insist on punctuality, gentlemen; punctuality. Gentlemen, some of you come late to parade" —Ah, Captain, they did, indeed, but those scamps went "over the top" first and earliest, prompt and punctual, at the Big Show.—Salute the Dead!—"Gentlemen, those who repeat it will be returned to their units; and, gentlemen, another thing—a serious thing—about saluting. The saluting in Winnipeg is rotten, absolutely rotten." —(Here I agreed with him, and thought of Tommy and his wind-mill, five hundred and sixty-seven revolutions between Eaton's and the Royal Alex.)—"Gentlemen, I must insist on saluting"—(God help us!)—"and, gentlemen, let me tell you, we aw saluting in the trenches. That's how we aw winning the waw." There was a riffle in that red-blooded bunch; maybe the sough of a storm. This is a rough-neck country, and we laugh at the soul-crippling duff and punk-punctilios, etc., but,—well, if we could win the war that way, it looked easy. Captain Bawlten, condescending, now, as to culprits reprimanded and forgiven, explained to us that he had been delayed—polite as Lucifer he was—and thought himself—dear, dapper little, red-tabbed son of a war-bureau—suckled on peace discipline and swaddled in red-tape—also that he was extremely busy with tremendous duties devolving upon him day and night. His fearful responsibility to his King and Country, in their tremendous proportions, were spread upon his extended palm and allowed for one terrible moment to overwhelm

us, and then, kindly hidden by the closure of his hand—we came to the top with a gasp. "Gentlemen, the lecture that I had intended for you will be given at another day, when there is less pressure upon my time." His overcoat was re-assumed, the huge fur cap buried again that busy head, his "fearful responsibility" was shoved into the gauntlet with his palm; and "'Shun! Eyes right!" swift scuffling scramble to their feet of some four hundred men, the creaking and shrieking of the loose chairs upon the wooden floor, the exit of Captain Bawlten—furs and spurs—from the little stage with its Christmas suggestivity, the sitting down again, and a boy in uniform from the Calgary Light Horse saying to me, "What the hell do you know about that?" and my replying, "Not a thing." I was longing for a dredge like Johnson to shear a way through the war detritus, diplomatic boulders, and commercial sand, to open a passage through it's blood-fissured, skeletonized, swiftly, steadily, deadly-silting barrier, till humanity's separated seas would meet. And as I was laughing, with tears, at Sterne and his flimsy, breeze-blown coracle, his isolated, lonely, beautiful, useless, shining baubles, and their inept, deceptive, illusive relations to the necessities, passions, and miseries of Man.

CHAPTER XV

"Subject to ancient and ancestral shadows."

"There can be no kernel in this light nut.
The soul of this man is in his clothes:
Trust him not in a matter of heavy consequence."

"History is a lying jade."

It is a world's wonder and paradox how such an undefinable and untrammelable creation as the mind can (if caught early) be not only deceived, shackled, but made in a manner self-deceiving and self-shackling. English writers of history, laborious, pompous, cumbrous, or just pleasant, ignorant, and fluent, have, with the assistance of school primers and the expounders thereof, (eliminative, deceptive, constrictive), produced in the youthful mind (for excellent patriotic purposes, no doubt) —one or two strange, though pretty general, mind-effects or conditions. First, that the dodger, Alfred, burning his biscuit like a careless dunce and punk cookee, was a Great Man. Second, that the world's history, dimly taking shape from chaos, began in a kind of anachronistic abortion about his time, and runs both ways from there—our way being one, and back into the uncivilized past, the other. Third, that thought began with Bacon the Contemptible, "wisest and meanest of mankind," a joke and lie every way (beware of such assumed derivatives), who was, methinks (I am but half-educated, as per Archie McMechan, don't take my say-so), almost wholly a mental antiquarian. Fifth, that all their

kings, at least till they were dead, were really divinities, whether the kings stole the country, (bludgeoning it into submission, like Billy the Ruffian), whether the country stole the kings, imported them, begged them, borrowed them, or beheaded them. Yes, all great men—though a few Scottish Jacobites—in songs, mostly—and a few English Radicals of the Savage-Landor type—in rhymes, principally—have disagreed. But the knowledge of this disagreement comes later to the youngster; so means, as it is meant to mean, much less than it should. All these fundamental illusions are blazed and flashed into the young mind by the historical scholastic diamond—politically polished—from its thousand facets, till our poor youth start out with the mind-maiming belief that their world's dim beginning sprang in some misty way from a fire-scorched scene, an irate housewife beating a moping vagrant (the whole of which is set in a halo of manufactured pity for a fugitive prince), who not only was not working for a living, but was incapable of tending the fire while his flap-jack was baked. Sixth, our young ones absorb a hazy conception that the Asian Antiquities, the African Pyramids, the Eurasian Parthenon, and Roman Ruin, each with a skill and communism superior to ours in their every angle, curve and dimension, are the relics of a barbarism so vicious and inferior to our own that it requires only one glance at, or one shell from a fifteen-inch gun to blast the doubters and their doubts into refutation, permanent and complete. What makes us write history that way, and start youth spinning like a top or a sand column, when, free of the leading strings (but not the clog) it begins to shuffle for itself. What makes

us start near—so very near—our own little present day, instead of at the beginning, and letting the mind, discarding the wreckage as it progresses, pick up and preserve its comparative values on the route. Starting as we do, is it not clear that always the intellect, if of any dimensions, must go backward for material, and is it not clear that this being so, we live and think and work retrogressively, with the net result that we are destructively constructive, quarrying (it's easier for indolent workmen) our building stone from ancient ruins (limited always to the old dimensions)—a mason (a stone and mortar one) will understand this—instead of stripping a new ledge, with seams and sizes that suit our evident necessities and building, not the size of the earlier works or smaller (because to fit you must hew away), but to the needs, the aspirations, and wholesome ambitions of this day and hour.

"About turn!" "On the left, form—squad!" "Salute by numbers!" "Salute judging the time!" "Right wheel!" "Right turn by numbers!" "Cne! - - - two!" "One! - - two!" "One! - - two!" "One! - two!" "One two!" "Onetwo!" "Onto!" "Say, kid," I gasped to the white-headed brief-bag, who was spilling out his one-twos faster and faster till our little squad of sixteen were spinning like tops or dervishes, "can't you say halt once in a while?" "Halt!" squeaked brief-bag, frowning, and continuing in his best legal manner (this boy had dusted the calfskins in one of the huge grinding mills and mortgage factories for a month or two before he decided to lead an army—in a church basement for a starter), "There is to be no talking in the ranks. I

know what I'm doing." "Maybe," said Number Eight. "Oh, yes, I do," bluffed brief-bag. "Perhaps you know what *you* are doing," said Number Ten (Tommy of the Windmill), "but you don't know what we're doing." "Oh, yes, I do," said brief-bag; he had apparently swallowed both iteration and precedent in his sixty days of law. "Not by a good deal," replied Tommy, who had his wind fully recovered, "or you wouldn't take the risk. You're spinning us so infernal fast that if a fly-wheel hursts, you and the pieces will go out through the wall." Brief-bag was entering legal defence to forestall action for damages and recovery, when the instructor's whistle blew and the Seventh Squad split up into three squads for basement manœuvres, all came to a halt, and the sergeant-major hellowed "Change commanders!" So the next in line for that frightful dignity fell out and Brief-bag fell in, and away we went. Saluting, mostly; we all had that down pretty well, and remembered Captain Bawlten and his responsibility and "the way we were winning the war"; and, anyway, a church basement doesn't lend itself to vast field operations; so away we went, "About turning," "On the left form squading," "Saluting by numbersing" and "Salute judging the timesing," "Form foursing"—we had that pat, too—and the "Disniss" stuff also; amid such a din and clatter as would "deeve the Deil." A divinity student—an Irish chap from Saskatoon—was putting his bunch through the "Slow march," and chanting the deadly dirge from Saul in a voice like a drum, and his boys were on the halanee (sometimes against a friendly shoulder) hetween the goose-step aud the reverential

pace, with which (if there's time and nothing presses) "Tommy" is borne away and buried with the unknown immortals. Gillmore, the divinity student, had them going, holding out their feet alternately (much like "Towser" trained to offer his paw), and Gillmore himself was not only drum and band, but a buckled drum-major as well, and was bent like an L on it's end, walking backwards in front of his squad, beating the air with both arms, and with his ministerial eyes verifying that the sixteen right feet rose religiously, came forward reverentially, and descended sacredly in unison, and rejoicing in diapasonic drum-roarious volume, when the sixteen left feet did the same. The thing was so ludicrous (no dead in sight, just then), and so well done, that the other squads, halted while the gink in the frightful dignity of temporary squad-commander was rattling his bean in search of another war-like order, began to look and then to laugh and then to roar, drowning (almost) Gillmore's "Dead March." This had no effect on the Towser-pawing sixteen; they were pulling off a huge success; besides, Gillmore "had them": they took no liberties with him such as we took with Brief bag and with others; so they carried on till silence fell on the gazing thirty-two, and Gillmore ceased chanting, straightened up, and roared "Halt!" Then "Coats and canes, gentlemen," a sudden scramble and digging up and drawing forth of coats, gloves, caps, and khaki scarfs, from among Anglican vestments—and me a Presbyterian! och! och!—in the white pine cupboards; the eternal "'Shun!" a brief review by our good sergeant-major, "Left! Quick march!" upstairs, files unfiling, and filing

through the doors ont into the—its easier to-day—thirty below and a swell swing-off to the lecture room, where the uniformed subs grown thicker and thicker (very few in civies now) we begin to look more and more like the real thing. We have become, indeed, as little children, with no cares except the "classes" and the "exams." The world, thongh cold, is bright; hard-set boys are waiting for us over yonder, where our chaps have shown already that they knew how to "stick it," and die. Despite their "punk discipline," and natural irreverence for ritual bunk, it was heginning to dawn on the ancient, blood-cemented military mind that these boys, though careless re saluting their officers, rendered sound obedience to the "Boss" when there was a job to be done, and that these chaps charged through the tangled wire as they did through red tape, were devils in a scrap, and could be depended upon to fight when there were no officers (subs and captains, principally, and fiercely out of proportion) left to be saluted, and when the Staff was far away at the end of a copper wire, and even that cut. Well, what of it? Here we are, listening to Lieutenant Beattly, "from the front," lecturing on discipline, and he flim-flams around as if he had something to relate, and he finally does relate it, and he does it for the especial benefit of these boys (suspected of rough-neckianism), that they may know what dire consequences wait upon them if they get gay over yonder. His language (though he has the English accent) is rather inferior to Nnmber Three Canadian; but he has been at the front, and this lends him an importance; besides, he has the endorsation of M.D. 10

and of the School Commandant (who is a wonderful soldier, and knows how to keep in the war and out of the battles), and, in addition, he is loaned by the Military Authorities (not known) to enlighten the boys of this particular class and province. Therefore, he amplifies on the "Stern necessity of discipline"; how it has "saved Europe a hundred times" (he doesn't say that it lost just as often); "its incalculable value," etc., etc.; and tells us (mark you the poor fool's insolence) that the *first Canadian casualties* were two soldiers who were shot for telling a British Staff officer to "go to hell." The Staff officer had seen these two lads wandering loose, apparently; not beating it, nor anything of that kind, but just taking a look round. He had asked them what they were doing, and had got the above reply, and had them shot. Of the truth of Mr. Beattly's story (he was only a Loot., or a lout, perhaps), I know nothing. Privately, I think he was a liar; and both publicly and privately, I'm sure he was a fool, and that's flattery. But, certainly, if our chaps had not had something superior to the discipline he was exhibiting, a little self-restraint and common-sense, he would have had his silly head beaten off right there. I thought of the shooting of Byng, and the Frenchman's laughing comment that the English shot an admiral once in a while in order to encourage the others, and I wondered whether this yap was lecturing on that principle. Anyway, we stood for it, everyone of us perfectly ashamed of ourselves and of each other, and of the "bally ass" who pulled this thundering bunk. There were in my immediate vicinity a row of red, embarrassed faces, and sudden closing of

numerous note-books. But, anyway, we didn't need them further, as this was the climax of the lecture, and a clincher, and anything to follow would look cheap and undramatic. The lecture, without question, was an unqualified scorcher; not a man left that hall whose head was not full, and whose heart was not a smouldering fire. Some of the boys billetted with us (two of them are now captains, one a lieutenant-colonel, and one, a law student, has now the freehold of a French grave) opined that if there was no hell it was going to be mighty difficult to deal with a chap like that; or, if his story were true, with the British Staff officer. I've often wondered where that contemptible dog, who made us contemptible to ourselves and to each other, wound up. Maybe he's in Selkirk; but even if he is there it only proves what he was out to prove, that "it's a mad world, my masters," and war but multiplies its insanity.

CHAPTER XVI

"Charity is the assumption of class;
Benevolence is the privilege of brotherhood."

"The eyeless worm that, boring, works the soil,
Making it capable for the crops of God."

"The speciality of rule hath been neglected."

". . . . . Chainless as is
The undisciplined sea."

I had progressed thus far in the writing of this history when, in an unguarded and regrettable moment, I showed a chapter or two to a friend. He was one of the lads that liked my verse, but did not read it, and he paid me the compliment of saying that my cracking off junk in the vernacular was belittling myself, and doing the very thing that I had so often reprehended in the other fellow; namely, not writing up, but scribbling down. He observed, too, that my little effort (this little effort) was without form and void: that is, without a story and without a plot. Like Burns, in a much more serious case, "I owned that it was truth he telled me," but explained to him that in a world headed for democracy it was catering to class to confine myself to superior diction; that, if I had not a story, I had at least a theme, the interest of which depended upon my own skill, and as for plot, that I was no schemer. Besides, people were weary of plots; the sick world was full of them; men who were nurtured upon them were dying by the

million because of them; and that, trained and worked as I had been, my mind—such as it was—being simple and direct, did not naturally run to the creation of knots and involutions, but was rather out to seize these tangles and complications, lying thick-twisted, like a scorched slash about my route, and, in my little mode and with what tools I had, to simplify them, cut off, slip around or over them and find a way out, if I could. He thought, perhaps, that this was reasonable and even commendable, but doubted, as I do myself, one man's ability to do much towards the destruction of the plots, the counter-plots, the stratagems, the traps, the deadfalls, the snares, the pits, the pound-nets, the laws, the rules, the regulations, the religions, the customs, the traditions and legends that involve, beset, and terrify mankind at every step. "Well, son," said I, "I'll not clear the entire ground, that's certain; but I remember, when a lad upon the farm, that when we ploughed to sow to wheat or oats or barley, or even peas, that at the spots where we had burst a trace or a share or warped a beam or coulter on a low-lying root or boulder, and were short of time or power just then to clear these away, we did at least mark their location with a piece of split cedar rail, so that, when the grain had grown we wouldn't bump into them with the mower or reaper, and make a wreck of things." Therefore, as there will be in our present furrow, roots (privileged, pitch-pine ones, let us say, devils to hang on, at that, not immediately to be moved, though shortly, let us hope) and boulders (heavy, stolid occupants of the arable areas—land speculators, like), though I may not rip them out with

my teeth, or seize them like a giant or another Solon, and stack them in the stone fence or the stump pile, as the case may be, I can at least, "with my little axe," split a cedar rail, or an oak one, if necessary, and stick up a marker. So, when the chap who reaps where I have sown (this crop not being measured by seasons, but by generations, alas) comes along with his binder whirring, a song of the fecund soil, in cheery defiance to famine and discounting scoundrelism, he'll not land into the root or rock, twist a guard or two, put some knife sections on the bum, a kink in the frame of his machine, and, maybe, if he lands hard enough, snap the pole and stake the off horse.

On the seas and lakes and crooked straits of literature there are light buoys, filled, often, from the storehouses—or libraries or colleges—by Government caretakers; bell buoys, also, which need but an empty dome, a tongue, and room to swing; and there are the great lighthouses, too—pinnacled boldly on the sheer, beetling cliffs and out-flung promontories—spectacular beacons, far-warning, founded on the solid adamant of nature, and their imposing pillars, by the artistic genius, fashioned of the same. We, or, rather, I, am in a little field, ashore (no oath necessary), but where the grain will grow, some day—life's necessities are murmuring in the soil, fecund, virile, sure-coming as the summer's sun and rain—I, in my haste, the season wearing late (lost some time hunting bird's nests, too. Ah, yes), ploughing among the hidden, or partly hidden, rocks and roots; cannot remove them, but must, for the present, let them cumber earth. So, with a few stakes

ready to hand upon my plough snaths, which will indicate, (if they are not knocked down by the harrow and the hired man), the (when the grain shall grow) hidden location of the lurking wreckers. Pausing for a moment, as I encounter them (sometimes with a jolt and a broken plough-point), to mark their whereabouts, I furrow on. Flimsy work, in a way, crude and uncertain at the best, desperately inartistic, God knows, hog's backs and wallows showing everywhere,—shocking to a ploughman, knowing only his own soil—perhaps. (Come again, son.) But as I have seen upon the farm such marks and such methods, and also forty bushels of wheat to the acre reaped, and the machine still sound, let's hope for something analogous in my little rood or two of writing, and write on. Don't pert, urban reader, turn up your nose at this agricultural stuff; the farmer will, of a winter's evening (his chores done up and everything snugged and settled for the night), read this book, and is entitled to a little speciality for his time and his attention. If I were to smash away continually in the "'Ercles vein," that is, the contractor's vein (both dealt strongly and swiftly with things big and difficult), I might offend the poets, who at times insist upon their rights—Government jobs, sinecures, and such (Poor, poor poets!), and if I conciliate them with a special chapter, as I have done, as well must I then do my devoirs to the farmer, lone toiler on the wide acres, plugging after his team between the plough handles,—one foot in the furrow and one upon the land—it depends upon the stiffness of the soil—though, indeed, some of them now ride, rocked by the gasoline explosions; boys all gone,

and the city gods waiting for the crop. But this farmer chap, in his patched overalls, that is, patched on the knee and thigh, not on the seat of leisure—his boots that never knew polish, except the stubble polish—his world-famous hay-seed hair—his horny hand—his striped cotton, collarless shirt—washed and mended till the pattern is no more—his quiet, patient, thin-looking, over-worked face—indicative of a mortgage somewhere—sits close to my memory and my heart. I am of the soil—of many soils, now—and the smell of the barnyard's dung (pardon me, ladies and gentlemen) is no offence to me. In that I am something of a politician, for when the said dung, well-rotted, short and greasy, is being loaded (and I've forked lots of it), and hauled out on the creaking waggons (they use the old ones, if they have them, with the weathered hubs and felloes and the tires wired on) filling the circumambience with its indecorous odour, I can scent, beyond *its* heavy smell, the clover fragrance and the light, scarce-perceptible grain-perfumes that will follow it and the plough. Similarly, the politician, soaked by the clinging ordure of craft and graft—the manure that fertilizes the Party crop—shrinks not from the stink (in fact, hates to let any of it get away) "they might get next," unwilling to share it with his friends almost; but he scents, beyond the smell, the fruits-to-be —Place, Power, Privilege, "reverence" (ha, ha), "love" (ha, ha, ha) "obedience" (while he can buy it), "troops of friends" (while the swag lasts), all, of course, of the heeler's kind, and bearing no resemblance to the crops grown upon the soil which can be eaten. The political manure produces nothing that can fill; but only parasites that can feed, and must be fed.

Having stuck up our cedar-stake, or, in literary parlance, having made the foregoing, primitive elucidation, explanation, excuse, and digression, let's hurry on. The Seventh Squad had, under the sharp eyes and commands of Majors Donaldson and Lamontagne, been examined in squad and company drill (weather more moderate, and us working in the open), and we were bowling along O.K., and no enemy in sight. Tom and I were billeted at the Royal, and had been for three weeks—fourteen days had sufficed us in the cells; and, besides, Bill, one evening, when I was up to dinner, had, after many feints and shifts, asked me point blank, "Why I stayed where no one could get me." "Why, Bill," said I, "just plain necessity." "Well," said he, "you are an odd chap, K.C.; one never knows how to take you, and—" "Don't bother taking me, Bill," laughed I; "I'm not worth it." "But," said Bill, "you'll never get what you want, nor meet the fellows you should meet, if you stick around there." "But, Bill," I replied, "the gink that's going to do for me doesn't live in Winnipeg; and our joint is O.K.—its clean, its cheap, and they play good checkers." "Well," he rapped, "you play checkers down to the Royal where you've—always stayed—and—now—don't get mad. Tell them to send me the bill." "Why, old chap," said I, "You've slipped a cog or loosened a gear or—" "I know I have," said Bill, "I telephoned for you three times this week—you weren't out, you told me so to-night—and I couldn't get you, and I'm not going to have *that*; and besides, K.C., here, here," putting it in my pocket (there was no encumbrance on those friendly

hands, now), "there's a cheque for a hundred, and when that's done let me know. Good night, now; its getting late; that British warm suits you to a T; turn up the collar" (doing it himself). "Don't he look the real thing, Annie?" and Annie smiled and answered, "You bet." "Good night, K.C. Ring us to-morrow at six from the Alex., and Annie and I will come down, and you'll go with us to the Pantages. I've got the tickets. Good night." And I nodded and went out, and on the side-walk, where they could see me through the window, I paused, and with my face to the wind (the match shielded in the hollow of my hands) lighted another of Bill's cigars, removed it, saluted Bill and Annie, and strode away, the cigar tight in my teeth, and an indefinable sensation in my heart, and a whirl of foolish impossihilities in my head. But, if only some Irish lad, the blarneying, quick-witted, light-footed, big-hearted scamp, could, in some way—dear, oh,—conciliation, common honour, common sense—blazes!—privilege wants it's place and dominance wants it's club and bum superstitions stand glaring at each other, fearful lest they loose what they'd better be without—infernal fiddlers! —Bosh!

This happened three weeks earlier. I wasn't anxious to enrich the C.P., though they'd get it, anyway; because every creek flows to the sea, and a drop like me, hugging a boulder or swirling in an eddy—for a minute —couldn't save me ultimately, from nature's law, backed by the Government and the Bank of Montreal. So here were Tom and I, in airy rooms, big enough in which to drill a squad, passage and bathrooms between, ventilators

for Tom's infernal morning cigarette, tables for books, and a telephone on the wall, where Bill could catch me any time. "Tom," said I, "this is poor stuff for fellows who expect shortly to sleep in the snow or mud, with their mit, not for a pillow, but to prevent their ear from sticking or getting plugged." "It's perfectly all right," said Tom; "nothing the matter with it; besides if we don't pass these exams. we'll be in the soup instead of the snow. Where are you eating to-night, K.C.? If you have nothing on, I've an invite for you. Our O.C. and a bunch of our's are dining downstairs with Davy White, the elevator man. Will you come?" "Sure thing, son; how many?" "Ten, with you." "All set." "And say, K.C., Colonel Dashon told me to give you a tip: don't close up too sudden with the other ginks." "He said something like that last night, but I don't want the Infantry stuff, Tommy; me for the construction or destruction end of it, whether that end's front or rear; but if it's building up or blowing down, I know it, and I'll be at home, and there's enough plugs in jobs they can't handle. Not for mine. *I'm too old.*" "Well," said Tom, "what are you here for?" "Partly to wait on Slam, partly to look things over and see how they start the boys off, and partly to get familiarized with the harness, and show that I can be worked without blinkers." "Seems all right," replied Tom; "they'll be grabbing off your kind over there, and it will be handy to know the A.B.C. stuff." "You bet you, Tommy," said I; "and though there's a lot of good contractors who never carried a water pail, I'm not one of them." "You're out there," grinned Tom. "The right place

to start contracting is Snottawa." This, viewed in the light of recent experiences, was unanswerable, and so I took up map-reading for a time, and Tom went to it, repeating and re-repeating (in his voice developed on the parade ground) the answers to questions that he expected to run up against in the coming exams. He was at me in a minute to "hear him," as if I hadn't heard him for five weeks now; but of course I dropped my book and bellowed "Go ahead!" "Here's the book," said Tom; "be sure I'm right." "I don't need the book, fellow," laughed I. "But," frowned Tom, "I don't know that." "Well, all right, give me the blasted thing, and go ahead." Ten minutes "hearing" him, then tunics and belts, and "quick march," away down the "side line," and "right wheel" along the concession, Right wheel at the "jog." "Halt," at the elevator (don't know the military command for elevator operations) but down, anyway. The big rotunda of the prairie dimensions, productivity, and seductivity, filled *full* of ambitious, anxious, bright-faced, healthy, vigorous "oreifer boys"; sprinkled here and there with decoy colonels (in their voluminous belts, cold feet, and sleek safety-first heads); also a few swanking majors, promoted and transferred in order to get rid of them, and everywhere, thick as stars in the midnight sky, the bright ones, the snappy ones, the clean-hearted ones, the brave ones that were to show the world that they (like the lads who had set the pace) knew how to die, and that no man, nor historian, could or ever would measure the soul of Canada by the soul of her profiteers. We dined. The dinner, like the man who gave it, was good. He,

too, like some of his guests of that evening, lies "hushed from the roaring storm." Death is at home in the quiet by-ways of peace, as well as on the shell-swept highway of war. He was not a soldier in uniform; he was not in the army, but he was a fighter in civies, and, up to his lights, did what in him lay for his country and his kind. To you, old chap, calm in your narrow house, the Christmas snows for the first time sifting softly and quietly down upon the fresh earth which covers that man's-heart of your's, stilled forever. To you, Davy White—here's to you.

CHAPTER XVII

"Fat paunches have lean pates."

"My son, my son, would God that I had died for thee!"

"Foul, venting ignorance,
With scabby sapience plastered: aye, forsooth!
Claps its wise foot-rule to the walls of the world."

The last exams—law, etc.—were on. The "pussy-footing" major, pulled from a pulpit, given a stack of text-books and cut loose on full pay and field allowance, occupied the platform in that hall, where those upon their captain's course were to indite documentary answers to the "legal questions," formulated, as earth had been, from the nebulous gases of tenous military mist. He had put us all in gay good humour that morning when we assembled. He was a solemn guy; fat, and had the right-shaped legs to keep his spurs from tangling, and when he mounted the rostrum to address us, before we began, he had, in a moment of abstraction, closed his ministerial eyes and raised his reverential palm (as if about to call upon that Master whom he had deserted—for higher pay, perhaps) but luckily, opening his peepers, looking, maybe, for his special platonic goddess (even preachers require inspiration, and ladies have lots of it), he discovered that there were present only boys and a few ancient ginks like myself, and that he was on a militant, not a love—pardon me—peace-making mission. His declamation, to still the rippling of foolscap and other

kindly and furtive camouflage, was deeply solemn (great how these chaps, through a long practice in self-hypnosis, mumble on, quite unconscious that though they have themselves under, they have not got the other fellow yet). But we listened like good disciples of discipline (maybe the firing squad was loaded and under arms round the corner, and the brigadiers and staff polished up and waiting impatiently to see a soldier die by a bullet —as a first and final opportunity, alas). Anyway, we were adjured, in solemn admonition, to avoid unworthy practices, such as copying from notes, giving or receiving tips (which last looked as if the tiddle-de-wink had forgotten his collection plate) and all other heinous and piratical devices for pretending to knowledge that we did not have. These boys were born soldiers; not one of them flicked an eyelash nor an eye, nor made any other guilty or guilt-disguising tremor, absolute little-child-like innocence and rigidity. We were prepared for the pussy-footer, and had pasted between the leaves of M.M.L., which book we were permitted, enough legal war fog to stack all the Huns roaming over Europe in a scrap heap at Berlin, provided the boys with the guns made good. The gentleman posted us at isolated tables, gave us the copies of the questions, and we set to work. But our fellows were good scouts. Some of them had, over-night, obtained information of the enemy's intentions by a reconnaissance, conducted with unquestionable skill and a courage worthy of St. Julien, and these, like Napoleon on the eve of Austerlitz, had told their comrades how the enemy would deploy. Consequently, the heads of our column hit the unsuspecting enemy in the flank,

and, as General Rapp reported of Austerlitz, in a few hours it was all over. Some of our boys had only to demonstrate for a half-hour, pass up some seventeen pages of manuscript, and slip away. Most of us were through at three o'clock. A few were a little later, and as we too finished, and were at the door, in came a lad who was receiving special treatment on account of his civil occupation. He was flurried; the exams. closed at five; and he whispered to Captain A., Captain B., and Colonel C. (their present ranks), and myself, "God, fellows, I'll never make it." "Oh, yes, you will," said Captain A.; "let's see your M. M. L.," taking it from beneath his arm and substituting his own. "Sure, that's all right; page five seven eight." "I get you, you thieves," he laughed, light-heartedly, and hurried to his task. He had been a good comrade, a favourite, full of life and song, at the essential examinations, the drill, the maps, the musketry, the tactics, the engineering; he and everyone else had gone to it like a Trojan and a gentleman; but this was law under a presiding tiddle-de-wink pussy-footer, and no one cared a hoot about it; the infernal dope on the amount of the fines for the second, third, fourth, fifth or five hundredth offence for "drunkenness, guilty of" within so many days or weeks or months, got the goat of every boy who tackled it. There was a natural recoil from the assumption that every lad who carried a rifle for the protection and vindication of civilization, humanity, and truth, would, in some damnable way, the moment he shouldered it, become a drunkard; so it got them all, and got me, and has me yet. Though it would seem now that it was necessary, because since the big booze com-

panies over in the tight little island had to have their *war margins*, "bigger and better than ever," and somebody had to drink their output, it was very likely that the soldier boy would get mixed up with some of it. This late comer (he was a school man) had been, as I said, a favourite. Always, at recess, during drill, he had the boys who were not loaning, borrowing, or lighting lusty cigarettes, singing some of the popular airs, the swan-songs of so many. Life and love and the virile blood dancing in the hearts of his ready pupils finding voice in meaningless words, but in tragic measure, made the wooden roof-trusses of the old rink ring. So the boys gathered round him and sang with him, until listless smokers stood with a dead fag in their fingers, or maybe, with the smoke from a blazing one smarting an eye, while the instructors waited, with their unblown whistles, listening till the song was done. Cheery, laughing, singing Klapperton—your late-coming for the law exams., your anxiety, Captain A.'s surreptitious help, your evident relief (so very like a boy's)—what of these! Nothing now. You were a comrade and a man. For the rest, you were but *one* of many *thousands*,—I know that; and yet, for a moment—ah, yes, just for a moment, I see you only. Singing . . . Sailing . . . France;—her sun so bright. Easterly, a cloud, the ever-closer rolling reverberations of the giant guns. Singing yet! What else? Then—then—above that blazing, "lyddite-souled" tornado—do I hear it? "Keep the—Home—fires burn . . ." Ah! the multitudinous explosions, radiating jagged steel hail and annihilation, have engulfed forever the singer and his song. "Well," saith the

Profiteer, "what of this? A trifle! Tut, tut! People sing—it keeps them from thinking; and they die—it keeps them from thinking long. Look what boys like these—in the aggregate, of course—have done. They have made Canada famous—they have saved us from Kultur and the Hun—they have preserved us from Bill the Pietist and his German 'Gott,' splotched with the blood of babes. Pooh, pooh! Look at the Future; look at our Commercial Expansion. See the Volume of our Export Trade. Cut out the 'sob stuff'; leave tears to the women." (We have done that.) "Be men! Look at us! We, the sleepless ones—we, the tireless ones—the anxious ones—the workers (by proxy, of course)—we, the traders, the financiers, the profiteers. Look at us and rejoice, and get busy and pay us the couple of billions you owe us!" "But, now, you Great Ones, you, having spoken, might Simplicity, with its weak human feelings and emotions, its tears, its void heart, ask you a question?—Was it wise, think you, to shame us with the transmutation of our offsprings' blood into golden chains; were you wise—with all your wisdom; was it wise, think you, to pile up and pinnacle your mountainous margins till they outshadow life and the future—till they hide the very heavens—till you have, of yourselves, so out of the form and proportions of their originals, debauched, exaggerated, and caricatured them that reflection, as she recoils from their stupendous dimensions, 'shell-shocked, goes laughing mad.'" "But," saith the Mighty Ones, "when ye talk thus, it is because of your narrow vision; because ye think too much of your little griefs, your petty chattels, your plain domestic

trifles. What are they?—Nothing. Dishonour not your dead; they gave their lives like men—they perished that their country might live—be worthy of them. We have compassion for your sorrow and tolerance for your griefs; but don't indulge them too long; this is a working world. For your chattels and little homesteads—they are our securities; you'll have them returned when you redeem them—if you cannot do that, reconcile yourselves to parting with them. Domestic ties are broken eventually —a day earlier means nothing; what of them? For your dead—they died gloriously. Such death to so many in so short a time is only given once in a thousand years; and we—you see we are not physically fit, fat, unexercised, mentally indisposed from our constant employment in regulating mankind—we envy them their glorious deaths; you have no occasion for tears or grief on that score. For your maimed—who would not give all this world's goods in exchange for their honourable scars and their poverty? Poverty must still be their portion, because to reward them according to their merit, were to traduce them to mercenaries, and shrink their heroic service into the sordid balance of barter and sale. Perish such abominations! We have done much in the way of charities, contributions, donations, etc.; we will neither insult nor embarrass you by citing them; but we will yet do more for your sake and—treat it not lightly—we will endure the reproach of sordidity, of luxuriousness, of parasitism, and the shame of idleness. In the amount of these last that are properly laid to our charge, by that same amount shall your poverty, your frugality, abstemiousness, and laboriousness be increased and rendered

beautiful, noble, and self-sacrificing. You have shown your patriotism abroad; let it now be exhibited at home, and for countless generations our heirs, assigns, and descendants shall be to your heirs, assigns, and descendants, as we are to you, the voluntary bearers of those reproaches which would shame you, and render your precedent illustrious services null and void. Go to! Tears and griefs are but idle things; regrets also take up valuable time, disturb the labourer's needed rest, and unfit him for his task upon the morrow. Fret not yourselves of the foolish vapourings of uninformed and noisy idlers; work is the only sane thing. We know this, having studied it well, it being from of old our special inheritance so to do. We have reasoned thus long to calm you, to turn your minds in the only direction that life, with its manifest laws and limitations, permits; for this time you are forgiven; you have not sinned so much against us as against heaven, and heaven also knows how to pardon, and will, at the petition of a contrite heart, with the proffer of your prayers and ours, in your behalf—unworthy though you are—extend its amnesty and forget this temporary deviation from the paths of rectitude, wherein you and your forefathers have walked since the deluge engulfed mankind for its rebellious wickednesses. Think of these things and be warned, and be grateful. A few years will heal the wounds and dry the tears, and life's miseries—unavoidable, part indeed, of humanity—will make you thankful for your dead. Look, also, upon us as your friends, patient, long suffering, slow to anger, beneficent—in measure not to corrupt your frugality—and thoughtful of your needs, without, however, debasing

you to that point where you cease to provide for yourselves. Look at it calmly, and in its proper light, as we here show it you, and is it not evident that you, in your simple frugality, your clean abstemiousness, your carefree, happy irresponsibility—except for the passing day—could not and would not—everything weighed judicially and without prejudice—even if you could, exchange places with us? Nay, you would not; reason and that strong homely sense of yours would not permit. How could you, without doing violence to your most sacred feelings, attachments, affections and noble loves, exchange your felicity of quiet, harmonious existence for our commercial strife? Your carefree days for our fear-infested nights, the simple troubles of your little cottage for the cares of a world, and your confined and loving solicitude of your immediate family and friends for our continual anxieties for the welfare of mankind! Shame at your hasty and irrational complaining may—nay, it does—withhold your answer. But we, studied in the human heart and humble mind, understand your silence, and know how to interpret it. You will return to the paths of your patient forefathers, gather together your remaining household gods, giving full, submissive and penitent thanks for what of them is left. The occupations in which your vigorous sires passed so happily their laborious days and dreamless nights (honest toil their marvellous sedative) shall once more become your occupations. War, Heaven's punishment for the sins of man, shall be succeeded by an enduring peace. In the busy work of reconstruction, inevitable in the wake of conflict, you will forget the griefs which are, by the operation of laws,

immutable, yet Divine, the inheritance of man. Little ones, sweet gifts of heaven and the pledges of love that are both temperate and beautiful, will blossom and grow up in loveliness, and bear the names of those who bequeathed them their heroic honours. The troubled memories of grievous events hidden ever deeper in the past, and hallowed by "time, the adorner," shall lose their sting and poignancy, and become ever easier with the waning years. You see your griefs were largely the results of a vain obsession; the human mind cannot dwell upon such without becoming diseased. Remember—"my son! my son!—" "Yes, remember your son, the honoured one, if you must; but remember also his mother." "And her gray hairs!—" "Yes, and her gray hairs, the glory of a mother who has borne a soldier." "God!—" "Yes, remember Him, also; He is the Comforter. Come, old chap, we'll credit you with a pair of overalls and a grub-stake; get back to work; its the only thing. And don't think, old fellow, that we do not respect your grief; we understand—it—and—you—tut, tut." All to the good, you bet.

The parents of the cheery, laughing, singing one—they who had laboured that he might get out of the mud and teach a school, thereby becoming a great man,—they sit in the evening's failing light—failing, thank God; it hides the gray hairs, the thickening wrinkles and the new prophetic trembling of the hands—silent in their unspeakable grief—not for themselves, but for the sudden blotting out of that bright future of his that they together had so toiled and saved and planned for in their loving, self-sacrificing hope. They know that there is

but one way. They are of the soil, and understand its necessities and demands; therefore, they will, upon the morrow, after their simple breakfast and its cup of tea (the singing one liked tea; oh, boy—his cup and saucer still decorate the old cupboard), go about their occupation and till a little of the soil (the singing one had done that, too, before he became a teacher in the great school), and the days will continue and the seasons, as heaven hath designed, and they will bear their loss and their life until they, too (let us hope as they do) shall slip away together, and once more listen, unburdened, comforted, glorified, to the Singer and his Song.

You see, my lords and gentlemen, that I place the hope of redress and recovered happiness in the future, in the mist beyond the grave; that is the Orthodox Future which hath, for nearly two thousand years, proved such a magnificent distraction, and hath served your purpose so well.

My lords and gentlemen, I ask you, what further could I do?

CHAPTER XVIII

"We are but moles; our tendency is downward;
Our element the earth."

"What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?"

"For when we in our viciousness grow hard, the wise
Gods seal our eyes in our own filths."

"Yet did not this stony-hearted cur shed one tear."

Commend me to a dinner of good, fat, juicy roast beef—if you want to get the self-confident, unctuous, God-is-love, "all's-right-with-the-world" mental poise. A man, his stomach lined with that (the striped stuff—fat and lean, fat and lean), you know, can defy "public opinion, death or the devil." No condescension for him, no revising of decisions or reversion of judgments. The thing that is to-day was:—What is—will be. I am *it*; consequently *it* is I; and "Waiter!" "Yes, sir." "Bring the roast." "Yes, sir." "And, waiter!" "Yes, sir." "See that there is just such another roast for to-morrow." "Yes, sir." "For the following day." "Yes, sir." "And, waiter!" "Beg—beg pardon, sir?" "Confound your impudence." "Yes, sir." "For all time." "Yes—sir—but, sir—" "But me no buts; begone!" "Sir!" "Silence! and see it done." The fatter the more unctuous, the juicier the more self-confidence, the tenderer, the less exhaustion in the masticator and the more reserve force in the consumer. The reader who has followed me thus far is passed the primer

class—my class (laugh again, son)—and should be able, at his leisure, from the roast—or roasts—of beef, to draw a few deductions. Enough!

"After the storm the calm"; after the grief, the subsiding sighs; after the tears, the smiles; after the toils, the leisure; (perhaps) after the war, the peace—and the profiteers; after the tragedy, the comedy; after the tragedian, the clown. Mind, in the centre of the universe, must of necessity radiate in all directions, sometimes at desperate speed and with far vision, or it misses much celestial phenomena. But (blast that infernal *but*—"jailer bringing forth the malefactor") the mind, in its cerements of flesh—frail, failing habitation of clay—dependent entirely on the stomach, gross, clamorous, unspiritual, and the stomach, being wholly concentrated on next year's crop, it must, though in unwilling rebellion, become the servant of the maw. Its radiations fade into a furrow, or parallel furrows; its visions fixed on their seasonal regularity; the glimpses of far glories celestial grow rarer and rarer—unnecessary, perhaps.—It becomes short-sighted, and the effort required to look at the heavens is so painful, so ineffective, that the desire also becomes atrophied, and the eyes remain finally fixed on the earth. Kindly earth, that grows, "at labour's earnest call," the roots and fruits whereon the stomach feeds. "Yet," saith the seer, the prophet, the poet, "unless the Mind uplift its vision—gross, near-sighted—from the furrow, and gaze—sometimes heavenward—it will, in the end, become wholly sightless—an unseeing thing, unable to guide even the plough" and what will the stomach do then, poor thing! Command its bipedal,

depilated upright case to grow—or regrow—a furry hide, crouch upon all fours, and find predatious *fellowship* with the wolves. Certainly, without question. "Therefore," saith the seer, the prophet, the poet, "look heavenward once more, O Mind; combat the stomach—gross, luxurious, unreflective autocrat, look up, revitalize, revisualize thyself, the lights celestial are not extinguished; they cannot be extinguished." "But," saith the mind, "Alas, I cannot see; concentrated so long upon the dark furrow, with its crumbling mold, the flashing lights of Heaven sear and blind me, I cannot see!" "But," reply the others; "we, the soul's triumvirate, will help you; you must look or perish—you and the stomach with you." "Here," cries the poet, "is the lens of genius—nothing in itself, but it aids the vision; look through this." "And here," cries the seer, "is a table of the things you must first look upon, till your eyes become once more accustomed to the light." "I, also," whispers the prophet, "leave with you this scroll, sealed; when you have exhausted the immediate, break up this seal and unfold a chart of the ultimate. In the future you will have more leisure. From this hour the stomach shall demand less, and will, also—even against its nature—be forced, in a measure, to provide for itself." Truth, if she be followed faithfully, will lead the enquirer or unen-compass-ed voyageur along unforeseen paths. When I began to speak of the Mind, it was my intention to postulate that it radiated many ways—all ways. Truth forced me to admit that Mind, far from doing that, dwelt and worked in a degenerate darkness, in retrogressive gloom—in a semi-self-induced night.

"Claptrap, my son." It is so, indeed. I cannot write a book—I see that. (The bright ones saw it long ago, and smiled beatifically.) A book requires continuity of thought (something that is not) and treatment (something of which there is too much), deliberate, undeviating purpose (devil take discovery), express limitation—fitting the foot to the factory shoe, or the head to the helmet of the dark ages. The purpose of a book is to entertain, to amuse, to gild the never-was with the might-be, to caricature wit, to make obvious the humour, to set forth the points at which to laugh, to weep, to be wise, to be gay, to be good, to be wicked: these are some of the things required to "make a book." This, for me, is quite impossible. I could wish, for my purpose, that the reader and I could wander off together in the illimitable spaces, and, with Question and Answer, or even with Question and no Answer (which is sometimes the wisest), pass a few thoughtful hours in each other's sympathetic company, and, with a little knowledge discovered, acquired, and bestowed, each to each, part, at the end, with some gladness and regrets and a cordial "I thank you." It was something in this condition of fellowship that Squad Seven, smart parade-soldiers by now, were parting for their widely-separated units. Pascoe the Wit, and irrepressible terror of sergeant-majors and never-ceasing storm-centre of the Squad, shaking hands, his eyes glistening while he laughed: "See you in France, old top, if you don't stop a bullet before I get there." "Goodbyes" to the young, thin, awkward Laidlaw (often wrong, yet undisturbed—"Sober-sides" or "Duncy," he answered to either), who slipped away after a fight with

three or four doctors, as a private, and got—a post-humous V.C. Gay, red-headed "Trieksy," who daneed —a la eabaret—all the way to his wooden eross. The sissy-looking lad, who "didn't give a rip for the infantry stuff," but "meant to fly," and did, exhibiting a skill and swift decision that lay hidden unsuspected beneath that girlish exterior. These, and so many others, saying soldierly "Good-byes." We were laughing, too, and rallying "The Boob," "The Elephant," "Little Walks," and "'Arry," who, in the final field-day and sham battle, had proven themselves great eommanders in their valiant and skilful defenee of Winnipeg from the invading enemy, when our eourageous major—fearless as a Cœur de Lion—had so valiantly exposed his great figure and fine fore-sight on top of the Norwood lumber piles. These boys were eraeking their last elass-jests, and waiting in the old rink for the suceessful names to be announeed. Ha! here come the tiddle-de-winks. Hush. So many are qualified as eaptains—I among many others—so many as lieutenants; a number will be given another opportunity. Poor boys! they need subs. aeross the seas; their proportion of casualties are always over, never under, so these lads who missed their stars shall have another chanee for the perilous honour. But the lucky ones (just luek—dubbed captains by the grace of God and the tiddle-de-wink majors—orthodox recalcitrant or ward-heeling) are "damned glad the fool thing is over." For didn't the fighting colonel, who got his rank on the fighting field and had hopped back to take a fighting battalion to the fighting front with him, tell us in his lecture, "Boys, you've got to get this dope to pass; but as soon as you've

passed—forget it." Spoken like a brigadier-general, and he is one now, by gum. Of course, he had first taken a squint (pity the truth should ever have to truckle) to his right and left rears to verify that no tiddle-de-wink majors, cull-war captains, or murder-mad disciplinarians—war jetsam—were lurking in the depots of the hall.

We were dismissed with unctuous roast-beef instructions, each to his fate—to wounds—to "wait on Slam,"—to annihilation (by a shell)—to the spinning plunge of a blazing aeroplane—to German prisons—and to worse than these—to the heart-curdling submission to intolerable swank, to the cunning, shameless shuffling of the safety-firsts, to that hell-sieve and separator, where the chaff, the husks, the hollow pretences, by their very want of heart, their emptiness, uselessness, and unfitness are blown back from the fighting front by the hurricane of war, while the sound-solid, clean, heart-filled No. 1 hard is, by virtue of its weight and ability to withstand the tempest, hurried forward and flung indiscriminately into the colossal grinders of destroying Mars. No one knows better than I do, that there must be control and obedience. No one knows better than I that to do a job you must put the "game one" in the danger spot, and sometimes lose him, too—even in our little way—but the chap who got the easy place, the safe place, the keep-clear job, didn't get the top price, stuff his overalls, and sit around the "sleeping camp" at night, blowing about what he had done, if he had, his mates would have beaten his block off. It is over; it is finished. The tiddle-de-wink majors amble off to say additional farewells to lovely cousins—to drink tea with the patriotic

infantas doing their bit on the Red Cross booths—with a prospect of discounting the "Swag-bellied Hollander," later at the Garry or the Alex., as becomes a Staff that has beaten the enemy, ignorance, out of its boots.

Seven of us who have established a habit of eating together at Harve Latham's on Smith Street head for that notable dump for dinner "The Boob," "The Elephant," "'Arry," "The Windmill," "Little Walks," the "Hon. Mr. Pascoe," and myself. "Harv.," expert proprietor, cook, hash-slinger, comedian, and collector at the "notable dump," had dubbed me "General," out of respect for my years and dignified deportment—having a workman's eye also for merit and the fitness of things. We filed into Harv.'s—our successful seven. The Oracle had spoken; we were "qualified"; fit, as far as the Imposition Authorities were concerned, to go "over the top," and gather our bread-baskets full of bullets—and our caps full, too, if we wanted to be greedy and play the porker—in the morning. Harv. was interested in us; we were all "good pay," the kind of boarders a landlord loves; and the moment we opened the door he was roaring—he had a sergeant-major-voice himself—"How is it, General! how did you ragtags pull out?" "Harv., my boy," said I, "you'll have to chuck the rough stuff; these gentlemen have the Imposition stamp, and you'll have to pay them the deference due to rank and merit." "What the hell, Bill," roared Harv.; "haven't I called you a General ever since you've been here; what do *you* call these ginks? Captains, son?" "Captains Harv." "Captains! What part of the shindy do they shine in?" "These heroes head their men, go over the top first,

when there's a charge and little things like that." "Good-bye, boys," said Harv., shaking his own hands; "farewell; I wouldn't mind a spit goin' over in the ruck—somebody might get away; but, pshaw, when Elephant here hoists that carcass of his over the top by his lonesome—good night!—some hell of a chance he's got. Good morning—fire out your orders. I hope you'll always have as good grub as I give you—till it happens. You first, General." "Thank you, Harv." "I didn't mean—" "Yes, you did. Steak for mine." "Extra cut." "Extra ten cents, you mean. Yes," "Boobsie; same thing?" "Yep." "Elephant? Extra-extra; I know you; you've been here before. Walks?" "Same's Boob's." "Cert! I know you'll all fill up for your last meal; you'll be back to plain stuff to-morrow." "Butter, Harv.!" "Lord, I stacked that butter bowl till it slid off." "Slid off's right; bring the slide." (Exit Harv. and re-enter.) "Here, Gen.; here, Boobs; your's, El.; your's 'Arry—wat in 'ell do'ey call 'e 'Arry for? Mister Salute, here's your's." "Harv.!" "Yes, Honourable." "A little bread here." "You don't want bread; you want a bakeshop." "Well, bring the bakeshop." "Can't insult you fellows." "No chance, Harv." "Just like the Scarboro hogs—feet in the trough, pretty soon." "Certainly, Harv.; what about the H.-P.." "Lord, I can't keep you fellows in H.-P. Buy a drink once in a while. Do you furnish your own when you eat at the big joints?" "Garry's all right, Harv." "So's the Alex.," said Tom "Well," said Harv., "why don't you eat there?" "Money, Harv.; money, boy." "Well, do you expect me to fatten you on wind?" "Say, Harv.!" "Say it, El." "A little mustard for

the extra fat, here." "It would take a slather of it to make you go down; but here you are; stuff yourself." "Harv.!" "Captain Boobs!" (saluting him). "What about bread?" "Bread? Bread? No more bread; buy a meal on the diner to-morrow—the C.P. needs the money." "Bread, Harv.! Bread! Bread!" "Blast you fellows; but here—here—kill yourselves and save the Germans the job." "Thanks, Harv." "Thank your impudence; don't thank me." "Say, Harv.!" "Out with it." "Salt's cheap, isn't it?" "If every guy was as fresh as you, it'd be dear enough; what about it?" "I don't want any." "But you need it." "Harv.!" "What chance has a fellow with this bunch of wolves—what's wanted now?" "Pie." "Thank God, I'll have enough bread and butter for breakfast. What kind of pie?" "What have you got?" "Blue, rais', mince, rasp', app', lem', and black'." "Blackberry, Harv." "And you?" "Lemon." "And you?" "Blueberry." "And you?" "Raspberry." "And you?" "Apple, my son." "*Apple-my-son!* Haven't got it; Gen., what say?" "Mince." "*Mince!* Just a minute You want rais', Hon.?" "Certainly, Harv., r-a-i-s-i-n, raisin." "Damn your skins, no two alike; how do you expect me to keep them from tasting of the tin; seven pies to split open and spoil" (Here a chorus of "Anything, Harv!" "Anything, old boy!") "No, you don't—you'll eat what you ordered. Here, and here, and here, and here—still at the bread, you three—playing cut-throat—all you're good for—what you've been studying for—go to it—you'll get your belly's-full." "Cheese it, Harv." "Some of you dainty ladies will butter your bread with your fingers before long, or

I miss my guess." "Well, we can do that." "Yes, and wipe them on your tunic tails, too, for a cigar." "No, we'll suck 'em, Harv." "That's it; kids enough for anything." "Bring the pie, Harv." "You don't need pie; be sure you've enough bread, boys." "Come on, Harv." "Not after so much bread." "Bread nothing! Say, Harv.! we're going uptown—be a sport." "That's where the bread's gone—a quiet lunch in the rooms, eh? Why don't you take the lady out?—But here, where'll you put—" "Where'll you put the money we pay?" "I'm not paid yet." "Well, we're going to settle right now." "Gentlemen! gentlemen!" "That's the stuff that get's you, Harv." "Look here, Boob: you've got fat here." "But I had meals out." "Sure, you had —corns on your elbows leaning on the free lunch counters; no wonder I can't keep even." "How much, Harv.? Let's settle." "Let's see. Ten for the Gen.—three and a half. Ele.—five extras—four beans. Walks' regular and a piece of pie—three fifty-five. 'Arry, ot. .wice and one extra—two ninety. Boobs, regular and three pies—put it over me once, at that—three sixty-five." "Out once, Harv." "Just seeing if you'd twig—three thirty. Honourable, how much?" "Three dollars, numbskull." "Thanks; want any change?" "I'd get it too, like—" "Cut it out, cut it out, son; you're a captain now; and must not swear." "We're out to fight autocracy and privilege, Harv." "Fine! You'll not be out every night with a new girl then." "Not new, Harv.; just different." "Same thing. Whose next? Wind's— four thirty-five." "Why, I'm top notcher." "Sure, son; you're the only gink big enough to have four extras and

a friend." "Oh! oh! he had a friend?" "Yes; maybe he owed *him* one—see." "Well, I'll not owe you one. Here you are." "Look, fellows, don't run out—for a second. Here's a cigar—the very best Coronados—twenty-five cents apiece—for you wolves. But likely I'll never see you again." "Don't cry, Harv." "Here, take two of them." "Don't cry, Harv." "Boobs, you swine, leave me one for myself." "Good night, Harv.!" "Good luck, Harv.!" "Good night, fellows!" "Good night!" He followed us to the door. We went down the steps, steaming his Coronados; went out through the little gate. "Halt!" Harv. is calling. "What is it, Harv.?" "Say, you fellows—I—hope—the bogie man won't get you!" "Go in the house, you old scamp, good bye!" And we moved off. Halt! "Say, boys!—give 'em hell!—and don't forget—old—Harv.!" We called cheerily back, "All right, Harv.!" But the door was closed.

CHAPTER XIX

"Had I been consulted at creation I would have spared The Maker many absurdities."

Waiting—corps are made—the personnel appointed and forgotten. Still waiting—I'm forgotten, too, I guess—trying to stride in uniform; don't know how to discard it and don't know how to keep it on—just a fool and a joke. My good friends, with the prejudice of partisans, tell me I'm not a joke—but I know better. Go to work; yes, that's it; but Finance sneers at me—I'm no financier. I can neither over reach, cheat nor steal—therefore I am not safe—and Finance, like democracy, must be made safe, though the whole world go to wreck and men begin to question the potency of God, and wonder whether Nature is a freak, and the old earth just a mere, after-dinner jest of drunken devils. How can I go to work? The bank, chaining up my *three* for their safe *one*, won't pay a lousy thirty-five dollar cheque, though I had a current of thirty-seven—they had pinched twenty-five to pay a piece of insurance, and marked my paper N.S.F. Some layout to go to work. Blessed, perspicacious bank! how clearly it sees—one way. It doesn't set the robbers down as criminals; it only classes me, who was robbed, as a fool. Well, their system demands that classification, so how can I go to work; and if I did, at what would it be—munitions, more munitions, aeroplanes? you need a pull or a percentage

for that. No, not for mine, if I could. Even misery, self-contempt, and the choking "paltering in the shifts of lowness," couldn't flail me into that stuff. The profiteers in these things will wish, when this war is over, that they, with their fiercely-begotten plunder, were, with a millstone round their necks, cast into the sea. Go to work! yes, go to work! The big jobs are being closed out—for what? Necessity, doubtless. And its a great scheme for the Government to help its friends. A dung-hill that I knew (he wasn't a workman, and never would be) had a fifteen thousand dollar interest in a close-out; he got sixty-five thousand—yet I couldn't get the cost of a completed building that had been saddled on us by a fraud and a fraudulent minister, who had to burn up records and steal them to cover his tracks. Go to work! I had worked since I could carry a water pail, and before, and the net result was that I sat roped, tied—threatened with being "set on the street" if I didn't consent to being tied—and now borrowing from friends enough to eat, I was just a vagrant-in-charge of a heap of idle machinery, till the rust and interest would eat it all away, and the old lady and I would be where the bank's solicitor said he'd put me—on the street. Hell! no work for me—there was none, anyway, unless you *paid* for it. Graft had kept herself disguised before, but now she swanked openly and unashamed. No! let them do what they chose and show their hand. I'd find mamma and the little chap a shelter, and I'd go overseas, if I could get. Dozens of dubs had gone, pretending to be experts—why not I; I could handle a couple of hundred men, a company, say, and

I didn't want anything bigger—at least, till I'd looked it over.

Snottawa! Here we are again; to see why in blazes Slam, with all his noise, thunder, and uproar cannot, from such a deafening diapason, spare one little echo for me. So once more to the Chateau, which is beginning to look like the colossal iniquity it is—bold, self-confident pyramid of plunder legalized. "Register!"

"Sure" you cannot afford to be a bum and look it; so you borrow and keep up the flimsy pretence of being able to pay your way, in deference to the infernal grip of the plunder system that blackballs you if you don't splash in the glitter of its pauperizing rays. Where have we got to? The working-man, at twenty cents an hour, works his entire day for the price of two cigars, four cigars, or, if you are really frugal, eight cigars, and, if contemptible, sixteen cigars. He works the whole of one day and half of the next for the price of a fairly simple meal (he don't eat it, of course) that is served with so much "side" and waste labour and obsequious degeneracy (heggary in a dress suit) that it is an insult to common sense, and a conceited, flagrant imposition on the fellow who sweats. The old illusion that wealth, somehow, came down from the top instead of ascending from the bottom has been swept into limbo by the hell's hurricane of war. Men have begun to see that it's the soul and strong right arm everywhere—at the plough, at the forge, the lathe, at the stoke-hole, and in the battle field, that counts, and that nothing else means anything. The business brains, the commercial intelligence, the Napoleonic (pardon the fools, thou mighty

shade!), financial skill—where are they—they, the miserable hell-hounds—they are busy "cleaning up." Busy, busy, cunning boys! They, like the sap-boilers in the old Uxbridge woods—but on a world-engulfing scale—are watching their Kettle boiling down the blood of millions, while the hell-fires of war roar beneath it, consuming, after having bled them, divisions, army corps, army groups, nations, and they watch assidnously for the flood to foam, testing calmly, at intervals, its consistency on the sooted snow-drift of their margins! Then these experts at the sugaring-off—behold them! They will pour that terrible residue into moulds and make a sweet-meat thereof to tempt the fools of future generations to renew the process! Some sap-boilers, these boys! But the sap is crimson, and the syrup is a ghastly, hideous horror of coagulating gore, and the sugar is but the concentrated, compressed corpuscles of dried blood—product not to be vended but by devils, nor to be touched except by the blind, the bestialized, and hopelessly damned. That's where the brains are; the wise boys, the cunning boys, who must be paid for their unrelaxing efforts; efforts—swanking into their offices at ten a.m. and hiking it to the Club and poker-game at four, and hanging, at home, a food card in their front window.

Will this stuff get away? We can't change it—yet—for a minute. We've got first to beat the poor asses in Germany who have been taught that the loathsome passions which decency, in all ages, has reprobated, are divine when let loose by their commercial plunder-bund, headed by a straw soldier in a golden cloak. Will it get away?—not by a damn sight! But, meantime, let

it go. We've got first to beat the foreign thief—out to do with the world what the native thief does with the nation. We'll get the blood-boilers, the sugarers-off, later on. Just now, the workers—who must win this war—believe in the medium of exchange, and are positive if there was no product of the printing presses in the banks, that the grain would not grow, and that the trees would cease to put forth their fruits. The worker—unschooled—his mind pre-empted prior to birth and mutilated after that and cultivated in the creed of commerce, cannot be told these truths just yet; good patriots will not precipitate disruption, and the financial cynics know that, and bank upon it, trusting that the world's agony will subside to an apathy that will leave them safe for another thousand years. Meantime, we stand for this colossal theft—the compression into a slip of paper that they can put in their pocket—of next year's crop, before it is grown. *Next year's*, yes, and the next fifty years'—if they can turn their fictions over fast enough. But all men, except the bloodless circle of the plunder-bund, sense the end of that fraud; feel it, and see it, and believe in, and hope for it. Meantime, let's smash the Hun, and take breakfast at the self-serve, and beat it down to the Shirks building, where he of the cropped gray head, black eyebrows, snappy eyes, and the thirst to stand next to Napoleon, keeps the Nova Scotian cabal guessing. In uniform now, I am, and, as my rank is modest, I get a polite reception. The smiling orderly conducts me into Colonel Lookemover's quarters. "An appointment, Captain?" he asks. "No, sir." "Your business is with the Minister personally?" "Yes, sir."

"What unit?" "None, yet. Just an offer of my services and a promise of work." The Colonel is a bright chap; the word work is unmilitary, but he's not offended. He sees that I am a rookie, despite the tiddle-de-winks majors. "I shall send your name in right away." "Thank you, sir." A half-hour's wait, and the process of eight long months ago is repeated—the orderly, the hall, the two sets of doors, Slam! bang! "How are you, Captain Sport?" shaking hands cordially; "what's doing?" "Fine, General—waiting for that Pioneer stuff you spoke of." "Ah, not raising any Pioneer Corps just now; why don't you see Colonel ———, of the Engineers. What can you do?" "I can build anything with two ends to it." "Should have had you. Where do you come from?" Nora Criena, the stenographer with the Irish name, sees that I am embarrassed at being totally unknown, and reaches quickly for a file. "There are a number of letters here of Captain Sport." "Who from? snaps Slam. "Colonel Pickles, Major Towne, Mr. L. L.Comeon, K.C., Mr. Million Billionaire, and Dr.McFlail." "Yes, I know them all; but who's Dr. McFlail?" "A friend of mine, General." "Medical doctor?" "No, General; a doctor of letters." "A philosopher, humph."—Slam's studying philosophic resignation, like some others of us, now, himself.—The stenographer, turning over the history of my achievements, said, quietly, "Captain Sport has three sons in the army." "The black brows raised a little over the snappy eyes. "How old in hell are you, young fellow?" dragging a chair from his right rear; "sit down." "Old enough to command a brigade, General, but I don't want that; just a few hundred men

to keep busy till I get the run of things." "You don't want much." "No more than it's safe to start with." "Well, see here; where are you staying—at the Chateau?" "Yes, General, for a minute." "Come in and see me in the morning, nine o'clock. I'll fix you up right away." "Captain Sport was here eight months ago," murmured Nora Criena. "Eight months ago?" "Yes, in connection with an armoury." "Well what happened?" "You told him a young fellow like him should be raising a battalion." "Yes, and then?" "He agreed with you." "And?" "You asked him to offer his services, formally, by letter." "Well, the letter." "It came by the mail that evening. This is it." "That a long time since. Where have you been?" "Waiting for you to say something." "But, I'm busy, Captain." "Sir, I know that; therefore, I didn't want to spoil things by importunity." "A fellow like you should have been at work." "I thought that, too, General." "Where were you trained?" "Railroad construction." "But the uniform?" "M.D. 10; Military School—January class for Lieutenants, April class for Captains." "Well, you—look here, Captain—the Commission's sitting, I've got to go. Talk things over with Colonel Squinter and Colonel ———, and come and see me in the morning. Too bad, Captain—its a mistake." "I'll be here in the morning, General; thank you. Good day." "Good day, Captain, good day." I smile my thanks to Nora Criena, who flashes back a look of pleased acceptance. She is a bright girl, diplomatic as a Dufferin, and knows her job. I hope she has it yet; though Slam, whom she knew, is in the scrap heap as an undesirable. Out through

the two sets of doors, and chat a little with Colonel Squinter, who is an alert wide-awake boy, and knows what's what. Those boys down there are all pretty wise, bright, amiable, and elusive. They are the same in all the Departments—do anything for you except something. They fill you up with their recommends to the Minister. The Minister, when you land him, has returned the recommendation, "for a revision on points a little obscure." You return to the elusive one again; yes, it is now with the Minister. Back to the Minister. Oh, it is now with the Deputy. The Deputy is a corker and cares for no one, Minister or devil; and now, after spending months, he will require a month at least to look into the matter (through his assistants); and so your affair slithers off into fog about this point. The Deputy is a batter who puts you so far over the fence that you never get back into the game; to be sure he never runs—he just bats for someone else—enough. Colonel Lookemover has a genial, social, fatherly way of getting at your occupation, history, and politics. The occupation and history are, in a measure, unimportant; but politics—that's a serious matter; and he was actually shocked when he discovered that of politics, as defined at Snottawa, I had none. "Why, Captain, a man in your profession"—eh, what?—"must have taken a very active part in the politics of his country?" "No, Colonel, very little." "But you voted?" "Always, sir." "How did you vote?" "With the winners." "But we have not always been in office." "Nor will you always be, Colonel." "Then you have voted both ways?" "That's it; I'm an independent." "That's no good, Captain; no one has any use for a jelly-

fish; no one cares for a man without backbone." "I always thought, Colonel, it required more backbone to stand alone than to lean on something, and as for jelly-fish, if they're like their first syllable, they are favourites, they'll fit any mould. Don't seem much merit in that." "Well, you see how things are." "How what is, sir?" "Captain, if you had known your member, and had him speak for you, you would not be idle at the end of eight months." "I thought the war had blown that stuff galley-west long ago." "Well, Captain, that's the routine, the method. How could we here take care of a man unless someone vouched for him?" "Not very well, as things are, Colonel. Still, I thought the need, the Empire's necessity—not saying I'm the last—would by this time have beaten flat the peace preference." "Captain, take a tip; that is never beaten down; its the way Governments live—you can't get away from it." "Well, Colonel, don't put a string across my path. I don't want anyone's job. Just to help get this thing over and go back to work." "Captain," said the Colonel; "I don't like your politics, or, rather, the want of them; but I'll not hurt you." "But will you help?" "I will." "Sir, I'm much obliged." "When are you to see the Minister again?" "Nine a.m. to-morrow." "There'll be fifty here at that hour; but I'll see that you get him." "Thank you; I've loafed for a year. You know what that means with the world on fire." "Tough luck, old man." "Tough! its worse than that. Good day." "Good day, Captain; see you to-morrow." "Nine a.m."

CHAPTER XX

"Oh! these deliberate fools."

"Like God, we made things possible."

"Spike-Maul Bill was a husky guy,
Rags to the rump and hair to the eye;
Could sink a spike like a three-inch nail,
And the shining steel is the line of his trail
So drill, you tarriers, drill!"

If you want to get a look at Democracy filling a cushioned seat in the halls of Privilege, perfectly at home, perfectly irreverent and unabashed—by Power, in its morning coat and white piped vest; by statesmanship (chartered) in its academic locks and Haligonian abstraction; by unscrupulous wealth in its furtive pussy-footing, sewed-sole and rubber-heeled surreptitiousness; by military autocracy in its red tabs, gold braid, glistening leggings, feminine breeches and clicking spurs—bump up against Charlie Kelly. Charlie has known Snottawa since the biggest thing in it was the Spring drive, going down, engineered by laughing, cursing, athletic devils in flaming woollen shirts, sashes and calked boots. Charlie ran the river with the, to be, millionaire lumberman, J. R., for a mate, when "long-clear, beans and blackstrap" were the shanty-man's trinity and the gods, physically—as are most gods—of the death-dodging river driver. Charlie has still a smack of the Irish accent (it's common down the Gatineau), and understands, (as his forefathers understood, the fairy purl of the Bann and Shannon)—

the wild mysteries chanted in savage diapason by the white-lipped, blue-throated cataracts, and knows the seductive song of exhaustion's eddy, that has swirled to sleep in its drowsy, Thetisian boudoir many a little-limbed dare-devil of the untamed days. Charlie has heard the rapids thundering liberty and roaring mortal defiance to him and his fearless mates, and he, therefore, knows much of the elemental forces and the Power they represent—God. Therefore he shrinks not in the petty presence of the grand statesmen, mighty manipulators, and expert exploiters when they flow past him beneath the "pallid bust" of "The Great Liberal" who dynamited the graves of his habitant sires with a detonating "*Sir!*" Kelly has seen courage and skill in a lousy shirt walk a twelve-foot butt, peevy-balanced end over, deciding the to-be or not-to-be of *his own life*, with lightning speed, yet with the calmness of the deep forest where the log was grown. He has seen these things and heard wild oaths, soul-born, that struck deeper and reverberated heaven-ward higher than the perfunctory prayer droned out from stole or cassock, safe, comfortable and rotund, with dinner browning comfortably in the oven at home. In short, he has worked with and studied and learned his lesson from the wild-surging, leaping, chainless waters. So the oily flow of the commercial, financial, and political back-set does not deceive or impose upon him. In fact, he looks upon it as a kind of sewer or necessary nuisance, designed, in a way, to carry off the scum and waste and filth of a nation's life. If you doubt this, dear Miss Canada, question himself about it when on your next trip to Snottawa, he hands you into his waiting "bus." Of

the "white water" part, there's no need for question; no man, who has done battle with nature, nude and elemental, will ever consent to wear the fetters of the artificial gods. An odd one, like J. R., may do a little fettering (of the other fellows) on his own account; still, they keep their personal, mental limbs free. Most of them stand out for freedom all round, but—well, yes—but. The point I wanted to impress was Kelly's indifference, not rudeness—he's too big—to the man-made Great Ones, whose glistening glories lick up the waters of the toy canal when they blaze to and fro between the Pyramid of Plunder and Parliament Hill.

If you want, also, the political status of any chap "who sits up there," ask him, and you'll see what your representative looks like at Snottawa, stripped of the correspondents' veneer (able chaps, these) and the beer-begotten, barroom-born adulation that haloed him from home, and his favourite haunt in the snide legal office, by the tobacco-plastered wood-box, and the ancient spittoon filled to overflowing (filthy cornucopia) with the frowsy butts of nickel cigars. Charlie can strip these fellows to the skin, and exhibit the "poor, bare, forked radish, fantastically carved." Get next to him when you again visit the Pyramid of Plunder, and enjoy yourself for a half-hour—if the truth doesn't shock you—and get first-hand information from the Hibernian who's who. However, to talk with him is a poor powder for your mental complexion when you start out to solicit a patriotic death from the grave autocrats at the Shirks building. One had better take breakfast in the dining-room and purchase a dollar's worth of deference from the obsequious

chap who thanks you so like a beggar, but who, the very moment he has bowed you away, is "some sport," splitting your dollar with the head waiter, or "rolling the bones" "*once* for the bill or no." After all, "the tools to him who can use them." Some like a muck-rake, others a white-wash brush—and a lime kiln; the successful ones carry a chamois, lending it to the world for her red nose (flattery for the fool); and here deference recurs (its not a physical implement, of course, but the uneducated boor mixes his tools as—the critics *thought*—Shakespeare mixed his metaphors)—but what could I do with deference. I'd look like a dummy in deference, and talk just his way. Nothing for me to do but to butt in, in my shirt sleeves, the mud on my boots, one overalls suspender shy, perhaps, and talk business from the working end and land a piece of the layout (if I could), there being plenty of room (if I were big enough). So I headed once more for nine a.m., and Slam. Colonel Lookemover had an orderly posted, and I was closeted "with my friend, the Minister," at once. Slam was busy—not even a good morning. "The Commission" was flying a kite, and Slam, taking beads on its tail with his famous rifle, was firing so fast that the blasted gun hadn't time to jam before he finally zipped it down. I was, and am, sympathetic—he forgot me, I wasn't much, and cut no figure; and they did without French, Smith-Dorrien and Kitchener, and, presently, without Slam, and, a more serious matter, some two or three millions of Tommies; so I was unimportant; but I like a chap who is a hustler, so I like him. "Look here, Captain, I'll put you in Slack's Sport's battalion, a railroad battalion

—will you take it?" "Shoot, General," said I. "All right," and he pushed a button, and an orderly appeared. Nora Criena smiled very faintly. "Send Colonel Lookemover here." Exit the orderly. "That will suit you, Captain; you know the railroad game?" "From wheel-barrows to steamshovels, General." "Correct, that's it." Enter the Colonel. "Colonel Squinter—Captain Sport; instruct the Adjutant-General's Department to reserve a Captainey in Slack Sport's battalion for Captain Sport." "Yes, sir." "And also for Captain Pooley." "Yes, sir." "That'll do." Exit Colonel Lookemover. "Thank you, General." "No, no—no thanks; it was a mistake; and Captain." "Yes, sir." "Slack Sport is on his way here now; he'll be here in a few days; meet him, and come up and see me. Good day and good luck." "Same to you, General." He twitched the cropped gray head to his left rear, with a snap of his eyes, "Thank you, I'll take care of that." I answered with a glance the Nora Criena congratulations, and went out with a navvy's best spike-maul swagger. I could see the grading and track-laying outfits, hear the ring of the thirty-foot steel, and see the nippers with their heels and bars as I had done first on the O. and Q., in the old days long ago. Certainly, in France, the "long range" or, maybe, the "short range" would be ripping out a section here and there, but one could dodge and damn that and drop them in again, and it would be fun for your life, and if you didn't dodge always, and a chunk of a tie or a flying fish plate ripped out your gizzard, you'd be buried—when they found time, perhaps—as the old track-layers had wished to be, under a frog with a spike-maul on your tummy,

and the gang (real ones) would "carry on," crack her down, hell-bent for the end of the line, with a full train load of supplies, just—because that's what the boss had wanted done. Oh, you sons of the world! the finish is in sight! Ah, Colonel Lookemover's quarters. "Captain!" "Yes, sir." "Who in hell is Slack Sport?" "Don't you know, Colonel?" "No." "That's odd." "The Minister expects me to know what's in the back of his head; but I've no idea who this O.C. is." "Why not ask the Adjutant-General? The Minister spoke as if the thing were common knowledge." "I've sent there to enquire." Enter an orderly. "Don't know anything there of Colonel Slack Sport, sir." "Isn't that hell?" said Colonel Lookemover; "what will we do now?" "Ask the General." "But he's gone to the Commission. He'll not be back till five. Can you come back then?" "Certainly; but meantime you've given the Adjutant-General the names?" "Surely—yes—but—now I'll have to ask him who this Colonel is." "Well, what of it?" "I suppose I'll catch hell for that, but I'm used to it." "So that it will be all right?" "Come back at five, Captain; but you should have an idea who it is?" "Well, Colonel, I have." "Who, for heaven's sake, who?" "Not positive, Colonel, but I can guess, I think." "Who, who?" "It may help you to prove up with the Minister; but, of course, I'm not the authority." "Who is it, Captain, who is it?" "I think its Slack Sport of Stoley Squelch and Sport, the chaps who had a five million dollar mix-up out west." "Captain, are all contractors thieves?" "Yes, Colonel, mostly." "That seems a remarkable admission." "They're mostly politicians,

aren't they?" "But they're not all politicians." "Well, Colonel, every honest contractor has a little patch of hair on the palm of his hand. I, you see, haven't got it." "Its good, but it proves nothing." "It wasn't meant to." "So, you think this is the man." "I'm sure of it, but, of course you must have the General's O.K.; but that should be easy now." "Sure, its easy. Come in at five o'clock. I'm very much obliged." "Good day, Colonel." "Thanks, Captain, thanks."

Down the laundry chute again, and take a ramble round Parliament Hill, and the ruins thereupon. The now ex-Honourable Snob had passed the repairs (that is, the reconstruction) privately to the Hogg Gall Company on a percentage basis, and maybe they weren't out with a full-length seine and the scoop nets for the ten-cent pieces. They had more timber erected round that old scrap heap to demolish it than would make a fortune for a contractor. It was as rank a piece of "put over" as I had ever seen (not even excepting the Chicago bluffers who singed the C.P. for their own material), and sure looked a holy show to any fellow who knew a piece of work when he saw it. Some indignant patriots (friends, likely, of some other guy) tried afterwards to bust up Snob's combination, but it stuck, and its sticking yet. But, as Lookemover said, "Its the method, the routine"; so what's the use—its the old game—and even the penitentiary doesn't stop it. Talking to Jack once about books and authors and styles, etc., I put forward an observation of my own, namely, that some fellows (literary fellows) were so thoroughly conversant with so many styles that the vice of each particular style had so per-

meated, percolated, and penetrated through and into their scribbling make-up, that the result was one disgusting, festering, scrofulous literary scab—not itself—not the other chap's—but a kind of scratchy symposium of every itch that the erudite unimmune had rubbed against. So, it seems to me, are some of the ginks that go contracting in this country. They've butted around so long with hotching, scabby scrofulous politicians, itchy architects, and scratchy engineers, that they've contracted such a damnable system of contracting that the rotten scab is nearly the normal condition, and clean-skinned honesty is an abnormal fool. Certainly, experts may argue that the boys who contracted the itch or scrofula or scab are less guilty than the chaps who communicated the disease, and that the victim, developing the same after contagion, is more to be pitied than laughed at. Still, its clear to me that the disease—pity, excuses, and subexcuses aside—has got to be isolated, quarantined, dealt with permanently. A short sojourn in the penitentiary for the goat, followed by a longer one to recuperate in California, isn't going to get us anywhere; that kind of treatment is a joke, and Canada knows it; and the amiable elusives at Snottawa and elsewhere know it down to the ground. Competition that does not compete—except in the prices paid to purchase the contracts—putting a premium on plunder, is the crime-producing factor; and is, in addition, the principal cause for the colossal failures—size them up, they're everywhere—that mark this country from sea to sea. Some of them, of course, are invisible; they're buried deeper than the doctor's dead, at the lake bottoms; but we have them by the score,

and our methods go on increasing them. I move that the National Incinerator be warmed up, and that our methods—silent members, party funds, stock one remove, cash in a grip, transfers of ownership, etc., etc., with the fiction of finance and a few other "rotten chickens" —be cremated therein, and that all men, contractors included, go to work for a living, and that the great obsolete objective, "profits," be blown to the hell where they belong, á la Josephus, the great modern interpreter of morals, and inventor of the justly-celebrated war patent for making slacked salt worth seventy cents a pound.

CHAPTER XXI

"Thou fulsome blight."

"And but for these vile guns
He would himself have been a soldier."

"With artless air;
Charms with her summer-smiling face
And blossoms in her wind-blown hair."

Back to the Shirks building on the dot of five. "Punctuality, gentlemen, punctuality"; and no impudence to red-tabbed curiosity. Colonel Squinter has red tabs and he is delighted; has "just seen Slam, and asked as a favour for Captain Sport—whose present non-cost establishment is in Toronto—just when Colonel Slack Sport will be in town, and General Slam has just had a wire from the said Slack Sport; and, wants once more—Gee, I'm getting chummy with the War Boss—to see me *now*." Away we go, the tireless orderly and I, the double doors giving an impression that you're in the safe for keeps. I halt, and stand to attention. "Slack Sport will be delayed for about ten days, but his bunch will be mobilizing at Valcartier in two weeks or thereabouts. Squinter will wire you when he arrives. I suppose you're not staying in Snottawa?" "No, General." "Going back west?" "Hardly worth while till this thing's settled." "Its settled now." "Very well, I'll wait for him in Toronto." "Squinter has given the Adjutant-General my instructions?" "Yes, General, so he tells me." You're all fixed up?" "Yes, General" "And

good luck. I'll see you again before you go over. Boys all right yet?" "All right yet, sir." Nora Criena looked suddenly up and then down again. "Captain, there never were such boys as these of mine." "The world cannot question that, General." "Never!" "Good bye, sir." "Glad, very glad, to have put you right—see you again—good bye." Nora Criena was tapping the rubber tip of her pencil, in alert abstraction, on the desk, eyes unsmiling. She was, I think, halted at the words "all right yet"—likely *he* was over there.

Out into the hall, now filled with fleeing soldiers, the wreck of army headquarters retreating in a mad frenzy of wild disorder, panic stricken, demoralized haste and fury, to where safety and the soup kettles lay far to the rear. Victorious hunger, with its desperate, blood-boltered, ruthless, savage, hell-ravening, insatiable, merciless legions at their heels (pardon me, All Paine, and also Crammer, great notorious tank liars)——I, from the surging vortex, clutched a door jamb and swung in on Squinter till the living deluge of hunger-harried uncontrollable humanity swept by..saved!! With my address on his reference card, a smile or two over questionable identity, congratulations, thanks, and hearty adieus, we parted. Colonel Lookemover was a good fellow a gentleman, and—well—a soldier. In his ceaseless mill with its endless grist (full of chaff, much of it), in and out, he has forgotten me and my one bushel of wheat, (with a few wild oats in it), maybe, but I have not forgotten him. I was not so busy as he was, and my head was not so full. Good luck, old scout. Down the laundry chute, and walk up the hill, and on past the pedestals, desolate

for their illustrious occupants, and into the Pantheon or Pyramid where Democracy in the person of a river-driver —that was—sits in his cushioned seat, waiting for his aristocratic fares, and stumble on a few M.P.'s, booted and spurred like the tiddle-de-wink fellows. Majors, too, as I'm a son of truth, the undesirable. "Well, K.C., old boy. You're in it, too. When did you hit town?" "Not quite in yet. Yesterday. What are you hooked to, Praise?" "17—we're raising a battalion, and they asked me to help—up to six hundred odd, now." "How long have you been going?" "I forget; all the gang that you knew are pretty well in." "That's great, Major." "Who's looking after you?" "How?" "Who's putting up the say-so for you here?" "Nobody; just a few letters." "That's why you're here yet. We heard you were off in the first contingent with the Engineers. Your old friend Charlie's gone, and we understand you went with him." "All you ginks seem anxious to get me out of the way—very—" "Ha, ha, ha! When they couldn't drown you at the Falls, you'll pull through—the devil's in no hurry for your kind—he's sure of them." "Since he's a chum of your's you ought to know." "Sure, I know; he and I have bunked it ever since you introduced us, K.C." "Well, I wanted to lose the old boy." "Leave it to you, leave it to you. Come down and have something. Major Skuce, pardon me, Major Sport—is it major or colonel, K.C.?" I never know these infernal price marks; what is it K.C.?" "Captain," I answered, modestly. "Captain! Hell, what a joke." "Joke is right." Major Skuce—Captain Sport. Colonel Jones——Captain Sport—built Niagara Falls, the boys used to

say." In Major Praise' rush and hurry I got time at least to shake hands with Skuce, and say "So you're at it, too, Eddy?" "Sure, K.C.—I meant Captain—I've been in for six months now—it's a great life. I knew this man before you did, Praise." "Don't give away any secrets, Eddie." "What's he done, Major?" "Struck our port and pulled the admiral out of the drink." "Wish I'd let the old stinker drown." "Well, he's as dead as need be now, K.C." "Yes," laughed Praise, "I know—Bob Edwards attends to keeping the grass green." "Bob's some boy," roared Skuce. "Yes," said Praise; "If some of us had his education—" "His brains," I interjected. "Well, what ever it is, he's clever." "No one owns him, either," said I. "Boys," said Colonel Jones, "I don't know a confounded thing about this." "Its just local stuff from their native towns, Colonel. Country lads always talk horse." "Come, fellows," cried Praise; "come and have something. Come Captain K.C.. Lord, what a joke!" "See, here, Major, I'll get sore." "Sure, you should be sore right now—what a hell of a joke!" "Blast your impudence, Major. Can't you see these boys are not seeing with your eyes and fool appreciation." "I wish they could," laughed the admiring devil; "they'd see what a lousy, double-damned joke it is." "Cut it out Bill, or I'll biff you in the ear once for luck. Don't you see that the Statue is becoming indignant." "That old Jack-in-the-box," snuffed Praise. "He got his, and he's a cheap one-ideaed habitant; him—he kept our fellows on the nigh side while he made his friends a present of this joint, and the road that runs both ways from it—but—he's done—and be damned to him. We're running

the show now, and we'll run it till the war is over; then they're bloody well welcome to what's left. "Tall talk, Praise, old chap, tall talk," said I. "True talk; let them pick the rack of the Christmas turkey and see how fat they'll get. Skimp picking for them, you'll see." "We'll all be making soup of the bones, Major, I guess." "Not on your life, K.C.; some of us'll have a nest egg." "A gentleman's bet of a cigar, Major, that your nest-egg will neither hatch nor cook." The Colonel glanced at me, a little puzzled, I thought, while Praise laughed back, "Well, my egg's the right breed, anyway." "Yes. Conservative," I laughed. "Come on and let's have a drink," said Praise. So Colonel Jones, Major Skuce and the adulatory one and myself headed away through the room with the ivory effects and down into the bacchic temple, where the swift, white-coated boys were working like sand-hogs (cleaner, of course) at a blow-hole when the fog thickens, and hustling as if they'd never get it plugged, and expected to go out under the shoe every shot, while the registers were ringing like the compressor gong answering to "more air." In the slopping, bubbling, match-exploding, smoky hubbub, table-groups roared at punk stories, dark-eyed French Canadians flashed speedy patois and agile hands; uniformed speakers, in English declaimed about the war and our war effort, and talked of Jack French and Doug. Haig and Kitch. as if they'd just been shooting pool or the bones with them in the tobacco-joint next street. Frowsy, commercial colonels, with greasy-rimmed caps tilted back, eyes as misty as a bricklayer's bubble, the top fronts of their tunics looking like an accordion and the lower fronts like

drums, talked in terms of hundreds of thousands, quarters, half and whole millions,—content, confident, comfortable, and at peace with themselves and the whole world. One special group, as we stood waiting for a seat, were in close confab—hushed, animated, emphatic—while one of their number, an all-black-eyed fellow with sleek hair, twitching nose, and loose underlip, was assuring his hopefully skeptical auditors that "Its all right; its cinched, I tell you. I've got Mr. Hungry fixed so's he can't get away; don't worry, its sure. Why, man, if I squeaked —just squeaked—this outfit couldn't last till morning—no chance." "Gad, Foxy, you sure are the boy; I didn't think the thing'd be so easy." "Easy!" answered Foxy; "cheese it. Those chaps—I've got every one of them—million and a half for us and not a move—cash before its crossed, too." We sat down as these boys moved up and away, "Foxy" gesticulating in blatant exultation; the others—there were three of them—laughing and clapping him upon the shoulder in garrulous financial worship and admiration. I noticed, as we sat down, that the trio paused at the bar's end before going out, to have a final shot—standing up—drank it hastily, and ascended deliberately towards the room with the ivory effects and Democracy and the "pallid bust" of defunct Liberalism just beyond. Major Skuce was a member, and a pretty clean fellow. Praise was what is known all over Canada as a "good scout," "a good mixer," "one of the boys." I didn't know Colonel Jones, but he knew me. God knows how, because I'm not in any way a national figure; but he didn't know of the battalion (which I nominated merely as a new battalion) for which I was slated, and

he slipped in more questions over a horse's neck, a cigar, and a couple of cocktails, than Theodore had fired at me anent the crook, Buchanan, when C.B. had reneged on me in favour of himself and the Anglo-Canadian. Of course, as Judge Mathers had said of me, I was "perfectly capable of taking care of myself" (limited to time and place, that is). So Colonel Jones (the Lord only can guess why he was a Colonel; I'll bet those who bestowed his rank on him couldn't tell now) left us in half an hour or so, doubtless convinced (as I am myself, Colonel) that anything I had done—Major Praise to the contrary notwithstanding—was a mere accident, and that I needed bringing back and setting up again. Skuce said he had an appointment to dinner; he always was a careful boy, and I think he was heading for the self-serve. So we bade him adieu and he moved off, with his seaman's roll and his spurs clattering (too loose by one hole), and then Praise was bound I'd dine with him—before he guaranteed me a brigade in the morning. It's wonderful to behold the unlimited ability, accomplishments, generosities, hopes, and hullaballoos that lie in the bottom of a booze glass—if it has been filled often enough. And the Major was pulling forth these things in that profusion and confusion which resembles nothing that I know so much as the paper roses and ribbons, extracted from the gaping yokel's hat by the professor doing his one-night mysteries at the old town-line school. Dinner with Praise under these auspices was a night-mare to be unhorsed. I was afraid he would yank in a piece of the Horse-shoe, flood out the joint, and maybe rip away the lock gates of the toy canal outside. He was in the

humour now for doing that, or instructing—yea, if need were, of deposing—a Minister, lax in his duty to the Crown or country, or the Major's constituency, in particular. Blast him, he was one of those fellows whom you despise and love, and with which Canada, and, perhaps her southern neighbour, finds it so difficult to deal, knowing that they should be killed, but hating like vengeance to have it done. Perhaps much of the trouble is in ourselves; it seems we somehow are the proper kind of a pan for them to sizzle in, right heat, not enough to burn, and room enough for them to turn over and keep on sizzling. The Major suddenly caught sight of a promoter friend of his, a chap who has started shoestring operations all the way from Welland to the mountains, and who is now a Napoleon of finance, and out to make himself twins by capturing Alexander's world—in specie or paper. Praise hailed him over to renew a "long distance" acquaintance, and the promoter and contractor were in a moment, through his fulsome heartfelt stump orating, made to feel that they "stood alone on a fixed point in space and saw the world sweep by" and away on its contemptible and petty errand. Most of us can swallow a lot of that stuff, and, with the bumps I'd got recently, it sounded for a minute as if there was a real accomplishment somewhere in my rear not wholly chargeable to accident and the absence of the right man; but the Major's cocktails got my goat, and I was about to lie and get away, when the promoter told the M.P. that there was something doing for a few minutes and that he couldn't get it done without him. Both winked at each other, and then at me, and I shook hands heartily,

and saw them disappear into that undefinable night wherein charters, privilege and fraudulent monsters are spawned. A meal comes handy, even when you are full of thought (our double-loaded English invites this nonsense), and the pea-soup in the Pyramid's grill is not—unless you have over-peppered it—to be sneezed at; so, with that and a sirloin (sounds like Homer and smacks of Peter the Great, but that's all) and a baked one, and a tip, dinner was dismissed. Then a half-hour's loitering, a glance at the Snottawa Oracle—bunching one and a half cent's worth each of Conservative laudation and Liberal defamation—a swift and deadly introduction to Smart Meene, the autocratic reactionary, parvenu and political pulpiteer, who promised to do for me, and, I think, did; a half-hour's chat with my friend the Doctor, who happens to be in town to post Frostner; a soul-enlightening talk with Tommy Blank, creator of Canadian public impressions of the Snottawa sublimes, and the hour for "taking off" arrives; and I find myself, presently, sitting in the "smoker," listening to a dirty, foul-mouthed, ignorant Inspector of Saddlery, the most offensive piece of garbage from the Government back-yard that any political mongrel ever trailed into the open. He was so rotten, blasphemous, and fulsomely filthy that—I've said every word about him that I'm going to say.

Morning again. The train, within thirty miles of the Holy City, curving out of Holden's swamp on to the "big fill," where we buried so many horses—the clay was stiff and the prices low, and Black Angus (the walking boss) ordered that they "lean against their collars, and when

they couldn't do that their harness would fit others." Well, Angus (a pioneer and a worker) is out of harness now, too; wasn't a bad old chap either. Familiar ground, here. This country is mine—but—I am not the country's. Just down the side-road we flashed over, there's the old Cedar-Creek school, where Craig taught me and used to lay his hand on my head sometimes—not like a master (I've seem them pretty rough, you bet), but like a man who loved a boy. The school teacher is asleep many years now; but that touch still lives; and if I had a genius worthy of its tenderness and its faith (forgive me, sir) it never would die. The school—I looked at it two years ago, just for a minute. I stopped, and meant to go in, but it was recess; about twenty little ones were at play (the old games, ah, they looked good and so simple), and I saw by the features that all men are not migrants. I was going to speak, when one of two little fellows, peering through the fence, cried "Jimmy, Jimmy, run and tell them to come and see the stranger in the big car." Stranger, that was it;—why should I go in, and, with the tailor's swank, set some little head dreaming of the far-away places beyond the horizon where felicity is deemed to have her habitation. I had known these green hills and fields and little creeks and the five-foot falls up in Davy Pugh's pasture, "where the fish bit best"—whales, those shiners were. I had been a reader, and knew Crusoe and Cœur de Lion, and my great-uncle Tommy had the Mutiny medals; and—I had gone—away to the great city—and carried the hod and peddled bread, and then far beyond;—and now I knew that outside the domestic ties and the home ties,

the world was largely a Sahara, with bare aridities, blinding sand-storms, thirst and cruel toils. Stranger, that's it!—so I tossed the two peepers a dollar—I was mean enough to do that rotten thing—but with a hot heart I didn't see the mistake just then—threw in the clutch and sped away in a dust cloud, feeling and knowing that since the trail was chosen it must be followed to the end. "Brush you off, Captain?" "I wish you would, George—clean off." "Yes, sir, I'll do it." When you want genuine service and things done properly ask a negro. "Your cane, sir?" "No, boy, the bamboo, that's it." The morn grows dimmer (we have triple-crossed the Don) as we crash in under the smoke canopy, the wheels are flailing over the clacking frogs now. "I'll hand you your grip, Captain." "Right, George, and I'll hand you this." "Thank you, Captain." "Toronto—all change!" George had all mine—pretty near.

CHAPTER XXII

"Egotists, four classes —Cæsar, Antoninus, etc. down to a thousand other old women and fanatic writers."

"Is there no derogation in 't?"
"My Lord, you cannot derogate."
"Not easily, I think."

The egotistical synod of deities, presiding over the realms of autobiography, reminiscences, experiences, and personal histories, are a narrow-visioned, limited bunch, quite unworthy of the world's worship, tolerated by superior gods largely because the said synod have always heaped up and lying about—in fierce disorder generally—great quantities of odd truths and curios that may be very handy in a pinch. The realms of egotism are a kind of dilapidated storehouse, second-hand junk shop, full of ancient, rusted, defaced articles and tools—often ere they were scrapped here—acquired and got together by long labour, patient toil, industry, and self-sacrifice, and finally parted from in tears under the merciless whip of fierce want or savage necessity.

The superior gods scorn these realms, these old junk shops, except when the special curio wanted, being quite unobtainable elsewhere, cheaply, they drop in, reservedly, condescendingly, make a furtive purchase, or theft, perhaps, and slip away.

The egotistical gods understand this partial patronage, accept it, pity it, and sniff at it, as becomes their nature and their name. The egotistical gods, therefore and

the egoists who serve them, fulfil a purposed function in the literary economy: their material may be neglected, discredited (heaped in undignified disorder), but it is not wasted. Apart from this, hearts and minds which have been cramped and bound against, spread and expansion, turn in and back upon themselves, and not free to fling their virility and vitality abroad, reconcentrate, become self-centred, self-cankered, "boiling, and o'erwrought," till, presently, they burst forth like a "geyser," for a minute, and collapse. Their stream or jet aims at the sky, yet does not reach it. But this is what I want to get at—this action is against the laws of gravitation; not, like the great popular streams, with it; doesn't accomplish much, but it's odd to look at while it lasts, and the sight may raise the question—Perhaps there is too much easy down-hill assent. The world has given its assent to some terrible things, flowing down, down, in ever-increasing volume. So—well—do the rest yourself—its easy. Much has been said against the egoist; much could be said for him (or her)—especially for her, for has *she* not, by her nature and her mission, had her heart and mind concentrated (through her very prime of life) within herself, wondering, reflecting and fearing for that to-be-unfolded world of which she is the present solicitious repository and mother. Some inattentive ones will not get this; but you'll have to (if you want to get it), try again in the next class—like a plucked rookie.

A few days' calm reflection in Toronto, and then—a letter from Colonel Squinter—gad, I'm nearly there now!—bang!. The date for arrival in Snottawa of Colonel Slack Sport has been set back—Captain Sport had better

write him (wouldn't that kill you?) Write! What shall I write—what shall I say? This chap knows nothing of me, and the chances are he has his officers picked—why would he not? He has built all kinds of railroads, and must have more foremen within call than would make a battalion. To meet him with Slam in Snottawa, a place reserved by the Adjutant-General, would mean something, but to write to him away west is putting myself on the outside of that. But Lookemover advises it. I wonder if it was a tip from the Minister. What are the slopping expediencies at now? Better write and obey. Well, yes. So I write in guarded terms—which is slavery, self-imposed—telling Colonel Sport of the General's arrangements, and appeal to his size, by leaving him free and specifying clearly that I will not expect him to feel bound in any way until we have met and each can determine how we fit. I further state that I would regret very much if he were to feel that I had been wished upon him, that the ill-assorted commands have been, in my opinion, the cause of the wrecking of so many battalions in England, and conclude by offering him, if he decides to have me and I decide to have him, all the sound service of which I am capable. The letter is posted. Ten days pass; two weeks; three weeks; four weeks; a full month—fine stuff—and I get a letter from Slack Sport, of Stoley, Squelch and Sport, saying that—yes—"That I *think*—I *might be*—able to place you to the rank of Lieutenant, and if this is satisfactory, you can report at Valcartier in about sixteen days." Well, Slack, old boy, you are the dear, indefinite dabbler of which to make a commander. What right have *you* to reduce

me to an I-think-I-might-Lieutenancy, in face of the tiddle-de-wink majors, those splendid soldiers, and contrary to the express order and command of Lieutenant-General Sir Slam. Still, there's no mystery, not a bit. Certainly, you don't want me; I thought as much, and that part of it was perfectly all right; but why not say so; why not come out into the open and tell me that you are "all set." Doubtless, you have a lot of clever manipulation behind you; but you have not got sufficient of a workman's record to justify you in pulling off your indefinite insult. Quite enough—its off; and I write my reply. "Colonel Slack Sport. Sir,—By holding up your finger you can get a thousand smart young fellows better able to command a platoon than I am. My luck seems a little off just now; perhaps I'll recover it later. Yours, etc., K. C. Sport, Captain." Then the first train back to Snottawa. Blazes! Slam has beaten it overseas —over-night! Colonel Lookemover once more. Sore and ashamed, I state the case to him, and beg him to "push me in somewhere." "Hell, Captain, you go to Valcartier and take the place the Minister gave you. Pooley is gone; you go too." "After that, Colonel?" "Yes, to hell with him; some of these chaps think, because they get a battalion, they're running the army. Slack Sport or any other, has no right to controvert or modify the General's orders. Beat it to Valcartier. The probability is, if you don't, some chap without any of your qualifications will, because he's a friend, get your place." "Colonel," said I, "Slack Sport has a hundred men as good as me; if he hadn't, he wouldn't be in his job, because he doesn't do the work himself. But that's

not the point. Don't you see that this letter is meant as a turn-down? If he wanted me he could have said he 'was stacked up, hut come along; there'll be room enough, and I'll put you to work; there'll be lots of it.' Not for mine." "Maybe, you're right," said the Colonel; "but I wouldn't let him get away with it. You go to Valcartier, and if he doesn't treat you right and obey the General's commands, he'll be taken care of in a hurry." "Couldn't do it, Colonel. I'd burst." "Well, the Minister has gone." "Yes, Colonel, and I'm going to wait till I hear from him." "It will probably be six weeks." "Well, I waited thirty days for Colonel Sport's joke, and it will probably be easier than shuffling in among a bunch of fellows set to shunt you from the moment you arrived. Nothing doing. Good day, sir, and I'm much obliged." "Good bye, Captain; I think you're foolish." "I've never been anything else, I think. Good day." Down the laundry chute: wishing the damned cables would break and make a finish; wishing I had some of the money that the infernal Government and the infernal wild-catters stole from me—then I could beat it to France and be damned to them. Wishing I'd never put on the rotten khaki, in which I look like an imposter, parader, and fool. Wishing I had never said a word to the boys—who still had faith in their father, though he was now nothing but a pauperized, insulted military misfit. Well—they all—said, what did —they say—that cuts no figure now. Nothing for it but to wait again, a whole year of it now, growing older every minute, and—my little affair meant nothing—nothing. Bah! Twenty years hence, I'll be out or

up against the Psalmist's limit; the world will have forgotten the war, and the criminals who made it, and the poor fools who fought it, and the rank and file (not the Staffs)—not in khaki now, but in duck jeans—will be at work toiling to pay "their profits" to the inheritors of plunder—coined from blood—by their clever forefathers who knew when to "take occasion by the hand" and clean up while the cleaning up was good. What figure did it cut—the wise cynics at the top, the Skillners and Bursons—they had it right—the mob was only a huge, ignorant, half-souled mass, littered to be manipulated for the benefit of the omniscient few; why should a man trouble himself about the "vile Canaille," or what became of them or how they were slaughtered; these things were since the beginning of the world, and could not be and never would be changed. These boys had it right—sit safe and comfortable, let the other fellow get mixed up with altruism and bursting shells—the world in conflagration like a colossal oil-well could only be extinguished by the cannon-blast. Sure they were right. Even the ramping patriots and orators—what were they doing? Hissing on the dogs of war, shrieking, preaching, expounding and declaiming for recruits, for supplies and redoubled efforts and production, everywhere, while they, though hundreds of thousands went down monthly—these, the orators, the noise-makers, were still on deck to make more noise and howl for more slaughter and more sacrifice. That was it;—this was the abomination in which we dwelt—I as rotten as any of them. I was here truckling and ducking and soliciting, like a beggar, while the young lads went out and fought for *me*, and took their chance

against death, buoyed up by their faith in my faith that I believed in the world, and that my soul would not admit that human existence was retrogression. The whole, cursed horror was a frame up, with the cynics playing safe and talking for the confusion of the gaping mobs. What could I say to these lads of mine when I should write again?—tell them a lie or tell them that the whole thing was a sham and a colossal delusion, that should have no thinking man's support or sanction? What shall I say to them?—take away their spiritual support, and leave them in the contest as merely beast against beast, with no object but to preserve their life at the expense of their enemy's. What shall I say?—write vapidities, platitudes, lies, or strip off this vile, blinding, damnable imposition, manufactured by Divine Right, with its sanctified Left, Plunder; tell them of the full-fed, safe cynics who kept silence and laughed; tell them of the wind-jammers who talked fight, but kept out of it; tell them of the safety-firsts, who taught war and left its practice to their dupes. God!—and I, their father—supposed to be a man of average talent—I had raised them to manhood and saw them march away, before I perceived the savage iniquity of the cults and creeds and silent mind-pre-emptions in which we lived—show myself a dunce now, too late by twenty years. Can I tell them this? I should tell them this; but if it wrung their bosoms as it was wringing mine, better let them, coward that I was, go on and die in their ghastly hallucination. Surely, surely, if there is anywhere in this Universe an Intelligence superior to ours, it is busy with the cynics and wise ones laughing at us. Grief—nonsense; tears—pooh,

pooh. Laughter—that's the thing; but reformation—"Well, really, you know, jokes are delightful things; they ease the war tension, old top." Let's go home and wait for Slam. The devil take the cynics, the patriots, the safe ones, and the profiteers; also the devil take Slack Sport; he's beating it overseas to get away from nasty complications and the five million cough-up, and the little "put over" on the Sub, that he had to pull off again and pay for. You don't want much with that bunch—I should say not.

The egotistical gods never grow weary of worship. Worship is the air,—the junk-shop air,—whereof they breathe; the tension of cramped hearts and fettered minds are their especial delights; and when a geyser bursts up towards the heaven, they tap their sandalled feet upon the floor, and cry, "poor old geyser." Maybe their gods also are friends of Skillner and Burson, and have a touch of Diogenes in their mental arrangement. I know not—but I may know—hereafter—if—certainly.

CHAPTER XXIII

"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law."

"Rascals! hang 'em up!"

"Skidoo!" "You bet." "Feeling like thirty cents." "Sure, kiddo." "They had my number." Therefore, back to the mortgage, the rusting machines, dying debtors (I forgive them—have to, I guess), defiant debtors, defaulting debtors, insolvent debtors, swanking in their touring cars while I tramped—for exercise—and to teach me the luxury of altruism and vicarious sacrifice. Odd thoughts crowd a man's brain when Insolvency, racing by in its big three thousand dollar "bus," splashes the mud on the honest fool, whom it has beaten out of that much by the simple process of assignment. It shakes a man's moral conception when he sees the unscrupulous manipulator sap his business, sap it deliberately, deflect the funds, concentrate them elsewhere, camouflage them with a skirt or his wife's old wrapper, and get away with it; and it shakes him further when he sees that the societies, the clubs, the banks and business men open up again for the bright Insolvent, as if nothing had happened; doubtless, their theory is that the chap who can put it over like that "is all right," and "he'll make good." Its a common thing—has legal help and lawful status; so it must be all right. Still it looks a little unbalanced to the chap who stands behind his obligation with everything he has. This is the little fellow—the

small fifty-thousand dollar Insolvent. Bigger men have bigger methods. Buster Bill could hook up, "stick up," this country and its citizens for many millions—fifty or five hundred, no matter; but the point was, or is, that he could keep a few "lady trifles," such as the Winnipeg and Toronto Street Railways, with their Niagara and Pinawa hydro-electrical powers attached, in his boudoir or back shed, and with the perfect urbanity of the polished gentleman of the delicate touch and convincing presence, murmur, like a master, "No, gentlemen; no, no, Sir Thomas; these, pshaw, these are my pocket pieces; you cannot pinch a man's luck-penny; bless you, no." I should say not. And I ask a question here. Did not Sir Thomas obtain his title for shoving the country in as security for Buster Bill's deficit. Great stuff! And these guys talk of commercial probity as if it meant something; there is no commercial probity; it isn't born yet; there is some business expedience—beyond that, *it's bunk*. The big interests know that; the banks know that; the commercial world knows that. *They* never conduct a deal with mankind, nor with each other, without "documentary proof"; they realize, to be sure, that paper between themselves means nothing; that it can only be liquidated on the mob, by whom every debt is liquidated, and that's why they want the written "bond," to present it further down. To revert for a minute to Mr. Buster, multimillionaire insolvent, and to the mud-splasher, the little fifty-thousand dollar insolvent. They have their homes and home comforts, their luxuries, their booze cellars—business men must be soothed with a little of the prohibited dope (Stephen says

the Mob should have it, too; keep them doped and they're easier driven;—professors are artists when they are not thugs; we'll dismiss them). They have their servants, their furs, their cars, their clubs, and can, by God, make their contributions to charities, to patriotic benificences, to churches; and can, by heaven, have them accepted—"wouldn't that skin you," "wouldn't that make a dog sick," "wouldn't that make a preacher swear." No use swearing, no use trying it; like Andy McMillan's Irishman, "You couldn't do it justice." So don't swear; we'll do better than that. Let's take a look at how a debt is taken care of—that is, on the lower levels where Privilege does not protect and where "the law," "the incorruptible," demands that indigence shall be honest. In our little village—desperately democratic, owning its own utilities, for the express benefit of the wild-cat real-estate swindlers, for whom the said civic democracy scatters street railways and sewers and water mains and electric lights and concrete viaducts over the uninhabited swamps, called additions—a man owed a little "overdue account" for telephone; the war and idleness put him out. The Village removed the telephone (though at the same time men who were "good pay" owed thousands of dollars for these same services). Time brought him a job; he needed it, with a wife and four infants, garnishees from a dozen directions (he owed other debts besides the telephone—doctor's accounts, etc.) kept eating bigger chunks of his wages than the kiddies did. But the big debenture companies were chasing for their "pound of flesh," "their blood-drops." Some one must pay; so the Civic Democracy, engineered by the privileges, got

after the poor workman for his twelve dollars,—(coal at sixteen, "tut, tut, a trifle!")—not *fifty thousand*, including *club dues* and *perfumes*, etc., not *multimillions*, with a *nation flayed—just twelve dollars!* The Civic Officials, the lawyers, the Sheriffs (astute boys, mean and miserable by choice, and who know the value of nickels, mileage, stamps and all those trivial perquisites on which the Judicial Spiders feed), leagued in ruthless, bloodless unity against the sweating worker. The Spiders must be fed. The Debenture Companies must be paid their dividends. So they pinched, by the garnishee process, the twelve dollars from the sweater's kiddies, and to show their charity (to themselves) charged thirteen dollars for doing it—twenty-five dollars all told. Looks a little coarse, doesn't it. Yet every one of the Court Spiders thinks himself a "decent beast." "Poor venomous fools!" The fifty-thousand dollar Insolvent swanks in a new car, splashing the mud on his tramping creditor. The multi-millionaire insolvent swanks up Avenue Road, the Toronto and Winnipeg Street Railways, powers, etc., for his pocket piece, (a few million only),—But the sweater *pays* (who else could pay?)—pays the lawyer, the sheriff, the *mileage never travelled*, the Stenographer, the stamps, the stickers, and *ten cents* for a pencilled summation of the accounts. Certainly, he pays for everything. Liberty equality, fraternity!—where were they born? In France? No, my lords and gentlemen, they were born among just such monstrosities as these; and, my lords and gentlemen, let me tell you—Bolshevism, though you do not know what it means and though I do not know what it means, but which is, let us say, for the sake of definition and a

clear idea, your fear of exchanging your luxurious idleness for frugal work;—Bolshevism, from such procedures as I have cited, is spreading faster than you can raise troops or mounted police to calm your uneasy fears. Quit your terrors and fool precautions, and get a piece of paper and a pencil and figure how much more idleness (which is your profit) and how much more nugatory work (which is also idleness and an economic loss) can be supported in our particular country, one half of whose population is centred in the parasitical cities. Don't break out in words, in voluble ignorance; but think it over for a day, and then start in. Having made some computations and got your bearings, you might, perhaps, begin to ask, "What must I do to be saved?"; and thereanent I'll give you a tip in the shape of a theorem. If we transfer from the cities to the farms two millions of our urban population, how much will our food carrying charges be reduced, and by what amount will our products be increased and the hours of labour shortened—not a very difficult nor abstruse nor fantastical nor fanatical problem; and one which, you, my lords and gentlemen, must immediately solve, or it will be solved for you. You will probably sob about "idle factories," etc.; but save your tears. Factories do not make men and women—they destroy them. Fundamentally, our manufacturing ambitions kill themselves: taking the farmer off his acres to manufacture ploughs and leaving his acres untilled is a punk way of extending the market for ploughs. Sometimes irrevelancy, though it may seem paradoxical, is apropos. In Judge Howell's court once, a case was suspended for a few minutes while he received the report

of the Grand Jury re numerous things, and, among others, a statement of the inadequate dimensions of the Selkirk Insane Asylum. The Judge spoke very feelingly (he had listened to and been pestered by monomaniacs for many years), and in scholarly terms of the ever-growing numbers of insane, the increasing volume of which was, he thought, a tragedy that must be solved, though he admitted that he had no solution. He spoke of the isolation, the loneliness, the constant hard struggle, the onerous conditions of the western farmer, all of which, he thought, tended to create, accentuate and increase the liability to mental overthrow. His remarks, his evident sympathy, humanity, and—yes—grief, have recurred to me many times. One particular point of recurrence might, perhaps, elucidate a close cause and connection between certain things not obvious to a man who lives wholly at either end. I have seen a club (any club will do) where the members, waited on by white-coated wastrels and idlers, each threw away annually, for mere amusement, luxuries, and booze, the entire margin of eight prairie farms. I have seen these good fellows slip out, assisted often, and roll away in a car that cost more than the average prairie farm family of five (father, mother, and three children) could save in twenty years. And I've seen an elevator at a season's end have two hundred and twenty thousand bushels of "overages"—that's what they call the wheat they do not pay for—"Overages." Now, if the quarter-section crops one hundred acres, and the average annual yield is fifteen bushels per acre, this overage represents the entire product of one hundred and forty-six farms. I wonder how much of the killing

grind to keep pace with the mortgages and the consequent insanity lies in these amusements, cars, and overages? A clubman, warmed with cocktails, and, perhaps, sore at the blowout of a hundred and twenty-five dollar tire, or out of patience with some "dum fool" who got in the way of a box-car or a belt up at the plant and was killed, costing a few thousands, will probably say, "Tut, tut!" which tut, tut, is perhaps, much more irrelevant than this little side-light. No matter. My lords and gentlemen, I submit both, to you and the Alienists, as being worthy of a moment's thought—after the game breaks up. When you are not at work, and not using Steph.'s prescription; when you are waiting for Slam; when the world is burning up her sons and her sons' labour at annihilation's rate—you have time to think of these things and wonder by what silly apathy, they are permitted to damn us. The Humanist, sitting in tears for man's home-grown viciousness, is a joke. The Wrapt-One, pleading for love and brotherhood, is a dull comedian. One must almost admit that the world does not want decency, that it is naturally a lazy world, and that, rather than consent to pour for life a just proportion of sweat, it prefers to be sweated till the salt dries, rather than forego the fractional chance of getting soon to a seat where it will not have to sweat, but can sit down, softening, on a heap of printed slips and watch the other fellow sweat, and provide the eatables for both. But its clear that this process, and the result it produces, must be supported by slaves, helots, villains, with consequent slave-wars, civil wars, collapse of empires, rebellions, restorations, revolutions, and our own present war—for which we have as yet no

name, the cause and principles of which are, as yet, scarcely defined—the object, indeed, of those who should define them being to leave them undefined—definition would be dangerous. For my personal part, I know them well enough, and could define them if the fool world would only "go to work," and listen; but she, having gone to work, would not require a definition. Poor, foolish, old world! Its a long time, now—book time—since the ancient vine-pruner and barley-sifter, meditating deeply, enunciated his elemental truth, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." This does not apply to the gorger upon uncooked flesh—to the foxes and the wolves. Murder and theft are without brows, being wholly jaw—from the tip of the twitching nose to the peak of the alert ear. But it does apply to wisdom, who has a brow and reflects and understands;—to her that ancient truth is incontrovertible. Notwithstanding this, Laziness still disputes the logic of Work—from the husky bum to the idle beggar; from the inheritor of plunder to the banker: these are all "dead set" against (work) sweat for themselves, and it cannot, in them all, be a fierce desire to keep clean. The spiders are unclean things—the beggars and bums are unclean things. The plunderers and bankers have baths;—but Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus and myself have all said these, also, are unclean; and a much lesser than the least of our quintette has declared with tears (sixty-cent-brine) that "profits should be in hell with the prince of uncleanness —Lucifer";—and Joseph, being a skilful futurist, should know.

CHAPTER XXIV

"Take physic pomp."

"You who stand so much upon the voice of occupation and the breath of garlic-eaters."

"He must serve who fain would sway
And watch all time and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become
A leader—and of wolves."

Sitting around the drug store (that's where they lug the accidents for first aid), sore as a boil. Jack, all out of medicine for my disease (strangling to death), cursing the censorious mist enveloping Europe and the grafters for the benefit of commerce—swapping wool for magnetos as a war necessity. Commerce must be maintained; the war must be carried on; and as commerce is the mother of wars, she alone can nurse them; the foster-mother, Peace, is farrow from grief, and no dry-nursing will do that job; it is wet-nursing with a vengeance and nothing else—sweat, blood, and tears—but commerce controls these in oceans by her promises to pay.

Things were speeding on; whither, none knew. Neuve Chapelle—"Glorious Victory"—was grown dubiously dim. Loos—"Glorious Victory"—shrunken to a questionable episode. Gallipoli, with its fumbling ineptness, waste of courage, and scenario scribblers, was hushed to fitful slumber. The Mesopotamia bluff, where we had lost five millions sterling with Townsend and his boys, had produced some anger and a little pep;—even a good loser

hates to get rapped for five millions. Still, the Turk couldn't eat it (though some say you can), and we could come back and "sit in," and as John Bull is a devil to play, especially with Scotch cards, and Canadian cards, South African, Australian and Indian cards, with the Irish joker running wild and a few dandy English aces up his sleeve), what chance would the Turk have; he couldn't pilfer from the slush in Germany any more: that was stacked, and Foch had his eye on it—well. The Irish fizzle—contemptible, pitiable, in its fool putters-up and crazy putters-down—had hurt the hearts of Irishmen the world over, and Lansdowne, the Conservative reactionary stalactite, gleamed, jubilant and justified, and the padded priests felt safe for another century. My father's rebellion-loyal Orangemen were rehabiliated morally, and the fairy god-mother of Anglo-Celtic kinship was in tears. The shoemaker's nephew, clear-headed, big-hearted, brave, resourceful, tossed on the contentious seas of weltering, storm-beaten democracy, with Al the sand-bagger rocking the boat, was zig-zagging—to avoid the U-Privileges—West to reach the East, trailing the sun, in a way—which, after all, is the route of Genius. The Hun, true to his cramping kink for practical research, had been out to discover whether his canal barges could make a wreck of the Islanders' sea traditions; and did make a hole in one or two of them, but the traditions, as set forth by Beatty and his sea-dogs, were sound, and were willing to demonstrate that they were founded on the adamant of ocean's floor, and some of them went down thundering invitation thither. But the Hun's area of inquiry was not intended thus far, and they fled to the Kiel and safety

in a smoke-screen of "dialectical clatter." These things were happening. Creeds, customs, constitutions, methods, habits, convictions, were, like the raffle-tickets in a bag, being jostled and shaken, shuffled together through other and apart so swiftly by the concussion of the big guns that no one could guess, when the thing was done, what he would draw, blank or blanker, or whether there would be a piece of paste-board left or just mere elemental dust, and new tickets to be numbered and the shaking done over again (easier, let us hope) before we could tell where the world was at and who got the prize—if there was one. Meantime, Jack was "pounding pills" for his food and for the fat fellow's and for the captains of finance, —the wholesalers in the big city—who had boosted castor oil tanks from twelve to seventy-five dollars, thereby driving their hooks deeper into next year's crop (when it would grow). It seems comforting for these boys who think they have done, or can do, that. But Jack and I are not in that class—we have advanced far beyond that stage: we are ranged with those whose personal ambitions and outlook are limited to the next meal, and a shelter for the night. We don't break out in a cold sweat and a shamed and savage anger when we see the bailiff any more. "Treason hath done its worst." We are at a point of perception where we see that this little Local Bailiff and all the bailiffs throughout the war countries, will themselves, shortly, be under seizure of a World-Bailiff, and will, if they want to eat, have to feast upon each other (like the cannibals they are), or go out and grow potatoes for themselves. So Jack waits on his customers and gets what cash he can against his deposit at the Whirlpool to-morrow,

and, between times, talks to me and a few other fellows who drop into his dispensing room, to smoke a cigar—forgive me, sacred Truth!—and raise Cain with the world, the War and the Future, and with the managers thereof. To be sure, Jack's visitors are not all sansculottes; his *landlord*, the fat fellow, is an aristocrat in the first generation, ennobled by lumberjacks and jackpine; but he has enough of the working-man left about him—in his mind, that is—to permit his presence at some of our less radical fulminations. *He* couldn't work any *more*; his avoirdupois (three hundredweight odd, Imperial) would not permit it. He couldn't sweep streets; the spherical redundancy that a good digestion and a callous conscience have rounded out like a young balloon on his bow, would have the scavenger sulky in the ditch ere he could clutch it with his hands. He couldn't dig sewers; it would be uneconomical to excavate that width; besides, and this is worth thinking about—overalls are not made in his size. It's the remarkable thing about overalls—there's more variation in the leg than the waist. Dress-suit builders find the variation the opposite of that. Anyway, we know the fat fellow cannot work; so we modify our radicalism in his behalf down to a Staff job—or a desk—and the appearance of wisdom. Sometimes Dr. Fanion drops in—he is our local Proteus, doctor, surgeon, military surgeon, statesman and author—author not of screeds like this, but of real books, which publishers push (which is more effective than genius often) and readers read and pay for, which last, is after all, the main thing. The doctor believes, like Johnson, that no man but a fool (thank God, doctors, there are

still some fools) ever wrote except for money, and he writes accordingly. He is a genial chap, likes humanity, cures its physical ills (if he can) with or without payment, trusts and distrusts it, and has the cynical Irishman's contempt and love for it. He is, like Jack, an Irishman (but southerly, nuff sed) in the third generation. His immediate ancestors knew the emphasis of the Ottawa and Gatineau, and bequeathed him a rich inheritance. He is an able fellow with numerous faults, one of them being, though its often reckoned a virtue, too much anxiety to prove himself right;—but he is yet young. These two gentleman—the statesman (at his primer) and the big fat little financier—represent in our small society the conservative bourgoisie element, the boys who "think things are bad, but are damned if they can see how you are going to change it." Jack, except as to home-rule at home, is a radical this side of violence, and is called upon, sometimes, to take issue with one or two who have been out of work for several years, and are nearer the bread-line than their former affluence will allow them to admit. These all talk of the war, the world and the future, and when you have listened for half an hour to any one of them, you understand, without enquiring further, why there is war and why its recurrent cycles are likely to keep on recurring. The fat fellow believes in the capitalization of skill, but he will not admit that he believes in the penalization of unskillfulness. The Statesman demands that skill, backed by effort, shall be rewarded, but will not concede that, when intelligent effort gets more, unintelligent effort gets less. Jack is quite clear that the burdens of man-

kind should be redistributed, but he is just as positive that the Fox would, before a day, have the Ass carrying his load for him. One of the revolutionary radicals, hot with his hidden hunger-fear, "doesn't give a damn what happens"—"things can be no worse than they are," and he feels "that vengeance should be wreaked somewhere," though he is not clear as to the particular somewhere, but thinks it should start with the Privilege-serving Judges, Court Spiders, and the human immediate parts of the Great Machine that crushes the miserable-small and lets the comfortable-big away. One of the local bankers—a boy who "lifts the nets" on our particular "sucker banks" for the "great chartered institutions," is worried—badly worried—not about *who* shall *pay* and how—that's not his part of it—but about "the doubtful possibility of collection," "the terrible indebtedness," "the overwhelming interest," "the probability that financial disruption is imminent and national bankruptcy inevitable." Oh, terror of words! He cannot see that the debt is merely paper, and the power to eat without sweating (his conceptions are more vastly profound than that), and he does not admit that it is relevant when he is told that this debt is just an error in speed, the printing presses outrunning the reaper. Our Railwayman (a conductor) pins his faith to his union—union rate of wages, hours, and mileage;—that's his solution. It is useless to tell him that when his union gets its demands, that the non-unionist and non-unionable further down puts up his extra margin of ease and comfort by clipping it off their own. He does not seem to understand that Power at the top gets its privileged rations always, and that the

proportions of what it leaves must be fought for further down. Then we have, too, the "Rivetter" earning, temporarily, big money—ten dollars a day. "Big wages"—"that's the thing"—"make the robbers come through." No use to tell him that he *must*, despite his big wages, be clothed and fed and sheltered from the Soil, which will not, like the stock market or the wheat pit (not the wheat field) produce a paper fortune over-night—but will only grow its crop in seasonal regularity and with labour continuously applied. Wages, chasing the price and never catching up, is to him a statement without meaning. His view is immediate and personal, circumscribed and not external; his beliefs are the charter of luxurious idleness. Our Great One tells these boys that "profits," which he defines as "the power of the physically fit to exact labour beyond the equivalent of its own," "is the world's curse." "Destroy that power and wars and luxuries and idleness are things of the past." This looks too concise and simple for us, because, from the Statesman to the hunger-fearing Radical, we have been cultured in the mind-pre-emptions that reformation takes years and long anxious study, and careful, skilful oratorical question and debate, and grave judicial examination, and massive, deliberate interpretation and profound summing up with Precedent, and erudite deduction from past experience (all of which are, I think, the listening posts of Privilege); and—and—in any case, haste is a pernicious thing and must be avoided, till men have been "educated up" to new ideas. So, doubtless, we "must wait" (as I do on Slam), while the debts accumulate and the chains are multiplied and the limbs

wear less virile, and the mind-pre-emptions wax darker and more deadly; and, worse than all, the idlers, more numerous, exacting, and luxurious, and the workers, less muscular and more fiercely driven; while the asylums, indigent homes, houses of refuge, industrial farms grow ever thicker and thicker. Yes, let us wait; and, perhaps, instead of getting out by going forward, we'll back up and stumble on Progression, wrong end to—and let's back up easily, Speed is an unsettling thing;—easy, easy. Certainly, I admit that fellows like myself—out to roll up time-limits and set world's-records or bite a chunk out of the horseshoe (to entertain millionaires, etc.)—are not the kind of men that "Privilege" would like to see turned loose, "to go to work," on her stamping ground. Privilege wants the lay-out examined by "her own engineers," "the limits of operations defined and clearly specified," so that, "when the work is commenced, with her permission and not earlier," and when "the work is done, in all and every respect to her complete satisfaction," and "anything objectionable being removed before acceptance;" providing, also, that "anything not so removed she may have removed or done at her own discretion, by herself, or in the persons of others" provided, also, "that any such removal or construction is not to be construed into a claim for redress or reimbursement"; "Provided, also, that in all these, when completed, she shall not find any obstacle in the way of her free egress and ingress" ("of which and of all the above *she* shall be and is hereby constituted sole judge and arbiter"). In other words, that she must not be incommoded, restricted, or disturbed, but must

be left in free, absolute and inviolable possession of all those advantages, rights, charters and liberties which she enjoys, has enjoyed, or shall hereafter enjoy, either in the persons of her predecessors, in her own person, or the persons of her successors, heirs, and assigns, for ever. "All of which, whether specified or not," she and her predecessors in ownership have held for their special *use* and *comfort* from time immemorial, and which she now holds by the right of use and occupation, and also by the outlawry for centuries of any and of all other claimants, fraudulent or otherwise, either in their own persons or in the persons of those descended from such claimants, fraudulent or otherwise, and which are now, again, and have been heretofore pronounced as being under sentence of outlawry, and are therefore null and void. "God save the King." God and the King are clinchers. When Privilege gets arm in arm with that pair, Radicals had better take to the woods. Profanation? Without a doubt—on the part of Privilege.

CHAPTER XXV

"Riches come from the devil as by fraud, oppression, and unjust means."

"They are sure because they are sure, and their persuasions are right only because they are strong in them."

If this book were packed with wisdom—well—you would not read it—now, would you? Be honest, and admit that when you come to the page whereon I ask you to pause and think a little for yourself, I being wholly unable to do it for you, that you—well, that you just speed up a little and hurry on, looking for entertainment—a fool thing, perhaps, under the conditions. Still, is not that exactly what you do? That's the reason that Dunces are, in a way, responsible for the fooling of Wise Men. But when Wisdom is fooling she is laughing—and when she is laughing, is fooling. Hurry on, now. You see, Wisdom will speak seriously, though she hide her gravity in a smile; but kindly observe that her smile is separated by evolutionary—or is it devolutionary?—infinitudes from the grin of the Ape. The dirty, dusty tenement wherein Wisdom has her habitation can be shown by bone-and-muscle experts (which seems confusing) to be closely co-related to that of its hairy, long-tailed blinking brother, the Ape; but—they bump into the indefinable when, leaving their dark gropings among bones and physical solidities that can be felt with the

fist, they come cowering forth into the white, overwhelming light of the Mind. Contact and co-relation between Man and the Ape cease at this point. The bone-and-muscle boys cite the Ape's ability to feed (a snail does that), to chatter (a squirrel does that), to nurse its young (a whale does that) to carry its helpless offspring (the cat and kangaroo do that—one in it's teeth and the other in it's pouch). But the Ape cannot do what you and I are doing—realize that each of us, though we do not know and cannot hear nor speak to each other, have an entity, merely through some characters like these, set with silence upon an unconscious medium and taken off that same medium in the very same way (almost), except when you, reader, may laugh a little—or cry—nonsense—or rubbish—or even—punk! Therefore, I have proven what I set out to prove—"The impudent devil!"—that you and I, wise reader, are not —Apes. The Celt always insists upon the Mind—for centuries it was all he had—and recoils from the Apish Stomach. His six-hundred-year-old contention with the Anglo-Saxon Normanized is not for, though it is through political forms. It is a reaction against Military Mind Dominance, and he has fought bare-handed, bare-bosomed (like a fool), bleeding (like a wit), jesting till even the Anglo-Saxon Normanized, commercialized, begins to perceive that the Celt has a possession—a mind—that he will not give up, that he cannot give up, but which can only be relinquished with his life. But the Anglo-Saxon Normanized, though maintaining his forms and his house, which he has built, and his histories, wherein he has recorded himself, will shortly, *I think*,

begin to enquire into his more recent genealogy—or have others do it for him? (which is, in fact, his strong characteristic)—and start rewriting his histories, renovating and remodelling the house which he thought he had built, and will also make modifications, eliminations and additions in his forms, and call the new blending and styles by their proper name—which is not obsolete and means something—Anglo-Celtic. I say this, sincerely (sincerity is the thing that has held you, reader, nothing else), because I, who am the grandson and great grandson of soldiers, have also sons and grandsons the sons of soldiers, and I would not have them feel that they are squatter citizens—by the grace of Toleration or of Condescension, or even by Parliamentary Enactment; but that they are citizens because they are part of the whole—which is the truth; not citizens because they are a fraction of the appendage—which is a lie.

I want these boys to feel at home in this state—after we have buried the profiteers—and to keep working in this state—when the financiers are also in overalls—and to laugh and reflect and be happy in this state—when Anglo-Saxon shall be rewritten Anglo-Celtic, and when no author, scribbler, or pseudo-philosopher shall have to demonstrate in a dozen paragraphs, for his own behoof and the behoof of his reader, that neither of them are Apes. And now, having taken some liberties with ancient models, obsolete antiquities, and evolution-ry devolutionary types, let us, like "the speed fiends" —our puncture repaired, the cement dried, our tire on, and pumped up once more—take to the turnpike, and, like the rest of the unworking world, see how much farther we can travel on the wind, without a blowout.

"Doctor," I asked, "since the Central Empires and their Allies will, at the war's end, be bankrupt, and since our Empire and our Allies will be in exactly the same position —what is the real signification of all this propaganda for after-the-war increased production and sale?" "I limit my answer to your question, K.C." "Quite right, Doctor." "Then," said he, "the real signification is that the propagandists lost their reason at the first cannon shot in August, '14, and have not yet recovered it." "Doctor, your answer is worthy of the question; I did not put it right. It was too loosely framed. Let's see if I can do better.—Since our big trade was with the combatant nations—ally and enemy—and since they will all be broke, how are they, and we, by increased production all round, not only to discharge our debts, but actually become rich and prosperous off each other?" "Call in an economist, K.C., and ask him." "Well, Doctor, you have posted economists, and should know the answer." "No, I do not know the answer, and no other man knows the answer. Your question precludes the possibility of an answer." "Well Doctor," said Jack, "its a question that must be answered. "John," said the Doctor, "*must be answered* is not what you mean at all. Think it over." "Doctor," said the Fat Fellow, "these boys have too much and too little language. I'm interested in this—tell us what they want to know." "I'm not a mind reader, big fellow," smiled the Doctor; "but I know what you want. You want to listen while someone else thinks for you." "Thats' the way we learn to think for ourselves," said Jack. "No, its not, John," flashed the Doctor. "Damn it,"

growled Jack, "I seem to get in wrong here every place." "Yes, Jack, old top," laughed I; "there's too many Irish here." "But, Doctor," resumed the Fat Fellow, "how about the conundrum? K.C. maybe didn't have it right. Still he has me beat—how about it?" The Doctor laughed his rollicking, D.D-laugh, flourishing his cane ecstatically, and when he had subsided to a ripple, replied, "K.C. is full of tricks;—he had you beaten—he had me beaten—and he had himself beaten from the start." "How, Doctor?" "Are you jesting, big fellow?" "No, Doctor, I'm not." The Doctor looked suspiciously at the ponderous enquirer, and then snapped, "Confound you, don't you see he propounded a problem impossible to solve? He knew that—I knew that—*and you know it now.*" "No, Doctor," replied the Fat One; "excuse me if I'm a little dense. I'm something like Jack, and think it must have an answer." "Well," replied the Doctor, "since you think that, find one." "I can't, Doctor; that's why I wanted you to say what you thought about it." "Well, I've said it, have I not?" "It can't be done, Doctor?" "Certainly not." "Then, Doctor, why did this friend of your's propound the question?" "Just to see, I presume, how long it would take you to discover that the thing is impossible." "Well," said the Fat Fellow, after a pause, "they seem to think that it can be done: we read it everywhere—in the big journals and the little ones; they all agree that increased output and increased trade will pay our debts, get us out of the hole, and if we work hard enough and long enough that it will re-establish prosperity." "Iteration by journals and writers therein proves nothing

beyond the popularity of ignorance. How many of them gave the conditions a moment's thought; how many of them are capable of thinking (outside of their prepossessions, their inherited and acquired beliefs)? How many of them would be permitted to think, if they could think?" "Doctor, I don't like to believe the implications underlying your queries. Surely to God, all the men who write are not hog-tied?" "That's the proper term, big fellow," laughed I; "hog-tied is right." "No doubt," said Jack, "control of public opinion is pretty strong and widely-spread; but everybody's not roped." "No," replied the Doctor; "everybody's not roped. K.C. writes, when he feels like it, what he feels like—but nobody reads him." "Curse your Irish hide, Doctor; you must have read me—when you know this much." "But," laughed he, "I'm nobody; don't flatter yourself." "Very well," I replied, "I'll not; I'll merely congratulate you." "But," continued he, "to recur to the ownership of public opinion and public writers. Here is the position. Public writers sit between those whose opinions are controlled and those who control them. What can you deduce from that?" "Well," said Jack, "a man's personality and private bias will show." "No," said the Doctor; "look at this," tapping with his cane an open case. "The public writer is the tube in this nursing bottle that you have here for sale." "And," said I, "has just as much to do with making the milk as the writer has with making the material that the public suck." "Yes," said the Doctor, "just a rubber conduit which can be scalded, cleaned, and sterilized—when it sours." "Doctor," said John, "what of the book writers?"

"Ask, K.C.," replied the Doctor. "Tell him, K.C. You've been up against the big publishers with your free, Quixote chivalries—tell Johnny all about it." "No, I'll not tell him all about it; I'll just say this—if you crack at successful iniquity, they won't print; success validates the crime—that's all. Finance is the dictator." "We seem to be in a poor place," said our friend, the rotund one. "No, no," said the Doctor; "the world has never, as far as popular redress and readjustment is concerned, been nearer to its goal than at the present moment." "Tell us, Doctor," said the Big One; "I'm in the dark." "Me, too," said Jack; "the way things look I thought we were being hornswoggled for all time." "Germany is not," said the LL.D., "the fool she is popularly supposed to be. She saw much further than her rivals. She knew that if our financial systems were to be maintained—that is, each nation accumulating an ever-increasing percentage of idlers (in other words, National Debt)—that it was her cue to strike savagely and hard for military control, then, by making helots of the other nations and putting the enemy idlers to work, she could maintain her own wastrels and continue to enjoy her accustomed luxuries at the expense of the balance of mankind laid under tribute. Failing that, she could fight long enough to disrupt the system, not only at home, but in the enemy countries, and put them all on the same plane of ruin—when she herself would have to do exactly what the others would have to do, whether she won or lost, or whether they won or lost." "But," said the F.-F., "Germany and her Allies will have to settle the bill—for us." "How?"

I asked. "I don't know," said he, "just how; but I suppose we'll control their customs and internal revenues —duties and things of that kind." "Well," said I, "let's assume that we are in control of these; let us also assume that they pay us a portion of our levy—if we beat them—in gold, money down, say five per cent of the account, we'll settle that first. Can you eat the gold?" "No, we cannot, but we can purchase eats with it elsewhere." "Not from ourselves; that wouldn't help much." "No, but the other nations—South America, Asia, Africa." "Well, Africa is our's, and much of Asia. That won't let us out, except in the case of South America. Let's grant that South America will give us something for this gold—then what?" "That's far enough for me." "Yes, it may be far enough for you, but its not far enough for South America. She holds the gold, to exchange it for a commodity." "Doubtless." "Very well; suppose she asks us to furnish her with a commodity by returning the gold—what then?" "Well, K.C., we'll give the goods, I suppose, if we have them." "Then what." "We'll probably buy something somewhere else." "Which procedure," said I, "is the function of gold. But where does this get us? Is it not clear that if we exchange with South America, German gold for our commodity that we could just as well, outside the financial and sentimental fiction of gold, have exchanged commodities on a promise to pay—paper?" "Well, yes, I admit that." "Then is it not clear that the gold we received from Germany is merely a medium of exchange, which means nothing except so many tons avoirdupois transferred from place to place?" "I'm

afraid I'm getting in too deep," said the Big One, dubiously. "Not a bit, old top, you're doing fine. What I want to demonstrate is, that unless Germany will repurchase her gold with so much labour in the shape of a commodity, that we have not got a thing from her as yet." "But she purchased the gold originally with labour or a commodity. We have that." "If you mean the commodity—and she may have given that elsewhere —we have used that, it is consumed; if you mean the gold, she must redeem it with a product or it is useless to us. Do you see that?" "Well, it looks that way." "And her paper would be exactly the same thing?" "Nobody would take her paper; that's no good to anybody." "Well, if she must pay, she cannot pay all in gold; the gold will be only a fraction of the whole, so we must take the paper." "No, K.C., you're wrong, we'll take possession of her ports." "Evidently; but this is merely acceptance in another form of her promise to pay, with the added cost of collection. What then?" "I give it up," said the Financier. "Take all three," said Jack; "the gold, the paper, the ports." "Good, boy, Jack," cried the Fat One, rolling till his chair shrieked; "take all—all three." "Very well," said I, "let's take all three—or thirty-three or three hundred and three—the whole thing reduces itself to this. That to be paid we must take her labour, and you cannot take that an hour before it is performed." "I think you are hoaxing us, K.C.; but I'll admit that things don't appear quite so rosy as they did," said our Big One. "Appearances went out in Fourteen," said I. "Let's chase this thing a little further. The Germans were

tbrifty, frugal, laborious, and were piling up a debt. There seems little chance of collection there, because, if you stint their ration or overwork them, your immediate gain is swallowed up in loss of efficiency. Where are we now?" "The debt they were accumulating," said Jack, "was for war supplies, fleets, etc. We can make ber pay the equivalent of that." "But sbe still owes that debt—internally, let us say—and it bas been multiplied many times since Fourteen, and we will, if we can, multiply it a hundred-fold; which will mean what?" "It means, as far as I can see," said the Landlord, "tbat Germany's internal debt will have to be suspended till we are paid." "Tbat's it," said the Doctor; "exactly." "How long, Doctor, did we estimate sucb suspension would last, provided we finisbed and won in Nineteen?" "You said tbirty-five years; I said fifty." Ha, ba," laughed I; "doctors of divinity, like doctors of law, bark back to precedent." "We are not all voluntary outlaws, you rascal," be replied. "No, Doctor, that takes courage." "Yes," said he, "of a kind." "I'll reply later, Doctor. Meantime, there's daylight right ahead here. If we suspend payment of the German internal debt for fifty years, or even half of it, what becomes of those who lived on the revenues derived from this obligation?" "Go to work, I guess," said the Fat One. "Well, old top," said I, "it was a long way round; but we're back at the very point which the Doctor told us Germany foresaw." "Yes," said Jack, "but the boot's on tbe other foot—you're assuming, of course, that we're on top." "Yes, Jack," I answered, "we are on top, remember tbat. A half-century or twenty-five years' suspension is equivalent

to cancellation. It means that the Germans, physically fit, are all at work, and that at the end of that period she, though beaten, will have a jubilee and stand redeemed. It means also that we, though the winners will still have our war debt, and will still be toiling to feed those who do not work." "How will we owe a war debt," said the Stout One; "is not the levy on Germany our means of paying it?" "Well," laughed I, "let us say that we will have our pre-war debt, and a piece of the other, and that will be big enough." "I should say," answered he; "but, confound it, why don't we make Germany pay the whole thing?" "Big fellow," laughed the Doctor, "how much was the German margin above life?" "I don't know, Doctor." "Yes, you do," said I. "It was a margin on the wrong side, and," continued the Doctor, "were not all the nations stepping along in just the same way?" "I think you're right, Doctor," said Jack. "It never struck me that way before," said the Big One; "but its plain enough, put that way." "Very well, if Germany and her Allies were going behind, and we and our allies were going behind, its clear that one hundred and fifty millions of people, even with internal cancellation—be they never such workers—cannot take care of the deficit of three hundred millions. Where does this bring us?" "Damned if I can see," said the Big Fellow. "Well," said I "it looks easy." "How—easy?" cried Jack. "Doctor," said I, "set it, please, in a form easily remembered." "Elimination in all countries—of all waste labour, of all luxuries, and the return of all the physically fit to work." "Come, Jack," said I, "the train's gone; there will be no more customers

to-night. We've settled the financial end of the Great Wreck." "Well," laughed the Fat Fellow, as we went out and Jack sprung the night-latch—guardian of property and profits—"I half believe that's the way it will be done; but I'll be dead then,—to blazes with it! Good night." And we three answered, "Good night," and watched him roll heavily away into the darkness. "There they go, boys," said I, "Finance and the pleasant Fat Fellow—the System and its Product—see, the night has swallowed them." The Doctor and I were leaving Jack at his own door, when the Doctor caught him by the arm and hissed, "John, your nonsense about the boot being on the other foot shows that you mix other things besides prescriptions." "Cocktails, formerly," said I. "Shut up, K.C.," said the Doctor, and continued to Jack, "I said whether we won or lost. Good night." "Damn it, so you did, Doctor. Good night." "Pleasant dreams, John," cried I. "Doctor," said I, as we separated for the night, "when you hit the Peace Conference—" "Ha, ha, ha," laughed the D.D. "When you hit the Conference to post our piffling marionettes." "Yes, K.C." "Don't forget the few Irish acres that educated you—and—" "Yes, old chap, go on, it will all rest with me, of course—ha, ha, ha." "You speak German?" "Yes." "And I am small enough to dislike Germans." "Well, I begged you to study Goethe." "And you speak French?" "Yes." "And I love the French." "Are you sure it's the French, and not their great Workman?" "Both, Doctor.—But tell them all—" "K.C., you're seeing things." "That if 'tis not Brotherhood, it is not Peace." "K.C.," said the Doctor, "If I had not seen

some of the work that you have done, I'd take you for a fool." "I have to look at it sometimes, myself, Doctor, to get away from the same conclusion." "Don't you know?" "Know what?" "That the Peace Conference will be a convocation of wolves." "But, perhaps, there will be a Good Shepherd there—with a gun." "Back to force, again, K.C." "Yes, Doctor, that's it, I guess. Genius and a Gun." "Good night, K.C." "The special quality of the Ape is imitation, is it not, Doctor? —Good morning." I heard the D.D.'s laughter as we went up the steps and disappeared, and I also went in and to bed with a smile.

CHAPTER XXVI

"The elbow of revolt in the rib of Autocracy keeps it from going stark mad."

"Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that's mad."

"Intemperance, the only stain of the Celtic character."

The grain cannot be harvested—till it is fit—though Idlers can discount it years ahead. Post-war problems are insoluble till the war is ended. It looks as if it never would end; and so, back to Snottawa once more. Slam was in the discard, unfit on many counts, but most of us thought the main count was shortage of wizard oil for his neck and knees. Well, we had to have a War Boss, so, as we had fought the war to date on the principle that Cash was a Conqueror, we scuttled around among the financiers and pulled a tinker or tinsmith from the draw (rattling stuff, noisy stuff still seemed to stand out strongest, though, this time it was stage noise and not real explosives), and we were foxing around to make two War Bosses (one looked like a dwarf after Slam) so we could have one for work and one for best; also, we were devising a scheme to blow up the military bridge between Snottawa and London, so that immodest explorers or impudent enquirers, or even curio seekers, nosing round on the wrecked spans would tumble in and get drowned. This stuff was in the air, and so was I, like our left at St. Julien; so one more big lonesome try for a sit in at the big game. But the game was still full;

they had dealt from the slush since they started. I met all kinds of fellows—majors, colonels, M.P.s, Senators, Ministers, and had "good words" from a dozen of them. One Senator whom I had met a number of times put it up as plain as plain could be. He was a good scout, one of the amiable elusives, and, after all my humps and blunderings I was prepared to get down and eat crow—anything, almost, to get away—but when he began to talk of my "Member," I went up in the air like a bunch of fireworks, though I hung on pretty tight for a minute. "Bill," said I, "I don't want anything that kind of a clothes-suit could get me." "Well," he's your man, and he can do it." "Bill," said I, "you know his style and kind, and what he has done and hasn't done this last few years, don't you?" "Yes, I know, and he's a good fellow, all right, and a friend of mine." "You're not sick, Bill?" "Not a bit." "And you weren't near enough to the front to get shell-shocked?" "No." "Well, look here; I've no say; I'm out of it, that's clear. But since it's bunk still—and this our third year of it, and the Empire rocking—I'll tell you this: though I have foremen and friends and an only brother and two sons fighting in France—by the immortal gods, I'm damned if I don't hope the Germans will beat us to a frazzle!" "Tall talk, K.C., old boy, and mighty dangerous, just now." "Hell! its not half as dangerous as this disease of pull that's eating us to the core! To get licked, and licked strong, is the only thing that will rid us of the dry-rot that is crumbling the Empire to pieces. The fierce part of it is that we're wrecking the sound crust to get at the rotten heart. To hell with it! and you, and

the whole box and dice." "Look here, K.C., maybe I can fix it for you." "I wouldn't, even if I were fit for it, hold up my little finger to be made a General of Division. I'm done." "That's the whole trouble with you, boy; you won't be told how to do anything." "Broke in wrong, I guess, Billy. Go whimpering to that thing? Not on your life. The biggest of them came to me to ask how it could be done, and one yawp once went away, and came back with my stuff on a plan as his own. I threw the blue print in his face, the big stiff, and would have flung him in the river if he hadn't hiked it; and he was one of the big ones, with a world's reputation, and talked Assouan and Zambesi and Moscow to the Baltic and all that; and do you think I'll go down on my belly and crawl among the maggots now? Not while the blood of the ancient Cormac beats here." "You're hot, K.C., you're hot. What difference does it make, if you get in where you want to be, how you do it?" "The difference betwixt honour and dishonour, the difference between standing erect and crawling on all fours, the difference between being clean and slathered with the slime of cowards—truckling to that stuff, the very stuff that through your pullsters and profiteers is forcing Conscription, the very stuff that is making a bloody jest of our fighting men—the stuff, the filthy stuff, that makes brine worth more than blood—do you understand that?" "K.C., heaps of us feel like you, but we don't talk so loud." "Well, I wasn't a blatherskite always, but this trumpery tiddling gets me." "Sure, there's too much of it, but what can we do. But let's forget, and I'll see." "See nothing, Bill; I'm done. It will cost me more to

stick around here like a stray sheep than to bump in over yonder. But I've never been too small for my job, and I'll stack up to the size of this." "Let's forget it; come up and see his nibs—I'll take you myself." "Not now, Bill, and not there." "But, why? I can fix it up for you, and, if need be, I'll get help." "Not for me." "But, why—why?" "Bill, there was a gink breakfasting in my home one morning—a preacher—and he saw a copy of Burns lying loose, and said he, 'It's a pity he's in hell this morning.' I'm not an aristocrat, and I know the value of a bohunk, but I believe in blood, and there's nothing that road for me. Besides, I couldn't do it. I'm all through—get that?—done!" "Sorry, K.C., you should have had a chance." "It's nothing, Bill; but this stuff's going to lick you. Keep your eye skinned; the bogey man's going to get you." "No, he'll not, K.C.; the U.S. will be in before its over, and they have slathers of men." "Well, that's the only way you'll ever beat them—smother them with our dry rot. Back to the woods for mine. I wish I were a chimpanzee; they, at least, have the courage of their nakedness, and the monkey doesn't appeal to Soul when he chatters to his fellows to fling him down a cocoanut, or when he steals it from his mate after it is tapped. I'll shake hands with you up at the Chateau before I go out." "You won't come up?" "See you West after the Session, Bill."

"No doubt. I'm sorry, K.C.; but, after all, its rough stuff, and you're just as well—" "I'm better, Bill; good day." "Good day, K.C., and if—" "I've lived on those *ifs* for a century, it seems, but of them no more for me I'm sure again." And I walked away

from the Museum (great old joint, never thoroughly fossilized till now), fit housing for crumbling Conservatism, with its sapless heart, spider-nets, red tape, and its privileged, accretions, and abominations, and feeling like the wreck it looked, with its ripped and settling walls, billowing floors and punk work, patronage and profits gaping wide-mouthed all over it; but stirring no adamantine fibre in the stone antiquities from the Red Deer region who had "had their day"; calm as to the cracking walls breaking hearts and a rending world. Fossils have a stabilizing effect on the human mind when it starts to seethe. Perhaps that's why Canada, still in effervescent youth and full of fire, hangs on to the Senate. A glance at these quiescent-ones stills the criminal's hand—sometimes; a living death with the addition of flames is uncomfortable to contemplate, especially with the first part of it visible. Of course, if the rascal happens to be born asbestos, as so many of them are, he doesn't care a whoop for hell; and for the other place—if he misses the first—he believes that "it can be handled, if you have the right hunch."

The setting sun beheld me following him westward, contributing another piece of borrowed benevolence to the C.P.R., and thirty-six hours—consumed, mostly, in mental conflagration—set me off in the midst of the mortgages, the elevators, misdirected efforts and ambitions, and the dead ashes of an expired hope. Ah, well! I was too old; "the gimp," "the pep," "the snap," the colossal self-confidence—which is the long-range artillery of achievement—were gone. Quiet ways and reflection, the deliberate step that synchronized with years; re-

miniscences—not prophecies; the circumscribed past,—not the illimitable future; the garrulity of idleness, not the laconic brevity of swift action; leisure—not speed; clinging to the beaten paths—not blazing the adventurous trails; the talkative discursiveness of voluble advice,—not the grim silence of power. These were my portion now, and I could talk to Bill, the rough-necked humanist, with his lumberjack's vocabulary and his woman's heart, and listen to him telling me what "a fool" I was, and how little I knew—gad, yes!—he thundering always with his jaw set, because of his schoolboy who was laughing like a soldier through the death-hail over yonder—surely —and I could chatter to Jack, who would tell me, when he waxed angry, that I was rightly served, because nothing on earth suited me, and I was always out with the knock. Both of them believed in "the glad hand" and in "the plausible speech," and winked with the rest of the world at the cleverness of crookedness—though these were the spikes that even now had humanity nailed up in world-crucifixion. And I could look in occasionally on Twisty Chris, who edited a paper for his bread and wrote stories for the butter, and grumble (we were all cross—cramped with the Ogilvie adulteration, I guess) at his countrymen, to Long John, the Englishman, whose sons had proved their derivation (one of them with his life); and I could take the little fellow out for a walk, and dry the tea dishes for the old lady, and write to the boys as long as they stayed on top, and read the papers with their favourable, flaring trifles and their tucked-away-in-the-corner disasters—children making believe for children; and I could pass with contempt the clowns who skinned

me, who felt now they were safe hecausc I was so far down and out I couldn't come hack—as if that made them decent. And, anyway, I had been in the war as far and worn a uniform as long as many of the patriots who had merited well of the nation. (Loud and continued laughter echoing down to the soot-feathered arches of Hell.) The only difference between them and myself being that they had heen paid, while my expenses were my own—a gift to my grateful country; and, in any case, what about it—one more or less meant nothing, and if snails, in their hlind viscous aimlessness, creep out on the wooden walks on damp Octoher nights, certainly they'll get hurt. What ahout it? what would it signify in the end? The Big Interests were thundering altruism and patriotic sacrifice, and were dangling forth, like a sucker's bait, the "self-expression" of the small and down-trodden among humanity—just now; hut when the hugles hlared the "cease fire," and the ragged, lousy millions stood up, for the first time in four years—full length—to look at each other, thcy would he there, repressing them in solicitous care for their own protection, and, with their hig hasket, picking the pockets of the living as they had picked the pockets of the dead. Let them hellow: they had neither hearts nor livers, so their lungs had room enough. And well—I was done—I would sit down and look on and teach the little fellow to think for himself—if I could do that (me having, with the world, thought so long at the hidding of others)—and I would lift myself out of this debasing personal depression and ohsession; and laugh, if I wanted to, and sneer, if I felt like it, at the whole, tumbling, fumhling, hurrying, skurrying ant-

hill which Fate had disturbed with her toe as she took an evening walk, meditating on great things. Infinitude was always by as a monitor or profound master, spreading wide a voluminous page whereon the failing eye (spectacled) could dwell, searching among the mysteries, surely—and I could return to the books of the Great Ones, which I had thrown over my shoulder so carelessly in hot youth, when *to do* meant life, and the past was a dead thing. Yes, I'd look at them all again—Socrates teaching, scarcely clad, as becomes one whose business is with the mind; Plato, whom the censor, poor fool, had banned; Xenophon and Eschylus, who were soldiers—ah, me!—so many of them were soldiers—Cæsar and Cervantes—enough. Besides, a man "is entitled to part of his life for himself," though so few got it, and so many gave their all for others. Fine stuff for slippers and an easy chair and comfort. In France the big guns were thundering, crashing, reverberating, in a voice that even Doom herself had never dreamed of; belching annihilation . . . reflection, meditation, and the spinning of words—bosh! The sound young manhoods of the world were grinding each other to dust at the direction and discretion of the antique creations and imitations who believed, every one of them, that they were saving the world; while the elders, of whom I was one, sat back in pitiful senility, senseless—or sensible—and hoarded their withering handful of decrepid years and talked—as ignorance always talks—exculpatory, wisely, and with devout mien—feeling the need of defence—and hiding the shocking nudity of truth in a fashionable drapery of words. Yes, I would sit down and give passive, idle,

silent assent to these world-engulfing iniquities—certainly. But—havoc was still swiftly at work—world-wide—and flinging wreck and desolation broadcast—even into such quiet, far-removed corners as ours. Bert, the quiet English foreman, who always met me smiling, his work well done and up to the dot—he had taken his rifle and was gone—out; his wife and two little ones left, for whom I could do nothing, now. Michael, the profane Irishman—swift, brave, dauntless, above the water or beneath it—combination of whipcord, whalebone, and dynamite—with language which it was a revelation to hear—oaths punctuated with tears—he was away—over the top, and had finished in a ring of dead foemen, cursing—not them—but his luck. Mac—"Old Mac" of the level temper and quick wit—who had paid out a million for me, without an audit—he had finished, laying his Scotch-Canadian bones in his Gallic grave, as became him. And scores of boys as good as these (but labour must be lumped always in the mass), who had done solid work here with me, had proved that they were of the heroic, though unspecified, and had done gallant service over there, and their "job" being completed, "had laid down their tools," and quit for the night. "So long, boys! see you in the morning!". . . . Ah! The sturdy ones (punk at an excuse), and the lucky ones, whom Fate had not yet dismissed, were still carrying on. Jack, my kid brother—gad, he's thirty-eight, now; confound the years—he is still on deck, pioneering, digging with the sleek-scuttling, innumerable rats, among the recently- or long-since-buried dead. Karl is still at it, luck being with him when the Somme—at the invitation of

Incompetence, camouflaged, juggled, dispersed, dismissed, taken care of and decorated, swallowed the big end of his bunch in a few seconds of time. Cliff, the schoolboy, with his dauntless heart, quick head, sure hand, and luck, battled like a good geometrician from the straight line to angles, and so to the triangles of stars, and is now challenging Death amid the clouds, or soaring far above them, to get ocular demonstration that every one has its silver lining if you will only go sufficiently high. He, "courier of the azure steeps," can and does, heaven-poised, like another Jove, survey far beneath him the flashing thunderbolts, and, just to make sure that his "pump" is right, falls, like a meteor, for eleven thousand feet—half way—"flattens out," and finds that the heart which Canada gave him still beats its soldier's rhythm. Oh, boy! And this is what the world-war (plunder-scorched) is stuffing and cramming into its bloody maw, while gold-abstracted, bloodless scoundrelism prates of "Trade Balances" and "Export Volumes," "Reserve Funds," "Net Profits," "Commercial Prosperity," and "Reconstruction after the war"—which proves that Lucifer, despite his antiquity, his superheated habitation, and sulphurous atmosphere, is alert, clear-eyed, busy as blazes, and Physically Fit.

CHAPTER XXVII

"Forms that move fantastically
To discordant melody."

"Gone to salute the rising morn."

"Of one departed world I see the mighty shadow."

And whoso (Intellectual Prostitute or other) taketh away from the [sense] that is written in this book, the same shall "demonstrate the necessity for its having been written."

Reader, you and I have wandered, not far, but much; among trifles, mostly, to little purpose. Purposes and designs seem to have "their currents turned awry" in these latter days—the stream of life or death—cleaving tumultuous course through wreck and desolation, terrible to see. Some—nay, many of us—have been shaken on our old foundings—shale, principally—and topple in uncertain balance towards demolition. Or, maybe, we sway, for a last look up, as I've seen a three-foot Maple sway, in the old days, on the wind and the wedge, when, as a boy, I steadied the saw and dad did the sawing. This metaphor of the Maple suits me—suits you, also, reader, else you had not followed thus far—and suits the world. Much sound, solid-hearted, erect, and lofty nobility is being flung crashing earthward and swept away, leaving strange gaps in the landmarks we had known. Fortunately, with our worn hearts, some of us will not be here long to mark and mourn for the unfilled breaks whence the tall familiar pillars have been cut down

and have disappeared. Let us be thankful that our passing shall be followed by those to whom the gaps and strange places, still dark with memories, are but clear and light-filled openings through which they can see the sky; and you, sick hearts, be glad for those who follow that it is so. You and I would not wish that the griefs and shadows which crowd the lonely spaces were bequeathed to them. You and I, knowing what it is to have wept our anguished question to the far, unaswering grave, would not willingly leave it as our legacy to them—they will have griefs enow. Let us compress our war-autumned Maple leaves —crimsoned by scorching shell-glare and the early, icy death-blasts—close upon our bosoms, and hide them there, not to be disturbed ever, but to be laid with us silently away. Let us dry our eyes and look thoughtfully towards life's sunset: the efficient guns have done their work well, and tears can avail us nothing now. The purple and amethyst evening colours are gracious to look upon; and, think of it, our eyes and mind are still co-ordinated. You and I, though full of grief, have escaped a great horror. What horror? Hark! It is young Love, desolate now, singing in her padded cell—singing in a vibrant, harsh apathy, in a voice from which hope and harmony have been forever stricken—that fool burlesque, "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey, won't you come home?" terrible to hear and to contemplate; and the frivolous wail that was laughter once—pregnant now with tragedy and with tears—"I know that I did wrong," damnable to hear, and which sends the shivering soul fleeing for shelter lest it, too, be lost. We cannot help this, now; the young mourner, lightless,

desolate, will finish her tragic hurlesque some day—perhaps suddenly, if unwatched—and find rest and fruition with the Eternal, "clothed, and in her right mind." "Won't you come home?" She sent him away so bravely, with smiles, with wild forebodings—the Virgin's mother-solicitude rending her heart—with tears and kisses, unashamed. "Won't you come home?" Surely, poor, troubled maid. It is long since he reached home. Flee! flee! and meet him! "I know that I did wrong." What had she done that was wrong? Nothing. But do not grief, desolation, and death insistent, set us whispering always amid our tears—"I know that I did wrong." It is as primal as the elements, that conviction, that anguish and suffering are ours because we "did wrong"—unless, of course, you are infallible, or a staunch Conservative.

It is not my cue, as a finale, to fall into "admirable fooling"—the nations have been busy at that; nor am I going to make my exit in tears—like a good Egotist, weary, and sorry for what he has done; nor shall I dismiss you like a Professor, no, reader, I am one of yourselves, a little more voluble and patient, perhaps, with a little, or too much spare time.

Therefore, I'll not pose as an instructor. How can I teach—who am untaught. Your deductions and conclusions must be your own. Neither you nor the chap with the scissors and paste-pot are going to fling any "lame and impotent" brick-bats at me. If you, reader, expected me to tell you what you should resolve, please note that I contend that the world takes too many of its resolutions ready-made. I am not a Preacher—

the world has too many of them. Nor a Statesman—though there's room enough. Nor a Prophet—though there is need. Nor a Bookmaker (not the Orpen kind)—the world is deluged with them. But I was a Workman—till *Finance*, a *Crook*, and a *Crooked Minister* blackballed, bled and shackled me, and having worked—and worked with the men of many nations (all nations, almost)—I believe that personal, national, and international advantage is a fraud; that the world is not a sweatshop, neither whole nor in part. I believe that Profit and Plunder are the basis of and causes of war; and I believe in Work. It may seem irrelevant, but no one ever stole anything from Socrates nor from Jesus—except their reputations; both, financially, were fools—ask the Profiteers. Both preached—Revolution! Cash could purchase betrayal, condemnation, and killers for the Last—a verdict against, and a cup of poison, for the first. But, in our civilization, where the teachings of both are promulgated but never practised by Power, it must be clear that since Power and the teachings she propagates each draws life and the means of life from each other that, therefore both are wrong; provided, of course, that this civilization is to you unsatisfactory. But if it is satisfactory—why, reader, you have it—dismiss my observation and pass on. Regeneration, being born again, is accidental, spasmodic, isolated, laughable. Luxury or Usury is deliberate, universal, continuous and laughable—for devils. The Soul, the immortal part, is conceded one day in seven. Finance, the stomachic whole, requisitions six days in seven and much of the nights—sometimes, also, pinching the soul's

seventh day. An actuary in moral computation would sum it thus—H+E+L+L equals degeneracy, squalor, and war. Where does this get us? Not far. Progress is slow, and often (I'm Irish) backwards. Passive goodness is to active unscrupulousness a jest. Nobility, lofty and aloof, is a mountain, indicating to the wolf the ravine at its foot, wherein he shelters. Crime enjoys the notoriety of noisy reprehension, and laughs quietly while he commandeers service and food by having his name "honoured" on a cheque. See where honour has gone! And after this—well, several things. Female frugality —that was—is dimming her clear eyes in the white lights of the Great Cities—taking desperate chances of herding with the "Lost Ones," ere the charnel house swallows her. Rouged and jewelled Excess—barren as Sahara, and scorched like it—calls Temperance a prude, and leads her away dazed and exhilarated through labyrinths whence is no return. But, fair reader, you know all this, and you don't want to hear it again. You are tired of restrictive dope and advisory dope—the dope that you want is advertised daily in the "family journals—for a Profit. "Let's beat it and have a good time." Well, you had your good time and your luxuries and enjoyments, and you stuck to them in the company of the horn-rimmed husks (not huskies), and the puerile antiquities marked, militarily, Z.001, while the sound young paladins went down to death by the hundred thousand—they and the rats, their filthy, cannibalistic comrades, blown to pieces by the same shell. You had your time; why should you not? "Its only fools who bother about virtue, temperance, and frugality."

Doubtless it is—since "there is nothing but what thought makes." Well, then—what? To me the idle Brawler is as odious and pernicious as the Profiteer. Don't, dear demagogue, complain if there are smarter, cleverer Cynics than you—Cynics who pinch your pleasures and add them to their own. If you will not split with the fellow lower down—don't expect to share with the fellow higher up. If you are out on the off chance of getting to the top—don't curse your rival in the race who spills you in the mud. If you are willing to subscribe to conditions in success—don't execrate them if you make a failure. Service, if the world were balanced, can only be purchased with service. And then—what? To you the Profiteers, the Financiers, the Fools—I'm sorry for you. I know that, right now, you see what you have done, and that you would, if you could, renounce your mountainous iniquities, and get back to the semi-decency and custom-sanctioned security of the old levels, if that were only possible;—but you have exaggerated the fiction that fed you till the simplest mind sees what a fraud it is. Your mountainous margins are crumbling, and you see no path to get away with your hide—the spectre, Hunger, haunting every route of escape. It is a fearful thing—that hunger-fear. I have seen it close-up on the richest soil that drinks the dews of heaven—and you have been so comfortably housed and fed always. But the majority of men, for your foolish luxuries, have endured that terror. What service have *you* rendered that you should hope always to be exempt? But you will be exempt, and the rest of mankind will be exempt—if you work and eat your share, and no more. Overalls can be made

with a larger waist—to start—and next year the girth will not be so great, and you'll feel better, and be able to stoop over and pull the vegetables for dinner, and get back your long-lost palatal keenness in the operation. You cannot empty the graves that Plunder—assaulted or defended—filled by the million;—but you can till a little of the soil (whereof all graves are made) and plant in your garden a sprig of Rue in apologetic remembrance, and, meditating in the open air (far clear of time-locks, alarm-gongs, and watchmen), murmur to your mother's-mould—the good earth (that hides the gallant ones)—"Damn it, boys—I didn't—honest—I didn't know—you can't forgive me—I wish you could." Sure, old scout, you were only a fool—lots of us were that. And then? One big difficulty for you and I, reader, is that you must read and I must write in terms of an obsolete age. It is impossible for me of my volition to create symbols expressive, in full measure, of the day that is at hand. To move, still fettered with the old words and combinations thereof, is to be, in a measure, still thrall to the old Ideas that created them; and since those Ideas, in point of our necessities and aspirations, are archaic, useless, the words that represent them carry us, like this my attempt to break their orbit, round in a ring. Let's shorten it. The roar is not the explosion—the work;—the work is done before you hear that;—if not, you're in a poor place. Language is the echo of forces in operation. Of the new forces about to be detonated, who can reproduce their reverberations till he has heard them! Of that, enough. And then—what? Well, for the present, I'm going to throw aside my pencil, and,

like the Prince of Humanists, take a "shoemaker's holiday." For thirty days (be thankful it wasn't forty, and another flood) I've toiled like an ammunition mule, or a deep-sea stoker, or a publisher's reader, seeking a new idea in a new book; or like a critic—Indian-listed, cheese-fed, or non-fed—digging for the punky spots in that same book. And, here, to you critical boys and girls, in a final, lob-sided parenthesis. I'm not sore, and I'm not given to lie; you have treated me well—much—well, no—not so very much—above my merits. Some of you are *near* and some *far*-sighted (so stand aside and laugh)—the remainder; the normal-sighted, "take tent." Since every marksman or woman makes their big score at their favourite distance, it's not surprising that my Butts are splintered, slivered, and punctured, principally at the "four hundred yards." The medium, the mediocre, "the mob of writers," or literary-shooters firing chiefly at that range. Apart from this, I've often thought, even at that, that I'd like to do you a good turn and put you critics wise; and I'll do it right here. Quit firing at the scribbler's target—its only a piece of cotton (flag of distress—oh, mercy!) tacked to a lath. Fling your damned, jammed, smooth-bored antiquity in the ditch, or plug it down the prompted-Editor's prompting-tube; and come—come with me. See, here—here's a stick of dandy eighty per cent—the detonator soaped, so its safe in the slush—enough fuse to get away, priming split, and all set. Put this under the scribbler's chair. He's a dunce, and suspects nothing real. Light his cigarette and your own and the fuse, and then walk quietly away. "Good Work!" "Good Night!"