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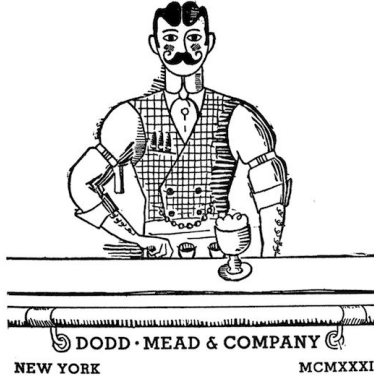
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# **WET WIT & DRY HUMOUR**

DISTILLED FROM THE  
PAGES OF  
STEPHEN LEACOCK



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STEPHEN LEACOCK

DODD·MEAD & COMPANY  
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This book is compiled in friendly appreciation of  
Prohibition in the United States, the greatest thing  
that ever happened—to Canada

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## WET WIT AND DRY HUMOUR

# THE DRY PICKWICK

## *England's Greatest Writer Adapted to America's Greatest Legislation*

### INTRODUCTION

The demand from the colleges for a revision of the works of Charles Dickens has now become so insistent that something must be done. "How can we put before the eyes of our literature classes," writes the president of the Mush Academy, "such scenes as those of the Maypole Inn, or the taproom of the Ipswich White Horse." "Our girls," writes Professor Lydia Leftover, "are tough enough already. If they start to read the drinking episodes of the *Pickwick Papers*, we can't hold them." "We must have legislation in this matter," declares a well-known senator from a Middle West state. "Our people are accustomed to lean on legislation. They can't progress without it. What we need is a state law to declare that Charles Dickens is not funny."

"But would it not be the more moderate and sensible course," so writes to me the president of a New England college, "if we could obtain a revised edition of the works of Charles Dickens, so made as to retain all the charm of character and humour and to leave out those features of social life not in harmony with our environment."

Exactly. But can it be done? Let us take some of the most famous and typical episodes of the Dickens books and imagine them undergoing such a revision.

All the world knows, at first hand or at second or third, the *Pickwick Papers*. All the world has read or heard of such unforgettable episodes as the Christmas visit of Mr. Pickwick and his friends to the hospitable Manor Farm of Mr. Wardle of Dingley Dell. What would revision leave of such a page of life?

Let us recall it as Dickens wrote it.

Here is the rubicund and jovial Mr. Pickwick, together with his inimitable and immortal friends, setting out by coach to visit Dingley Dell. We recall the starting of the coach from the inn yard, the vast hampers with mysterious bottles clinking within them; the cracking of the whips of the merry postillions; the pauses by the way for a change of horses at the wayside inns where Mr. Pickwick and his friends descend from their perch to visit the bar. Here a rosy landlord behind the long mahogany dispenses sundry smoking punches and hot drinks redolent of gin and lemons. We recall the arrival at Dingley Dell with jolly old Wardle merrily greeting his friends; more punches: festivities within doors and festivities without; hot toddies, hot negus, sugar, lemons and spices,—the very atmosphere of the West Indies wafted on the Christmas air of England; skating on the ice; whist, cards, and round games in the drawing room; huge dinners and substantial suppers; the consumption of oysters by the barrel and spiced beef by the hundred weight; and through it all the soft aroma of hot punch, mulled ale, warmed claret and smoking gin and lemons; till at the end the merriment fades into somnolence and Mr. Pickwick and his friends sink into innocent slumber having broken enough laws,—if the scene were in America,—to have sent them all to the penitentiary for life.

Can such pictures be revised? We dare not read them as they stand. They would corrupt the young. Let us see what revision can do.

## THE REVISED OR DRY PICKWICK

The evening was that of the twenty-fourth of December. Mr. Pickwick had retired early to his room in the inn and had betaken himself and his night cap early to bed, in anticipation of an early start for Dingley Dell by the coach of the morrow. Mr. Pickwick, we say, had retired early to bed, and reclined well propped up with the pillows with a bed-side book open on the coverlet before him as a scarcely necessary aid in the summons of slumber. Mr. Pickwick's night cap, in the corporeal or, so to speak, the flannel, sense was upon his head, while his night cap in the metaphorical sense, stood beside the bed upon the settee in the form of a tall glass of smoking toddy, from which the great man punctuated his reading from time to time with little sips. If we had looked sideways over Mr. Pickwick's shoulder at the book before him, we could have read its title as "*The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, together with the federal and state legislation for the enforcement thereof.*" We would have observed, moreover, that as the great man read further and further into the volume before him his usual genial face took on a serious air which almost deepened into an expression of indignation. We should have heard Mr. Pickwick from time to time give vent to such expressions as "most extraordinary!" "not to be tolerated," and various other ejaculations of surprise, indignation and protest. Nay, we should have noted that the repeated sips taken by Mr. Pickwick from the tall flagon of punch became more and more frequent and accentuated, as if assuming the form of a personal assertion of independence against an unwarranted intrusion upon the liberty of a Briton. Indeed we should have finally noted that nothing but the emptying of the flagon and the simultaneous expiration of Mr. Pickwick's candle as if blushing for shame to have illuminated such a page, put an end to Mr. Pickwick's reading. Indeed we may well imagine that the brain of that august gentleman, usually so well poised as to admit of a dreamless slumber, may for once have been carried into a dreamland, haunted

with the uncomfortable visions called up by what he had read. Mr. Pickwick indeed slept, but—

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"Better get up," growled a voice at Mr. Pickwick's ear before he seemed to have slept at all; "only ten minutes to coach time."

If that was the voice of Tracy Tupman, Mr. Pickwick's friend and contemporary, it was greatly changed; a surly voice with no good fellowship left in it; a mean voice,—reflected Mr. Pickwick, as he sadly pulled on his clothes in the chill of a winter dawn,—not like Tupman's at all. No suggestion of a morning draft of gin and bitters, or of something that might warm the system and set it all a-tune for Christmas day! Not even a "Merry Christmas," thought Mr. Pickwick, as he dressed and descended to the yard where the coach stood in readiness. Mr. Pickwick's friends were already gathered. They looked blue in the jowl and mournful in the chops; a sour-looking hostler half-awake fussed about beside the horses.

"Don't tip him," whispered Mr. Snodgrass to Mr. Tupman.

"Tip him!" replied Tupman; "a mean, disobliging fellow like that; not a farthing."

"Don't tip the postboys either," added Snodgrass.

"Certainly not," said Tupman; "such a couple of lubberly stupid fellows I never saw in my life."

Mr. Winkle, the fourth of the party, approached Mr. Tupman. "Have you got the hooch?" he asked in a half voice.

"For God's sake, Winkle, not so loud," said Snodgrass. "You can't tell who is hearing. I'm told they've got spotters now in all these yards. You're never safe."

With a sigh Mr. Pickwick ascended to the roof of the coach. "I never realized before," he reflected, "what dirty smelly things these coaches are, intolerable."

There were several other passengers on the Muggleton coach that morning. It had been Mr. Pickwick's agreeable custom, hitherto,



to invite conversation with his fellow passengers in whom he was accustomed to find a mine of interest and information. But the passengers of this morning,—silent, muffled and mournful, their noses red with the cold, their hearts heavy with depression,—inspired no such invitation to social intercourse. Mr. Pickwick left them alone. "They are a pack of bums," he murmured, unconsciously making use of a word not known until fifty years after his own demise, "not worth talking to." And then, as it were, suddenly taken with surprise at his own lack of urbanity: "I wish, Winkle," he said behind his hand, "I wish I could get a gin and bitters."

"Shut up!" said Mr. Winkle.

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Mr. Pickwick looked down from the coach roof at a mournful-looking man who was helping to adjust the luggage into the boot. "Is everything there all right, Sam?" he inquired.

"Eh, what?" replied the man in a surly tone. "I guess it is. Get down yourself and see if you doubt it."

"Surly fellow," murmured Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Tupman, and he added with a sigh, "How I ever could have thought that fellow Sam Weller obliging and amusing, passes my belief."

"Why not get rid of him," said Mr. Tupman in the same cautious whisper.

"Can't," said Mr. Pickwick, emphatically, "he belongs to the union."

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At length, with no more delay than coaches usually take in starting at such a season of the year, the coach with a fierce cracking of the whips and with sundry snarls from the postboys was off upon its way. "Mean, nasty weather," muttered Mr. Snodgrass, shivering into the collar of his overcoat.

"What you can expect," rejoined Mr. Winkle in a tone of equal complaint, "at this time of the year. It's, let me see, the twenty-fifth of December: always rotten weather then."

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Pickwick, "Christmas!" and he repeated as if lingering on the sound of a remembered melody, "Christmas!"

"What's that?" said Mr. Tupman.

"Nothing," said Mr. Pickwick.

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It would be too painful to trace the slow progress of the coach along miry roads, down muddy lanes with ragged snow in the hedgerows and past gaunt trees shivering in the winter gloom. There was no gleam of sunlight. A chill east wind flaked with sleet, blew in the faces of the travellers, while the sky darkened almost to the point of night. Conversation survived only in a few muttered imprecations at the weather, couched rather in the form of profane soliloquy than in that of mutual intercourse. Even the heart of the noble Mr. Pickwick sank within him. "I wish I had a drink," he murmured from time to time. "Winkle, don't you think we might take a sip out of the bottle?"

"Too dangerous," replied Mr. Winkle with a guarded look at the other passengers. "One of those men," he whispered behind his hand, "is evidently a clergyman. You can't trust him. But wait a while," he added. "There's an inn a little further on, the Blue Boar. We can get in there and take a drink."

"Ah, yes," murmured Mr. Pickwick, "the Blue Boar!" and at the very name of that comfortable hostelry such a flood of recollections poured into his mind,—memories of blazing fires, and smoking viands, of hot punches and warm brandies, that for a moment the countenance of the great man resumed its usual aspect of serene good nature. "The Blue Boar," he kept repeating to himself, "the Blue Boar," and with his hat, face and spectacles well drawn within the folds of his collar and muffler, Mr. Pickwick was able, in spite of all discomforts, to relapse into something like a

doze, in which no doubt his mind passed once more in review those pleasant scenes and episodes which had made his name famous throughout the civilized world.

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"Get down here for a while if you want to. We're changing horses." It was the voice of the guard which had rudely broken in on the somnolence of Mr. Pickwick.

He sat forward with a start. "Where are we?" he murmured, looking through the sleet at a large building, its main door boarded up, its windows for the most part shuttered and the swinging sign in front of it painted over with white-wash. "Where are we?"

"The Blue Boar, coach-stop number six," said the guard. "Get down if you like. You have four minutes."

Mr. Pickwick looked in silent dismay at what had once been the spacious and hospitable hostelry of the Blue Boar. Where now was the genial landlord of the bygone days, and where the buxom landlady, bustling about the inn, with a swarm of pretty chambermaids busy at her bidding, with serving-men stirring up huge fires, dinners on vast trays moving to private dining rooms, with activity, happiness, merriment everywhere, whither had it fled? This gloomy shuttered building with make-shift stables at the back, the bar boarded up, the license painted out, the chimneys almost smokeless! Mr. Pickwick sat motionless, scarce able to credit the transformation of the world he had once known.

"Get down, Pickwick, if you're coming," called Tupman from the ground, and accompanied his words with sundry taps at his side-pockets and with sundry rapid and furtive gestures, apparently indicative of the general idea of drink. "We may be able to get in," continued Tupman, when Mr. Pickwick had made his way to the ground, "and we can perhaps get glasses and some soda water inside."

The Pickwickians gathered in a little group in front of the closed-up door of the inn. They stood huddled together, their backs

against the driving snow, while Mr. Pickwick, as became the senior and the leader of the party, delivered with the head of his cane a series of firm, dignified and expressive knocks at the closed door. There was no response. "Knock again," said Mr. Winkle. "I understand that the landlady still lives here; if she once recognizes *us* she'll let us in in a moment."

Mr. Pickwick again delivered a series of firm raps upon the door in which the authority of command was delicately blended with plaintiveness of appeal. This time the response was not long in coming. An upper casement banged open. A fierce-looking virago, a shawl thrown about her head, leaned out of the window. "If you loafers don't beat it out of there in five seconds," she shouted, "I'll put the sheriff after you."

"My dear madam," began Mr. Pickwick in mild expostulation.

"You madam me, and I'll have you in the jug. You beat it," cried the woman and the window shut with a slam.

Aghast at what he heard, albeit couched in language he could not understand, Mr. Pickwick turned to his followers. "Can that be the same woman?" he asked.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Tupman.

"Certainly not," repeated Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle.

Yet they all knew that it was.

"It seems to me," said Mr. Snodgrass, whose mild poetic disposition was ever disposed to make the best of anything, "that if we went around out of sight behind the stable we might take a drink out of the bottle. That's better than nothing."

In accordance with this excellent advice, the four Pickwickians, with much dodging and manœuvring, retreated into a hidden angle behind the stable fence. Here Mr. Winkle produced from the pocket of his greatcoat a bottle—alas—only a *pint* bottle, of a beverage which had already been referred to as hooch. "There's no glass," he said mournfully.

"That doesn't matter," said Tupman.

"—and no soda or water."

"It's of no consequence," said Mr. Pickwick majestically; "drink it as it is. You, Winkle, drink first,—I insist,—you bought it."

"I *think* it's all right," said Mr. Winkle, a little dubiously. "I got it from a chemist in the Strand. He *said* it was all right. Try it yourself."

"Drink first," repeated Mr. Pickwick sternly.

Thus adjured and with his eyes upon that Heaven to which he looked for protection Mr. Nathaniel Winkle took a long pull at the bottle, and then removed it from his lips with a deep "ah!" of satisfaction. "It's all right," he said.

The bottle passed from lip to lip. The four Pickwickians under its genial influence regained in some measure their wonted cheerfulness. Mr. Tupman straightened up his coat collar and his shirt and adjusted his hat at a more becoming angle. Mr. Pickwick beamed upon his companions with a kindly eye.

But, alas! their little glow of happiness was as brief as it was welcome. One drink and one half-drink, even with the most honourable division done with the greatest sacrifice of self, exhausted the little bottle. In vain it was tilted to an angle of ninety degrees to the horizon. The little bottle was empty. Mr. Pickwick gazed sadly at his followers, while a gust of wind and snow that rounded the corner of their little shelter, recalled them to an inclement world.

Mr. Pickwick rebuttoned his coat about his neck. "Come," he said, "let us get back to the coach. But I wish we had kept a drink for Wardle. Too bad."

"Too bad," re-echoed Mr. Tupman, buttoning up his coat.

"Too bad," echoed again Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle, buttoning up their coats.

Indeed the Pickwickians were just about to retrace their steps to the coach, filled with humanitarian sympathy for the fate of Mr. Wardle, when there occurred one of those peculiar intrusions of fate into human affairs such as can only be attributed to a direct intervention of Providence.

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Round the corner of the stable wall there approached with sidelong steps and a stealthy backward glance, an individual whom even the charitable mind of Mr. Pickwick could only classify as obviously one of the criminal class. The shabby habiliments, the tight scarf about the neck, the cap close down over the cropped head combined with the saturnine cast of an ill-shaven face and sunken eye to suggest an atmosphere of malevolence and crime.

"I seen yous," snarled this ill-omened individual—"I seen yous take that drink."

Mr. Winkle as one acknowledged to be the most martial and combative of the Pickwickians, assumed an air of indignation and stepped forwards towards the newcomer as if fully prepared to take him by the scruff of the neck and hurl him over the adjacent fence. "See here, fellow," he began in a tone of mingled anger and contempt.

The "fellow" backed towards the fence. "Cut out that high hat stuff," he sneered, and as he spoke he drew from his pocket an object which even the inexperienced eyes of Mr. Winkle surmised to be a weapon of a mortal character. None of the Pickwickians, indeed, could from any freak of supernatural forecast have ever seen an automatic pistol, but there was something in the menacing clutch with which the villainous-looking scoundrel held the weapon which seemed to warn them of its power. Mr. Winkle's naturally pale face grew a trifle paler, while even Mr. Pickwick put up one hand as if to screen himself from an imaginary stream of bullets. "My dear sir," he protested.

The man put his weapon back in his pocket.

"I didn't come for no scrap," he said. "I seen yous take the drink and I seen yous finish the bottle. Now, then, do you want to buy some more: I've got it right here. How about it?"

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick in a tone of enlightenment and relief, "more liquor. You have some to sell? By all means, what is it,—brandy?"

"It's the real thing," said the man, pulling out a long black bottle from an inside pocket of his shabby coat. "You don't get stuff like that every day."

He held the bottle up in the dim daylight. It bore no label; the bottle itself looked greasy and no gleam of sunshine was reflected back from its contents.

"What is it?" again asked Mr. Pickwick.

"The real thing," repeated the man fiercely. "Didn't I tell you it was the real stuff?"

"And how much," asked Mr. Winkle, whose martial air had entirely evaporated, "do you ask for it?"

"For you gents," said the ragged man, "I'll make the price at five sovereigns!"

"Five sovereigns!" gasped all the Pickwickians.

"Five sovereigns," replied the man, "and you'd better hand it over quick or I'll report to the coachguard what I seen here, and you'll learn what the law is, if you don't know it already."

"Give it to him, Tupman," said Mr. Pickwick, "give it to him." It was characteristic of that great and magnanimous man, that the aspect of anger and quarrelling was overwhelmingly distasteful to him. Financial loss was easier to bear than a breach of those relations of goodwill and concord which alone hold humanity together.

Mr. Tupman, as the treasurer of the party, counted five golden sovereigns into the hands of the ragged man. The black bottle was

duly transferred to a capacious pocket of Mr. Pickwick's coat. The ragged man with a surly attempt at civility, based on the possibility of future business, took his departure.

"We might try a sip of it," said Winkle suggestively.

"Let it be understood," said Mr. Pickwick, "that there is to be no further mention of this bottle, until I myself produce it at the right time and place for the entertainment of our dear friend Wardle."

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With this understanding the four companions betook themselves sadly back to the coach, and were hustled up to the roof by the guard already impatient at their long delay. There they resumed their melancholy journey, the wet sleet and the drizzling rain alternately in their faces. The long day wore its gradual length away as the four Pickwickians were dragged over muddy roads, past mournful fields and leafless woods across the face of what had once been Merry England. Not till the daylight had almost faded did they find themselves, on reaching a turn in the road, in the familiar neighbourhood of Manor Farm of Dingley Dell.

"There's Wardle," cried Mr. Pickwick, waking up to a new alacrity and making sundry attempts at waving signals with an umbrella.

"There's Wardle, waiting at the corner of the road."

There, right enough, was the good old gentleman, his stout figure unmistakable, waiting at the corner of the road. Close by was a one-horse cart, evidently designed for the luggage, beside which stood a tall thin boy, whose elongated figure seemed to Mr. Pickwick at once extremely strange and singularly familiar.

"You're late," said Mr. Wardle in a slightly testy tone. "I've waited at this infernal corner the best part of an hour. What sort of journey did you have?"

"Abominable," said Mr. Pickwick.



"Always that way at this infernal time of the year," said Wardle. "Here, Joe, make haste with that luggage. Drive it on in the cart. We'll walk up."

"Joe!" repeated Mr. Pickwick with a glance of renewed wonder and partial recognition at the tall thin boy whose long legs seemed to have left his scanty trousers and his inadequate stockings far behind in their growth. "Is that Joe? Why Joe was—"

"Was the 'Fat Boy,'" interrupted Wardle, "exactly so. But when I had to cut his beer off he began to grow. Look at him!"

"Does he still sleep as much as ever?" asked Mr. Tupman.

"Never!" said Mr. Wardle.

The cart having set off at a jog trot for the Manor Farm the five gentlemen, after sundry adjustments of mufflers, gaiters and gloves, disposed themselves to follow.

"And how are you, Wardle?" asked Mr. Pickwick as they fell in side by side.

"Not so well," said Mr. Wardle.

"Too bad," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I find I don't digest as well as I used to."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, who has passed more than half a century of life without being aware that he digested at all, and without connecting that interesting process with the anatomy of Wardle or of any other of his friends.

"No," continued Wardle, "I find that I have to keep away from starch. Proteids are all right for me but I find that nitrogenous foods in small quantities are about all that I can take. You don't suffer from inflation, at all, do you?"

"Good Lord, no!" said Mr. Pickwick. He had no more idea of what inflation was than of the meaning of nitrogenous food. But the idea of itself was enough to make him aghast.

They walked along for some time in silence.

Presently Mr. Wardle spoke again.

"I think that the lining of my œsophagus must be punctured here and there," he said.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Either that or some sort of irritation in the alimentary canal. Ever have it?"

"My dear sir!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"It's this damn bootleg stuff," said Mr. Wardle.

Mr. Pickwick turned as he walked to take a closer look at his old and valued friend, whose whole manner and person seemed, as it were, transformed. He scrutinized closely the legs of Mr. Wardle's boots, but was unable to see in those stout habiliments any suggested cause for the obvious alteration of mind and body which his friend had undergone. But when he raised his eyes from Wardle's boots to Wardle's face, he realized that the change was great. The jolly rubicund features had faded to a dull, almost yellow complexion. There were pouches beneath the eyes and heavy lines in the once smooth cheeks.

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Musing thus on the obvious and distressing changes in his old friend, Mr. Pickwick found himself arriving once more in sight of the Manor Farm, a prospect which even on such a gloomy day filled him with pleasant reminiscences. The house at any rate had not changed. Here was still the same warm red brick, the many gables and the smoking chimneys of that hospitable home. Around and beside it were the clustering evergreens and the tall elm trees which had witnessed the marksmanship of Mr. Winkle in the slaughter of rooks. Mr. Pickwick breathed a sigh of satisfaction at the familiar and pleasant prospect. Yet even here, in a nearer view, he could not but feel as if something of the charm of past years had vanished. The whole place seemed smaller, the house on

a less generous scale, the grounds far more limited and even the spruce trees fewer and the elms less venerable than at his previous visit.

In fact Dingley Dell seemed somehow oddly shrunken from what it had been. But Mr. Pickwick, who contained within himself like all great intellects the attitude of the philosopher, resolutely put aside this feeling, as one always familiar in visits paid to scenes of former happiness.

Here at least as he entered the good old house was the same warm and hearty welcome as of yore. The old lady, Mr. Wardle's mother, her deafness entirely laid aside, greeted Mr. Pickwick and his younger companions with affectionate recognition: while the charming Emily Wardle and the dashing Arabella Allen appeared in a bevy of pretty girls for the especial welcome and the complete distraction of the susceptible hearts of Messrs. Snodgrass and Winkle. Here too, as essential members of the Christmas party, were the two young medical students, those queer combinations of rowdiness and good-humour, Mr. Bob Sawyer, and Mr. Benjamin Allen, the brother of the fair Arabella.

Mr. Wardle, also, as he re-entered his home and assumed his duties as host, seemed to recover in great measure his genial good nature and high spirits.

"Now, then, mother," he exclaimed, "our friends I am sure are thirsty; before they go to their rooms let us see what we can offer them in the way of wine. Joe,—where's that boy,—a couple of bottles of the red wine, the third bin in the cellar, and be smart about it." The tall thin boy, whom the very word "wine" seemed to galvanize out of his mournful passivity into something like energy, vanished in the direction of the cellar, while Mr. Pickwick and his companions laid aside their outer wraps and felt themselves suddenly invaded with a glow of good fellowship at the mere prospect of a "drink." Such is the magic of anticipation that the Pickwickians already felt their hearts warm and their pulses tingle at the very word.

"Now then," said the hospitable Wardle, "bustle about, girls,—glasses—a corkscrew,—that's right,—ah, here's Joe. Set it on the sideboard, Joe."

The cork of the first bottle came out with a "pop" that would have done credit to the oldest vintage of the Rhine, and Mr. Wardle proceeded to fill the trayful of glasses with the rich red liquid.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Pickwick, beaming through his spectacles at the fluid through which the light of the blazing fire upon the hearth reflected an iridescent crimson. "What is it, Madeira?"

"No," said Mr. Wardle, "it's a wine that we made here at home."

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick. Volumes could not have said more.

"It's made," continued the hospitable old gentleman, passing round the glasses as he talked, "from cranberries. I don't know whether one would exactly call it a claret—"

"No," said Mr. Pickwick, as he sipped the wine,— "hardly a claret."

"No," said Wardle, "a little more of a Burgundy taste—"

"Yes," said Mr. Pickwick, "a little more of a Burgundy taste."

"Drink it," said Mr. Wardle.

"I am," said Mr. Pickwick, "but I like to sip it rather slowly, to get the full pleasure of it."

"You like it?" said Mr. Wardle eagerly.

"It is excellent," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Then let me fill up your glass again," said Wardle. "Come along, there's lots more in the cellar. Here, Winkle, Tupman, your glasses."

There was no gainsaying Mr. Wardle's manner. It had in it something of a challenge, which forbade the Pickwickians from expressing their private thoughts, if they had any, on the merits of Mr. Wardle's wine. Even Mr. Pickwick himself found the situation

difficult. "I think perhaps," he said, as he stood with a second bumper of wine untasted in his hand, "I will carry this up to my room and have the pleasure of drinking it as I dress for dinner." Which no doubt he did, for at any rate the empty glass was found in due course in Mr. Pickwick's bedroom. But whether or not certain splashes of red in the snow beneath Mr. Pickwick's bedroom window may have been connected with the emptiness of the glass we are not at liberty to say.

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Now just as the gentlemen were about to vanish upstairs to prepare for dinner the sprightly Emily pulled Mr. Winkle aside. "Wait till the old guys are out of the way," she whispered, "Arabella's got a flask of real old tanglefoot, and Bob Sawyer and Mr. Allen are going to make cocktails. Come into our room and have some."

"God bless my soul," murmured Mr. Winkle.

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The assemblage of the party for dinner found much the same group gathered at the Manor Farm as on the occasion of Mr. Pickwick's previous visit. Here among the first was the elderly clergyman whose charming poetic talent had afforded such pleasure to the company.

"I am glad to see you," said Mr. Pickwick heartily. "I trust, sir, I see you well."

"Not altogether," said the old man. "I am well enough except when it's humid, but I find that after a certain saturation of the air, it affects me at once."

"Indeed," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I imagine," continued the clergyman, "that it's my sebaceous glands? Don't you think so?"

"Possibly so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Though it may be merely some form of subcutaneous irritation—"

"Quite likely," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You see," continued the old gentleman, "it's always possible that there's some kind of duodenal perforation—"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

The fortunate entry of Mr. Wardle with a trayful of cocktails carried aloft by the Thin Boy interrupted this ultra-medical conversation.

"These cocktails," proclaimed Mr. Wardle in the same tone of irritation and challenge with which he had passed the wine, "you may rely upon absolutely. There is no bootlegged stuff used in them."

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling, "and what is the principal ingredient?"

"Harness oil," said Mr. Wardle. "They were made here in the house by my old mother herself. Mother, your health!"

"Your health, madam," echoed all the company, while the guests with a resolution worthy of the sturdy race from which they sprang, drained the glasses with the unflinching courage of the Briton.

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It would be as tedious as it would be needless to trace in detail the slow progress of the meal which followed. The oil cocktails indeed induced a temporary and hectic rise in spirits which lasted through the first of the many courses of that interminable meal. But the fires, thus falsely raised, died easily down.

Mr. Pickwick found himself seated between the old lady who entertained him with a sustained account of her rheumatism, and the ancient clergyman who apparently found his sole intellectual diversion in the discussion of his glands.

Nor is it necessary to relate in detail the dreary passage of the long evening in the drawing room which followed upon the long dinner in the dining room. Mr. Pickwick found himself at the card table, with his friend Mr. Tupman as his opponent and two elderly, angular and silent spinsters as their partners. Here Mr. Pickwick

slowly passed from dryness to desiccation; from desiccation to utter aridity such that the sand in the desert of Sahara was moistness itself in comparison. More than once he almost broke his fixed resolutions and dashed off to his room to fetch down the bottle of the "real old stuff" which lay in the pocket of his greatcoat. But his firm resolve to share it with his host and to produce it as the final triumph of the evening kept him from so doing. His sufferings were all the more intense in that some instinct warned him that there was, as it were, "something doing" among the younger people to which he was not a party. There were frequent absences from the card room on the part of Winkle and Snodgrass and the two young medicos, closely coincident with similar absence of the lovely Emily and the dashing Arabella,—absences from which the young people returned with laughing faces and sparkling eyes,—in short Mr. Pickwick had that exasperating feeling that somebody somewhere was getting a drink and that he was not in on it. Only those who have felt this,—and their numbers are many,—can measure the full meaning of it.

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The evening, however, like all things human, drew at length to its close. And as the guests rose from the card tables Mr. Pickwick felt that the moment had at length arrived, when he might disclose to the assembled company his carefully planned and welcome surprise.

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Mr. Pickwick signalled to the Thin Boy who had remained in attendance in a corner of the room. "Go up to my bedroom, Joe," he said, "and you'll see a bottle—"

"I seen it already," said the Thin Boy.

"Very good," said Mr. Pickwick, "fetch it here."

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"And now," said Mr. Pickwick, when the bottle was presently brought and placed with the cork removed beside him on the table, "I have a toast to propose." He knocked upon the table in order

to call the attention of the company, some of whom were already leaving the room while others still stood about the table.

"The toast of Christmas!" said Mr. Pickwick, holding aloft the bottle. At the sight of it and with the prospect of a real drink before them the company broke into loud applause.

"This bottle, my dear old friend," continued Mr. Pickwick, his face resuming as he spoke all of its old time geniality and his gold spectacles irradiating the generosity of his heart, as he turned to Mr. Wardle,— "this bottle I have bought specially for you. I could have wished that this bottle like the fabled bottle of the Arabian nights (I think it was the Arabian nights; at any rate, certain nights),—that this bottle was everlasting and unemptiable. As it is, I fear I can only offer to each of us, a mere pretence of a potation. But for you, my dear Wardle, I insist that there shall be a real bumper, a brimming bumper."

Mr. Pickwick suited the action to the word, and filling a glass to the brim he handed it across the table to Mr. Wardle.

"You, Wardle, shall set us a good example by first draining this glass in honour of the spirit of Christmas!"

The kindly face of Mr. Wardle betrayed a noble struggle in which the desire for a drink, a real drink, struggled for mastery in the more magnanimous feelings. He hesitated. He paused. The liquid in the glass might be dull in colour and lustreless to the eye, but the pungent aroma, or odour, with which it seemed to fill the room bore witness at least to the strength of it.

"Pickwick," said Wardle, deeply moved, "I can't. You are too kind," and then suddenly: "Damn it. I will."

And as if anxious to leave no room for any weakening of his resolution, Mr. Wardle lifted the glass and drained it to the bottom. Only when he had consumed the last drop did he set the glass down upon the table. He set it down, so it seemed to those about



him, with a slow and heavy hand, and stood a moment, after his potation, as if pausing for speech.

"Pickwick," he said at last, "it's—you are—"

His utterance sounded suddenly thick. His eye seemed fixed in a strange way. He looked straight in front of him, not at his old friend, but as it were into nothingness.

"Pickwick," he repeated, and then, in a loud voice like a cry of fear:

"Pickwick!"

Wardle's hands groped at the edge of the table. He swayed a moment, trying in vain to hold his balance and then sank down in a heap against the edge of the table, unconscious, his breath coming in heavy gasps.

Mr. Pickwick rushed to Wardle's side. The affrighted guests gathered about him in a group, vainly endeavouring to recall the good old man to consciousness.

Mr. Pickwick alone retained some measure of decision. "Sawyer," he said, "where's Sawyer. Sam, Joe,—quick, go and find Mr. Sawyer!"

"Here, sir," said the voice of the young medico re-entering the room to which the tumult had recalled him.

He stepped up to Wardle's side and seized his wrist with one hand and with the other opened Mr. Wardle's waistcoat to feel the beating of the heart.

Silence fell upon the room, broken only by the stertorous breathing of the old man lying against the table. The eyes of the guests were fixed upon young Bob Sawyer who stood silent and intent, feeling for the beating of the flickering pulse, transformed in a moment by the instinct and inspiration of his profession from a roystering boy to a man of medicine.

Sawyer's eye fell upon the empty and reeking glass. "What did he drink?" he asked.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, silently passing the bottle to the young man. Bob Sawyer, with a shake of the head, released the wrist of Mr. Wardle. He poured a few spoonfuls of the liquid into the glass and with the utmost caution tasted it with the tip of his tongue.

"Good God!" he said.

"What is it," said Mr. Pickwick, "raw alcohol?"

"With at least fifteen per cent of cyanide," said Bob Sawyer.

"And that means?" Mr. Pickwick asked with an agonized look at his old friend, whose breath had now grown faint and from whose face all vestige of colour was rapidly fading.

Bob Sawyer shook his head.

"It means death," he said. "He is dying now."

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Mr. Pickwick threw his arms about the shoulders of his old friend. In an agony of remorse, he felt himself the destroyer of the man whom he had loved beyond all his friends. His own hand, his own act had brought about this terrible and overwhelming tragedy.

"Wardle, Wardle," he cried in tones of despair, "speak to me. Wake up! Wake up!"

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Again and again, so it seemed at least to himself, he cried, "Wake up, wake up!"

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Then as he repeated the words yet again Mr. Pickwick suddenly realized that not he but some one else was vociferating, "Wake up, wake up!"

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The voice echoed in his brain driving out of it the last vestiges of sleep.

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With a gasp of relief, as of one rescued from the terrors of a dreadful dream, Mr. Pickwick slowly opened his eyes and assumed a sitting posture, his hands still grasping the coverlet of the bed.

"Wake up, Pickwick, wake up. Merry Christmas!"

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There was no doubt of it now! It was the voice of Mr. Tupman, or rather the combined voices of Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle, all fully dressed for the coaching journey and gathered in gay assemblage about the bed of their tardy leader.

It seemed too good to be true! Here was the cheerful face of Mr. Tupman beaming with Christmas salutations as he pulled back the window curtains and let the sunlight flood into the room,—here was Mr. Snodgrass arrayed in the bright finery of a poet on a Christmas holiday, and here, most emphatical of all, was Mr. Winkle proffering to Mr. Pickwick a tall bubbling glass of brandy and soda that leaped and sparkled in the beams of sunlight as one of those early pick-me-ups or restoratives, so essential for the proper beginning of a proper Christmas.

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"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Pickwick, shaking off the remnants of his terrible dream. The great man leaped from his bed and assuming a dressing gown rushed to the window and looked into the inn yard. There was the coach, gaily bedecked with sprigs of holly, in the very imminence of preparation for departure, the horses tossing at the bits, the postillions about to mount, the guard fingering his key bugle for a preparatory blast and Mr. Sam Weller in his familiar wide-awake, his face illuminated with its familiar good nature, gaily tossing minor articles of luggage in graceful spirals to the roof of the coach.

Mr. Pickwick, with one last shuddering recollection of the world of the future, slipped back a hundred years into the Good Old Days of the past.

## A MEDIÆVAL HOLE IN ONE

### *Wet Golf in Dry History*

The Middle Ages, from what we know about them, were days of pretty tall deeds and pretty tall talk. In the Middle Ages if a man accomplished a feat of arms, or a feat of dexterity, or a feat of anything, he didn't let it get spoiled for want of telling. In witness of which take the marvellous accounts of archery, swordsmanship, strength, skill, and magic which fill the pages of mediæval romance from the *Chanson de Roland* to Walter Scott.

And there is no doubt that the "tall talk" of the Middle Ages was greatly helped along by the prevailing habit of tall drinking. They drank in those days not by the glass but by the barrel. They knew nothing of "flasks" or "cups" or "glasses," or such small degenerate measures as those of their descendants. When they wanted a real drink they knocked in the head of a "cask" or "tun" and gathered round it and drank it to the bottom of the barrel.

Even for a modest individual drink they needed a "flagon,"—and a "flagon" in the Middle Ages was of the same size as one of our garden watering pots. A man who had inside him a couple of flagons of old "Malmsey" or old "Gascony," had a power of talk and energy in him no longer known among us. When it is added that old "Malmsey" only cost ten pennies for a full imperial gallon,—six of our quarts,—one can see that even the dark age had its bright spots and that history was not so dry as it is called.

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As a result, not only were the deeds and feats of arms of the Middle Ages bigger than ours, but even the narration of them had more size. And the spectators and witnesses, having sopped up on their own account a few "hogsheads" of "mead" or sack, could see more, far more, than our poor dried-out audiences. In witness of which take any account of any tournament, bear fight, bullfight, archery match or rat hunt anywhere from 1000 to 1500 A.D.

For all of which deeds and performances, the running accompaniment of knocking in hogsheads and draining flagons kept the whole event in character.

No king in the Middle Ages ever appeared at a public tournament or joust without ordering the ends of half a dozen casks of sack to be knocked in. No royal christening was ever held without "tuns" of ale being distributed or "broached" for the populace, and "pipes" of wine being pumped into the nobility. At all big celebrations there were huge bonfires. Oxen were roasted whole. Any good man would get away with fifteen pounds of roast meat, six gallons of ale and a flagon of brandy, and go roaring home with an atmosphere round him like the mist round a brewery.

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Those were great days. We cannot compete with them.

But in just one point the superiority is ours. The mediæval people didn't have our opportunities. Their archery, and their tournaments were poor stuff beside our games of to-day. Just think what would have happened if they had had such a thing as golf in the Middle Ages! Imagine the way in which, with their flagons of sack and their hogsheads of Malmsey right on the ground, they could have carried out a golf match. Imagine what they could have done in the narration of it afterwards! Conceive what could have been made of a mediæval Hole in One. Our poor unimaginative truth-telling generation can form but little idea as to how they would have dealt with it.

What follows below represents an account of a Hole in One, as achieved in the year 1215 A.D. and related after the style of mediæval romance. It is based on the account of the famous tournament and meeting at Ashby de la Zouche (which is in England) during the reign of King John. On that famous occasion, as Walter Scott related in his *Ivanhoe*, there was an archery match between Hubert the Norman, the protégé of King John, and the Mysterious Bowman, Locksley, otherwise Robin Hood the Saxon Outlaw. In this contest Hubert "sped his arrow" (that's the

mediæval name for what he did) with such consummate skill that it pierced the very centre of the bull's-eye, three hundred yards away. But Locksley had a still more consummate touch. He sped his shaft with such unerring dexterity that the point of it struck fair in the notch of Hubert's arrow, still sticking in the bull's-eye, and split it into two exactly even halves! After which even the stingy King John had to treat the crowd, a whole meadowful, to about two firkins each.

Imagine what would happen if people who could write that kind of thing and people who could believe it had had a chance at a golf story.

Come! Let us turn Hubert and Locksley into their twentieth-century form and make the contest a Hole-in-One-Shot! Thus:—

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All was now prepared. The vast concourse of spectators, both Norman and Saxon, crowded the vacant spaces of the course, and even invaded the fairways from which the heralds and poursuivants sought in vain to dislodge them. The humbler churls, or jarls, clustered in the branches of the trees.

At intervals along the course great "butts" or "tuns" by which we mean "vats," had been placed, from which not only the yeomanry but even the commonry were permitted that day to drink at the King's expense.

King John was seated on a dais beside the sand-box of Tee No. 1, at the edge of which the pious Archbishop Stephen Langton knelt in prayer for the success of the Norman Hubert. Around and about the tee, on tiers of rudely contrived benches, the Knights of the Household in full (autumn) armour were mingled with the resplendent Ladies of the Court.

"Sirrah!" said the King, turning sternly to Hubert, "dost think thou canst outswat this Saxon fellow?"

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "played in the Hastings handicap, and it shall go hard with me an I fall short of his score."

The King scowled but said nothing.

"What is bogey?" whispered Roger Bigod, Earl of Bygod, to Sir John Montfaucon de la Tour, who stood beside him near the tee.

"Three, so it thinks me," answered Sir John.

"And gives either of the contestants as it were a bisque or holeth he in one stroke the fewer?"

"Nay," said Montfaucon, "they play as man to man, or as who should say at scratch."

At this moment the loud sound of a tucket armoured by the winding of a hobo from the second tee announced that the lists were clear.

"Let the course be measured!" commanded the Chief Marshal.

On this Sir Roger Mauleverer of the Tower and Sir Eustace, the Left-handed, Constable of the Constable, attended by six poursuivants carrying a line of silken yarn, measured the distance.

"How stands it?" asked the King.

"Four hundred ells, six firkins, and a demilitre," answered the Marshal.

At the mention of this distance—which corresponds in our modern English to more than four hundred yards—an intense hush fell upon the attendant crowd. That a mere ball no larger than a pheasant's egg could be driven over this tremendous distance by a mere blow from a mere wand of hickory, daunted the mere imagination.

The King, who well knew that the approaching contest was in reality one between Norman and Saxon and might carry with it the loss of his English crown, could ill conceal the fears that racked his evil conscience. In vain his cupbearer fetched him goblet after goblet of Gascony. Even the generous wine failed to enliven the mind or to dissipate the fears of the doomed monarch. A great silence had fallen upon the assembled knights and ladies, broken

only by the murmured prayers of the saintly archbishop kneeling beside the sand-box. Even the stout hearts of such men as Sir Roger Bigod de Bygod and Sir Walter de la Tenspot almost ceased to beat.

"Have done with this delay," exclaimed the King. "Let the men begin."

Hubert the Norman stepped first onto the tee. His lithe frame, knit to a nicety, with every bone and joint working to its full efficiency, was encased in a jerkin of Andalusian wool, over a haut-de-chausse, or plus eight, of quilted worsted. He carried in his right hand a small white ball, while in his left he bore a shaft or club of hickory, the handle bound with cordovan leather and the end, or tip, or as the Normans called it the *bout*, fashioned in a heavy knob flattened on one side to a hexagonal diagonal.

The manner of the Norman Hubert was grave, but his firm movements and his steady eye showed no trace of apprehension as he adjusted the ball upon a small heap of sand upon the forward, or front, part of the tee.

"Canst do it?" queried the agonizing King, his hands writhing nervously on the handle of his sceptre.

"My grandsire . . ." began Hubert.

"You said that before," cried John. "Shoot!"

Hubert bowed and paused a moment to drink a flagon of Amsterdam gin handed to him by the King's *boutellier* or bottle-washer. Then, standing poised on the balls of his feet at a distance of two Norman demis (twenty-six and a half English inches) from the ball, he waved his club in the air as if testing its weight, while his keen eye measured the velocity of the wind.

Then, as the crowd waited in breathless silence, Hubert suddenly swung the hickory to his full reach behind his shoulder and brought it down in a magnificent sweep, striking the ball with its full impact.



There was a loud resilient "click," distinctly heard by the spectators at the second tee, while a great shout arose from all the Normans as the ball rose in the air describing a magnificent parabola in its flight.

"A Hubert! A Hubert!" they shouted. "*Par le Sang de Dieu,*" exclaimed Sir Roger Bigod de Bygod, "some stroke!"

Meantime the ball, glistening in the sunshine and seeming to gather force in its flight, swept above the fairway and passed high in the air over the ground posts that marked the hundred, the two hundred, and the three hundred ells, still rushing to its goal.

"By the body of St. Augustine!" cried the pious Guillaume de la Hootch, "'twill reach the green itself!"

"It has!" shouted Sir Roger Bigod. "Look! Look! They are seizing and lifting the flag! 'Tis on! 'Tis in! By the shirt of St. Ambrose, the ball is in the can!"

And as Sir Roger spoke a great shout went up from all the crowd, echoed even by the Saxon churls who lined the branches of the trees. "A Hole in One! A Hole in One!" cried the multitude, while an immediate rush was made to the barrels or vats of mead which lined the course, into which the exultant populace precipitated themselves head first.

For such readers as do not understand the old Norman game of Goffe, or Gouffe—sometimes also called Guff—it is proper to explain that in the centre of each *parterre* or *terrace*, sometimes called a *Green* or *Pelouse*—it was customary to set a sunken receptacle or can, of the kind used by the Normans to can tomatoes, into which the ball must ultimately be driven. The virtue of Hubert's stroke was that he had driven the ball into the can (a feat for which many Normans required eight, ten, or even twenty strokes) in one single blow, an achievement called in old Norman a "Hole in One."

And now the voice of the Chief Herald could be heard calling through hautboy or megaphone:

"Hole No. 1; stroke No. 1. Hubert of Normandy scores Hole in One. Player in hand, J. Locksley, of Huntingdon, England. Clear the fairway for shot No. 2."

All eyes now turned to where the splendid figure of the mysterious Locksley, the Unknown Golfer or Gopher, ascended the first tee. It was known to all that this was in reality none other, or little other, than the Saxon outlaw Robin Hood, who was whispered to be the Earl of Huntingdon and half whispered to be, by his descent from his own grandmother, the Saxon claimant to the throne.

"How now, Locksley!" sneered the triumphant John as the Saxon appeared beside him, "canst beat that?"

Every gaze rested upon Locksley as he stood leaning upon his hickory club. His mysterious appearance at Ashby de la Zouche and the whispers as to his identity lent to him a romantic, and almost fearsome interest, while his magnificent person marked him as the beau ideal of the Saxon Golfer still seen at times even in the mimic contests of to-day.

His powerful form could have touched the balance at two hundred and eighty-five pounds avoir-dupois. The massive shoulders would have seemed out of proportion but for the ample sweep of the girth or waistline and the splendid breadth of the netherward or rearward hind-quarters.

He was clad, like Hubert, in woollen jerkin and plus eights, and he bore on his feet the terrific spiked sandals of the Saxon, capable of inflicting a mortal blow.

Locksley placed his ball, and then, grasping in his iron grip the leather-bound club-headed hickory hexagonal, he looked about him with complete sang-froid and even something of amusement.

The King's boozelier, or booze-hound, now approached Locksley and, after the courtesy of the age, offered him a horn, or "jolt" of

gin. The Saxon put it aside and to the astonishment of the crowd called only for water, contenting himself with a single bucketful.

"Drink'st not?" said the scowling King.

"Not in hours of busyness," said Locksley firmly.

"And canst thou outdo Hubert's shot?" sneered John.

"I know not," said Locksley carelessly; "Hubert's shot was not half bad, but I'll see if I can touch up his ball for him in the tomato can."

"Have done with boasting!" cried the King. "Tell the archbishop to count three, and then let the fellow shoot. If he fail, my lord Montfaucon and you, Roger Bigod of Bygod, see that he does not leave the tee alive."

The archbishop raised his saintly face towards the skies and began to count.

"Unum!" he said, using the neuter gender of the numeral adjective in accordance with the increasing deterioration of the Latin language which had already gone far in the year 1215 A.D.

"Duo," said the archbishop, and then in a breathless hush, as the word "tres" quivered on the lips of the ecclesiastic, Locksley's club cleft the air in a single flash of glittering sunlight and descended upon the ball with such force that the sound of the concussion echoed back from the woods beyond the farthest green.

In a moment the glittering trajectory of the missile could be followed high in its flight and then the curve of its rushing descent towards the green. For a moment the silence was so intense that even the faint rustling of the grass was audible to the ear, then the crashing concussion of the driven ball against the inner tin of the tomato can showed that Locksley also had achieved a Hole in One! But the gasp or gulp of astonishment had hardly passed when the crowd became aware that Locksley's skilled marksmanship had far surpassed the mere feat of a Hole in One accomplished by his opponent. His ball, driven with a power and accuracy that might well-nigh seem incredible, had struck against Hubert's ball inside

the can at exactly the angle necessary to drive it out with great force and start it back in flight towards the first tee.

To the amazement of all beholders, Hubert's ball, easily distinguishable by two little dots on its lower face, was seen rushing in rapid flight to retrace its course above the fairway. So true was its path that it landed back precisely on the tee from which Hubert had shot it and came to rest on the little pile of sand on which the Norman gopher had originally placed it.

"By God!" shouted Bigod of Bygod, as Locksley picked up the ball and handed it with a bow to King John.

A wild shout that rose alike from the Saxon Thanes, the Danes, and even the Normans, rent the air, while even the ladies of the court, carried away in a burst of chivalrous admiration, tore off their silken baldrics and threw them at the feet of the victor.

Nobles and commons alike, Norman and Saxon together seized axe or bill and began beating in the heads of the casks in their eagerness to drink the health of the victor.

"A Locksley! A Locksley!" cried the multitude. For the moment the King paused. His ear caught in the roaring plaudits of the crowd the first note of that mighty unison of Saxon and Norman voices which was destined to cast him from his power.

He knew that any attempt against the life or person of the Saxon chieftain was without avail.

He turned to the venerable archbishop, who was prostrate beside the tee, eating sand.

"Fetch me the Magna Carta," he said, "and I'll sign it."

# A GUIDE TO THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

## *For the Use of American Tourists*

I travelled the other day from New York to Montreal, where I live, in the pleasant company of some Americans coming to the Province of Quebec for a brief vacation. "I like the altitude," said one. "The air," said another, "is wonderful." "What I specially like," said a third, "is the charm of the old French civilization."

Now what they said was true. But it seemed to me to leave out something. The man who said he wanted altitude was six feet high already. So he must have had another purpose as well. The man who said he needed air was a big hearty-looking fellow four feet round the waist: that man needed something more than air to keep him going. And the other one who said he loved the old French civilization was very probably one of the Bourbons of Kentucky.

Something or other, some malign influence, seemed to have been at work to rob these men of their natural candour and plain speech. Presently I discovered what it was. They had with them, for reading turn and turn about, a little GUIDE BOOK TO THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC. I realized when I looked through this little volume how mendacious are all the "guide books" that are compiled for travellers: how artfully they conceal the true motives that start the average man upon a vacation journey.

The writers of these little books either are, or pretend to be, labouring under a constant misapprehension. They pretend that every tourist is crazy over history, with a perfect thirst for dates, memorials, and survivals of the past. They presume that if there is anything in the way of a tombstone within ten miles he will be wild to see it: that if you can show him a rock on which Charlemagne once sat he takes a twenty-four-hour round-trip just to sit on it.

When the tourist is not busy with histories, tombstones, and graveyards, he is supposed to get excited over folk-lore, old customs, and the dress of the peasants. When this interest flags, the

tourist is expected to fall back on geological information, altitude above the sea, and relative rainfall. Thus his pretty little vacation is filled up with examining what the peasants wear, how high they are above the sea, how much rain falls on them each year, and whose grave is said by tradition to be situated at, or near, their village.

Now as a matter of fact this kind of tourist lived in the days of Washington Irving, a hundred years before Sunday afternoon radio information, and is as dead as Washington Irving.

Let me illustrate the case by an examination of the Guide Book carried by my American friends. It starts out, as such books always do, with a burst of romance.

It is not without a thrill of romantic interest that we find ourselves on our journey northward from New York, swiftly borne along in the night through the great forests of the Adirondacks and thundering through the darkness along the historic shores of Lake Champlain. The broad surface of the lake lies sleeping under its winter mantle.

Quite so: and so we don't see it: the lake is frozen, and it's night and it's dark and we're asleep and we don't see it. We didn't come to see it, either. No passengers, except crooks, stay awake in an Adirondack sleeper at three o'clock in the morning. So much for Lake Champlain.

But the Guide Book rattles on.

We are now in a country replete with historic interest. It was here that the heroic Montcalm stormed Fort Ticonderoga, here that Ethan Allen overwhelmed the slumbering British; here General Burgoyne, hopelessly surrounded, made his last stand on Bunker Hill while Sitting Bull and his mounted braves closed in upon his devoted band, with Sheridan still forty miles away. . . .

Exactly so. But we learned all that stuff in Grade Eight and we passed our examination and are done with it. Anyway we're still asleep. Again the Guide Book—

We have now passed the height of land and are speeding down the Appalachian Slope into the Laurentian plain. The rugged *massif* of the Adirondacks is exchanged for the broad valley of the Richelieu, an alluvial plain, thrown up, perhaps, in the postprandial epoch. The soil about is a conglomerate semi-nitrogenous loam; our altitude is now 200 feet with a saturation of 175 per cent and a barometric air pressure of twenty-seven point three.

Precisely. But as a matter of fact we are in the dressing room of the car trying to shave and we do not propose to risk cutting our throat in the interests of geological science. So the Guide Book goes off on another tack and takes up its favourite lines of manners, customs, and the peasantry. This sort of thing was worked for so many centuries in Europe that it is hard to let it go.

We are now passing through some of the oldest settlements of *La Nouvelle France*. We observe the quaint houses, taken as they were right out of Old Normandy, with the solid stone walls, the high gabled roofs, and the little windows of the *dortoir* projecting high above the *fenêtres* of the *cuisine*. Behind is the *écurie* of the cows nestled beside its pleasant *fumier*.

That's enough of the French. Will the guide book people never understand that we speak nothing but our own language, acquired at great difficulty and cost and already brought as near to perfection as we hope to go? This is all that we can afford. But we know, of course, what the next item will be—"the picturesque peasant." All right. Bring him on:

As we pass the quaint farmsteads half buried in the snow, we note here and there the characteristic figure of a *habitant*, half buried in the snow, seated in his one-horse sleigh or *calèche*, his rough country horse, or *cheval*, half buried. . . .

That's all right: bury him and be done with it. It is strange that the guide books are unable to learn that human beings nowadays are all alike everywhere. A Chinaman from Shanghai and a pygmy from equatorial Africa and a high-school teacher from Oklahoma are all the same. They all see the same movies, hear the same radio, and they all lost money when the stock market crashed. The picturesque differences are now all gone. Turks wear American shoes, Americans wear Hindu pajamas, Hindus wear English shirts, and English students wear Turkish trousers. The picturesque peasant belongs back in the days of Voltaire, but to-day, when the Eskimo smokes cigars in his snug igloo and the Patagonian football team plays home-and-home games with the French Penal Settlement at Devil's Island, what's the good of pretending any more?

But at last, after passing through all the scenery and history and geology and local color, the guide book finds itself arriving at a real city: let us say the city of Montreal. Here at last is something like life and animation, taxicabs, noise, restaurants, beefsteaks, life. But can the Guide Book see it? No.

As we disenfranchise ourselves at Montreal we realize that we are at the very spot where the intrepid Jacques Cartier stood in amazement within the great stockaded fort of Hochelaga (1535), or where the gallant company of the Sieur de Maisonneuve prepared in 1645 the fortified town beside the great river which was to witness the surrender of Vaudreuil to General Amherst in 1760, which thus prepared the way for its capture in 1775 by the American General Montgomery, who little thought that the same



scene would witness the building of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1856 which culminated in the World War of 1914.

After which, having insinuated the history of the city in this painless fashion into the visitor, the guide book goes on to give him the really up-to-date information about the city of to-day. Thus:

The chief points of interest in the present city are the site of old Hochelaga (exact position unknown), the grave of the Sieur de Maisonneuve (the location of which is disputed) and the burial places of Hiawatha, Pocahontas and other early pioneers. . . .

I suppose there *must* be people to whom this kind of information seems good and this aspect of travel congenial. There *must* be, otherwise the little guide books and the illustrated travel booklets would cease to live. Presumably there are people who come home from their vacation tours and carry on conversations something like this:

"You were in Montreal on your vacation, were you not?"

"Yes, the city was founded by Maisonneuve in 1645."

"Was it indeed? And what is its altitude above the sea?"

"Its mean altitude above high tide is 40 feet but the ground on which the city stands rises to a magnificent elevation, or mountain, which attains the height of 600 feet."

"Does it indeed? And has this elevation a name?"

"It has. It is known as Mount Royal, a name conferred upon it by the first discoverer, Jacques or Jim Cartier."

"Really, and what is the annual rainfall?"

"Well, the annual rainfall—if you include the precipitation of snow—"

"Oh, yes, I do; of course—"

"—In that case it would be about fifty inches."

"Indeed! What a fascinating vacation you must have had!"

"We did, I recall one very old habitant, a peasant . . ."

Instead of the mournful and misleading information about history and the peasantry, how much better if the Guide Book would drop on the side a few little items of real and useful information, as:

The exact site of the old French town may be said to lie in a straight line between Molson's Brewery (now running) and Dow's Brewery (still brewing). The house occupied by General Montgomery in 1775 is easily found by its proximity to the principal offices of the Quebec Liquor Commission. . . .

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But wait, stop,—an idea occurs to me. Let me rewrite the Guide Book to the Province of Quebec as it should be written with a view to attract, instruct and delight the tourist from the United States.

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## REVISED EDITION

### GUIDE TO THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

The Province of Quebec, licensed to sell beer, wine and spirits, has an area of 706,000 square miles. Its magnificent extent reaches from the border of New York State to the shore of the Frozen Seas. The most northerly license is that at Oopchoopchik in Labrador. But it is not necessary to travel so far as that.

The great glory of the province is the broad stream of the river St. Lawrence. On its noble bosom ply the

magnificent passenger steamers of the Canada Steamships Company, the bars on which usually open at seven o'clock. There is no finer sight for the American tourist than to sit on the forward deck (the bar deck) of one of these palatial vessels and to watch the magnificent panorama of historic scenery which is unfolded to the eye as the ascent of the river is made.

Here on our right hand as we come up from the sea the magnificent stream of the Saguenay pours its foaming waters through the gateway of frowning rock as it joins the St. Lawrence. Clinging to the very crest of the rock, like an eagle upon its nest, is a tiny hotel, licensed to sell wine, beer and other malt liquors.

Ascending the river further, we pass the famous falls of the Montmorency, from which the soda water is made. Pouring over the cliff in a cascade over 200 feet high, the water is churned into soda at the foot. Nothing is needed but to mix with this soda a small quantity,—or a large,—of the Scotch whiskey, freely imported for private orders under the laws of the province. The result is a delicious beverage, sparkling and refreshing, which may be placed beside us on a little table on the deck, while we smoke our Havana cigar, with one foot up on a camp stool.

Our attention is next turned,—though not completely,—to the historic and picturesque Island of Orléans. Here are the quaint villages, the little spires, and the stone houses of the old French civilization, unchanged since its first foundation under Louis XIV. Through our field glasses we can see the thrifty French Canadian farmer busily engaged in distilling whiskey blanc, or white whiskey made from wheat.

In front of us now rises the impressive outline of the Quebec Bridge, its huge span crossing the river from

summit to summit, and here before us there appears the grey old city of Quebec, standing on its rocky stronghold, the sentinel of New France. Our eye detects at once the dominating outline of the Château Frontenac Hotel, the bar of which commands a splendid view of the river. Here lie the great ocean steamers of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They do not draw as much water as the steamers of the White Star and the Cunard lines that enter New York harbour. But they draw far more beer.

We are now so close in that we are right beside one of these leviathans of the deep and can hear one of the white-coated stewards cracking ice. As we pass by another of these ocean greyhounds, we catch a glimpse through the windows of the smoking room of ale being sold for eight pence a bottle.

The ancient City of Quebec well repays our brief visit of inspection. Here is the gateway where brave General Montgomery met his death on the wild December night when he tried to storm the city gates. Here is the entrance to the Hotel St. Louis. Here is the famous Convent of the Ursalines where Montcalm died. Here is the Hotel du Canada.

Our stay in the mother city of America is all too short. We would fain climb the heights to reach the broad plateau or plain of Abraham, where the destiny of America was settled at a blow. There are no licenses now anywhere near the Plains of Abraham.

If our time allows, we drop in for a moment to visit the splendid building where the Parliament of the Province of Quebec is in session. Here the Lieutenant-Governor sits enthroned, the direct representative of the King. Around him are the ministers of the Crown leaning over his chair. There is a strange charm in listening to courteous debate which is going on, all of it, we note

with unreasonable surprise, conducted in French. The distinguished premier of the province is speaking. We bend our ear to listen, understanding as best we can. We gather that the prime minister is speaking, gravely and earnestly, on the question of the percentage of alcohol in the beverages of the province. Certain members of the opposition have urged that it be raised from 100 to 150. The premier does not see his way to do this. But he assures the house that if any one will show him how to do it, he will do it.

The ancient city of Quebec has her own proud way of dealing with the modern liquor problem. She gives no licenses but sells liquor only through the medical profession, and then only to those who need it. As we descend the slope from the legislature we pass the gay little street of the doctors, with its laughing crowd of sick people around each door. The law is very strict, it appears. No prescriptions must be filled out for more than a barrelful at a time. The enforcement of this law is aided by a vigorous public opinion in its favour.

We are back again upon our comfortable steamer. We are again ascending the river on our way to the metropolis of Montreal. The bar, which was closed during our absence on shore, is now open again. It is a strict rule of the Canada Steamships Company that when nobody wants a drink the bar is closed.

The scenery has changed now. On either side of the river, we pass from time to time the quaint little villages of French Canada, each with its tall church spires and its neat hotel, licensed to sell beer and wine. From time to time larger towns rise upon the bank. Here is Three Rivers with its vast piles of lumber, its tall smoke stacks and its eighteen licenses.

In the country to the north, we can see the dim outline of the Laurentian Mountains,—a vast territory of lake and mountain, forest and stream, an ideal hunting ground, the paradise of the sportsman. Some of our passengers have visited the Laurentians and as we sit about the deck in a circle they exchange stories of their adventures. One tells us how he was once moose hunting beyond the forks of the Batiscan and lost his flask. Another tells a tale of how he and two companions got separated from their party over the divide in the wilderness near Lake Mistassini and for four days had only two bottles of whiskey among the three of them. Stories such as these, though told lightly and casually, give one a very real idea of the peculiar hardships and dangers of the hunter's life in the Laurentians.

But our steamboat journey is at an end. Our boat is steaming into the river harbour of Montreal crowded with shipping. Before us lies the great metropolis framed against the background of its Royal mountain. Our landing fills us with wonder and delight. On every side are objects of interest. Here in the foreground of the picture is the great brewery of the Molsons; we can see the thin steam rising from its covered top in a dainty cloud in the clear air. There is something exquisite in the sight that recalls the canvas of a Turner or a Correggio or the skyline of Milwaukee as she used to be.

In the upper town, all is animation, on every side are evidences of industrial prosperity. It is the noon hour and we can see that even the laborer on the street has his can of beer beside him as he eats his dinner.

Ah! Here is the hotel, our destination. The hotel has been full to the roof and has been since July, 1919, but it can always find room for one more. We enter. We sink into the luxurious wicker chairs of the Palm

Room where a Czecho-Slovak orchestra (they called it Hungarian before the war) is playing Jugo-Slav music. We order a quart of champagne each and send for a bundle of naturalization papers and a fountain pen. We shall never go home.

## A BUTLER OF THE OLD SCHOOL

*As Transformed and Enlarged under the Eighteenth Amendment*

"Perhaps you might like, sir," said the butler, "to have a look through the cellars?"

"That's very kind of you, Meadows," I answered.

It was indeed thoughtful of the old man. Here I was accidentally deserted by my host and his household, through some stupid error in regard to the hour of my arrival, with a long summer afternoon before me which I had to spend somehow in this vast, but deserted, country mansion waiting for the return of my friends.

True there was the billiard room. But knocking the balls around by oneself is poor work; and in any case one always doubts the accuracy of the cushions in a country home, even in such a noble old place as the Vineyards.

Then there was the library, of course, and yet somehow one felt disinclined in such glorious summer weather to sit cooped up over a book. On the other hand one realized that the wine cellars of such old places as the Vineyards, built and stocked heaven knows how long ago, offer a cool retreat on such an afternoon as this.

"It's very kind of you, Meadows," I said. "I should enjoy it of all things."

Meadows himself looked the typical part of the butler and cellarer of the old school. He might have stepped out of the pages of an old romance. His somewhat rosy yet solemn countenance, the neatness of his person and the sobriety of his costume were all in keeping with the character.

"Then will you come this way with me, sir," he said, "and we will go down."

We passed through Meadows's private butler's pantry and then down a little winding stairway, panelled with dark wood, that led



to the floor below. The cellars themselves, dark, cool and silent, with flagstone passageways and heavy oaken doors suggested almost the dignity and solemnity of a crypt.

"How old are these cellars, Meadows?" I enquired.

"Constructed in 1680, sir," he answered with ready knowledge, "though the house itself is not so old, sir. The original Vineyards house was burnt in 1760. But these, sir, were the original wine-rooms. They've never been altered since. . . ."

The butler had selected a small key from the bunch he carried and fitted it to the lock of a narrow oaken door which he swung open. "This is one of the best rooms, sir, I always think,—the driest. The wood of the bins is the original mahogany of 1680, sir."

Meadows reached out a hand and turned on a flood of electric light. . . . "We've put in the electricity, sir," he said, in an apologetic sort of way, "though it does seem a little out of place, doesn't it?"

In a way it did. Yet it served at least to light up the rows and rows of the old wine bins and the tiers of dusty bottles that lay each on its side in orderly array.

"Now, what have you here?" I asked.

"This is the Rain Water Room, sir," replied Meadows. "Nothing else except rain water and practically all of it from the same date. The year 1924, sir, as you may recall, was a wonderful year for Rain Water,—something in the quality, sir. It was a rain, sir, with better body to it, fuller, sweeter, than any rain, I think, since the famous year 1888."

"Ah, yes," I replied, "the year of the Johnstown flood."

"Yes, indeed, sir," said Meadows. "But the 1924 rain is not far inferior. Of course it still needs age. You can't expect good rain water, when it's only seven or eight years old."

"Do you still lay down much?" I asked.

"Only in the good years," said Meadows. "It's not worth while, sir, not at least for them as knows a good rain water from a bad. But let me draw a bottle for you, sir."

"No, no," I protested, somewhat feebly, I admit. It seemed a shame to open a whole bottle of such grand old stuff for a casual sip. "It doesn't seem fair," I said.

"I have some pints here at the side," said the butler, "and I'm sure, sir, the master would wish me to open one for you. It's not every day that I have the pleasure of offering it to a gentleman who knows real rain water when he sees it."

I felt my power of resistance weakening. The sight of the glorious old vintage that had lain here brewing its own sunlight in the dark for all these years was too tempting. "Come on then, Meadows," I said with a laugh, "but you must share the bottle."

The butler selected a bottle covered with dust, its cork heavily wired. The electric light shot a green glitter into its contents. Meadows took two glasses from a near-by shelf and then with the trained touch of an expert, firm but gentle, without disturbing the repose of the grand old fluid within, unwired the bottle and removed the cork. "It's a still rain water, sir," he said, as he poured it into the glasses, holding the bottle so steadily that the liquid flowed gently without the least disturbance. It showed the opalescent tints of green and gold under the light, only seen in the best rain water. . . .

I am not, I trust, addicted to overdrinking, and would not wish to appear a mere useless sybarite, but I must say that as I raised and drained the glass, I felt its full charm. The taste seemed to conjure up pictures of rain puddles in the evening sunshine, of springtime in the cow pasture and raindrops glistening in the April grass. There was in it all the freshness of the morning dew. . . .

I put down the empty glass with a sigh. "Wonderful, Meadows," I said, "wonderful. Nothing like rain water after all."

"Perhaps not, sir," said Meadows respectfully, "though I am not sure that my own fancy isn't for ditchwater. We have a rare Ditchwater here," he continued, stepping out into the corridor. "If you'll take a look into the next room, I'll be glad to ask you to sample a taste of it. . . ."

With which the good old man, whose rosy face, I noticed, was kindling to an even rosier hue under the influence of the generous beverage, began eagerly fumbling with his keys to unlock a second door.

"I say, Meadows," I laughed, "I'm afraid I really must call a halt."

But Meadows would hear nothing of my protest. "You must try the Ditchwater, sir: the master is more proud of this than of anything in the cellar."

The butler had taken from a bin a bottle even dustier than the last. In place of the radiant green and gold of the rain water it shone with a dusky brown lustre that bore witness to the strength of the generous fluid within.

Meadows held it up to the light. "It is a Ditchwater," he murmured, with something like reverence in his voice, "that got just the right body in it. You know, sir, if you get one of those cheap commercial Ditchwaters, it's either got too much mud in it, or it's so thin it has no strength. Now this, sir, as you see, has got the mud, has got the body. . . ."

I laughed. "Come along, Meadows," I said, "and don't tempt me any further with a sermon. Out with it."

Meadows with even greater care than before decanted the Ditchwater. This time it was a full quart that he opened, but I couldn't find it in my heart to protest.

How can I describe its taste? Full, rich, with just a tang of dead sticks and just that slight soupçon of slugs that gave it character. Without apology I held out my glass to be refilled, while the old

man, after filling it, drained the rest of the bottle. "Wonderful stuff, Meadows!" I said, as I drained the last drop.

"But I've got some better than that, sir, better than that," said the old man. "Come along this way, sir, this way."

I could not restrain a feeling of amusement as the good old man bustled ahead of me along the corridor, his step slightly unsteady.

"No, no, Meadows," I protested feebly, "your master will be back soon. I mustn't really encroach further. . . ."

"Just this one," said the butler, "just this one." Meadows led me along the corridors, around the corners, and in and out amongst the intricacies of the famous cellars of the Vineyards. I realized that those noble fellows our ancestors never did things by halves. When they undertook to lay the cellars of a colonial mansion such as this, they made a real job of it. Here and there the butler stopped at an oaken door and threw it open for a moment to give me an idea of what was within. Every possible variation for the taste of every possible connoisseur seemed here to be represented. The most critical hydrophile could have found nothing missing. Here was French Tap Water bottled in Paris, Pump Water from a town pump of the early nineteenth century, Trough Water from an abandoned New England farm, English Pond Water in stone bottles and Dutch Canal Water in tempting square bottles with yellow and green seals. Here and there, I blush to say, in spite of our avowed intentions, we could not resist opening an odd bottle and drinking off a quart or two of the mellow liquid. The Canal Water struck me as especially fine, but undoubtedly heavy. I asked Meadows what he supposed to be the percentage content of sulphuretted hydrogen in it. But the old man shook his head. "I'm not much of a one for what you might call the formula, sir: Master Charles, I don't doubt, would answer all of that. But to me, sir, good liquor is just good liquor."

At last Meadows threw open a final door and revealed a majestic cask that occupied the centre of a little room. There was on each

side of the cask an ancient seat, the true model of a Jacobean wooden "settee" with oak arms that had grown black with age and darkness. Down we sat, while the old man with pride and expectancy in his look slowly polished a pair of tall liqueur glasses, long, thin, and delicate as Canterbury bells. . . .

"What is it, Meadows?" I asked, indicating the cask.

"West Indian Bilgewater," the butler answered. "Right from the old days, a hundred years old if it's a day."

Meadows turned the spigot and slowly filled the glasses with the dark amber fluid, thick, heavy and redolent with a delicious bouquet of old tar, ship's ropes and rotten timber.

Facing one another on the settees we raised our glasses to one another.

"Your health, sir," said Meadows, and an audible hiccough shook the good old man as he drained the liquor at a quaff and filled the glass again.

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Can I ever forget the wonder of that West Indian Bilge? There was in it all the romance of the old pirate days with visions of West Indian Keys, of pirates at their revels drinking great goblets of Bilgewater, round bonfires of odd timber that turned the heavy tropical night to glaring brightness and lit up the strand of the sea beside them as they sat.

"Yo! ho! and a bottle of Bilge," I sang as I handed my glass for more. . . .

Upstairs and outside no doubt was the light flood of summer sunshine and the garish day. But down below in the depths of the cool cellars, there sat Meadows and I as far removed from the world of to-day as the pirates themselves whose memories we toasted in glass after glass of Bilge. . . .

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Ah, well a day! It is but a sad world! Let those whose cold hearts and puritanical standards may condemn us, do so if they wish. For

me I have no regrets for that long drawn afternoon in which the magic draughts of the old Bilgewater spread its charm, quart after quart, upon our souls. . . .

How many? My memory fails. I can recall the vision of Meadows seen through a half haze still repeating, "Another glass, sir"; recall his telling me the story of his life,—his early struggles in a city pumping station, his apprenticeship in an aqueduct, his first real job in a soda-water factory and his elevation to the post of chief water cooler in a big hotel, from which, ripe with experience, he moved to his present situation.

So passed and waned the afternoon. There they found us, I admit, Meadows and me, asleep beside the noble cask of Bilge. My merry host and his guests,—shouting in vain for Meadows, calling in vain for Spring-Water Cocktails and Ditchwater Loving Cup,—at last descended and found us, and woke us with their laughter.

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The good old man, I believe, toddled off to his private pantry where no doubt he continued his slumber. For myself I had to make the best face I could against the merriments of my friends and drink a few more quarts of Ditch, Pond and Pump Water for good fellowship's sake.

But the afternoon remains a pleasant reminiscence of old days now fading on our social horizon. . . .

# CONFESSIONS OF A SODA FIEND

## *Written from a Condemned Cell*

I believe that I cannot in any better way impress these confessions on the minds of my readers than by the simple opening statement that they are written from a condemned cell. Through the kindness of the authorities I have been supplied with pen and ink and paper, but I have been warned at the same time that my time is short. It has seemed to me, I repeat, that an appeal from a condemned cell ought to attract the attention of even the most careless of readers. People who as a rule read nothing are immediately attracted by anything that has been written in a condemned cell.

It was for that reason that I came here. As soon as I knew that this old municipal building,—with the town lock-up in the basement,—had been condemned, I went to the mayor and asked, "Could you let me have the use of one of the condemned cells?" He demanded my reason for my request and I said, "I want it to write confessions in." He said, "Very good. But remember your time is short. The contractors want to start demolishing the building at ten o'clock this morning." I asked, "May I have the use of writing materials at the expense of the authorities?" The mayor said, "Yes, provided that you work in a write-up of the town as a factory site. But you don't get stamps."

It is for that reason, gentlemen, that I find myself seated in this condemned cell, gentlemen, and writing my memories, gentlemen. And I want to say, gentlemen, before I stop calling you gentlemen, that I would gladly keep it up all through the confession. But as I have always noticed that writers of confessions in condemned cells only call their readers "gentlemen" a few times in the opening pages and then forget about it, I have decided to crowd it all into the first two sentences.

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I want to say also at the start that this autobiography of my life and downfall is here presented with apologies to a great many

eminent writers who have in the past attempted to do the same thing. I have in mind here such stories as the Dipsomaniac, John Barleycorn, The Ravages of Rum, and other confessions of the sort. Their relative failure arose from the unsatisfactory nature of the material available for the authors. In their day they had no more terrible picture to present than that of the ravages affected by rum, brandy or absinthe. They traced the decay of mind and body under the influence of these baneful spirits. But they could form no idea of the terrible wreck of a body inflated and distended with effervescent soda water and of a mind diluted to the verge of liquefaction. If my sufferings have been greater than theirs, it was because I was far more completely soaked than they were.

---

But to begin,—I feel I ought to. There is nothing in the circumstances of my parentage or upbringing that I can plead in extenuation of my downfall. I was born of a family in comfortable, if not affluent, circumstances, of parents of sincere, if not profound, convictions, in a home that was educated if not cultivated, in a house that was rough cast if not brick, with plumbing that was effective, if not open.

In short I enjoyed all the ordinary advantages of the average middle class.

My father was essentially a temperate man. If he took a glass of iced soda water now and then it was merely as a matter of conviviality and to suit the gaiety of the occasion. I may have seen him slightly inflated at Christmas or New Year's, but never unduly distended.

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I grew up, then, as a bright boy whose school and college days differed little from those of others. I made friends easily, learned without difficulty and was fortunate enough to know little or nothing of the trials and sorrows of life until I was on the threshold of manhood. Least of all could I have imagined that drink would ever become a danger to my welfare. Eating perhaps, but not drink; frequently at our meals at college one or the other of my friends



might say, "My God! how you do eat!" and I can frequently recall, in a restaurant or in a hotel dining room hearing some one, "Look at that boy eat!" As a matter of fact I took the first prize for pie-eating at college while only in my second year. Our Alma Mater, I remember, was keen on all activities and friendly rivalries and I think I may say that I held my own at most of them, such as pie-eating, the oyster contest, the spaghetti championship and the other big events of college life.

But it was not, as I say, until my college life as an undergraduate was over and I found myself a student of law, that the real trial of my life began. I was preparing for a law examination, working hard, indeed up to the limit, as a keen student is apt to do, without being aware of overstraining the faculties. I often sat at my books till long after nine at night, even till nine-thirty or nine thirty-five, and would be up again and at it by ten o'clock in the morning, working right on till ten fifty-five or even till eleven-two. The truth is that I was overstrained though I didn't know it. Often as I played pool my hand would shake till I could hardly pot the ball; and at times in throwing dice I could scarcely throw a double six.

Then came the fatal morning when I was due to appear in the examination room at nine o'clock and found myself not only ill prepared and exhausted, but worse still, hopelessly nervous and in a condition of something like collapse.

As we were about to leave our college room one of my friends said, "Here, Charlie, drink this." He handed me as he spoke a tall glass of bubbling soda water with a piece of ice tinkling in it. I drained it at a single drink and as I set it down I felt a new life and power. My veins tingled with animation, my brain revived, my ideas became active, my fear vanished. I stepped into the examination room and wrote what I believe was the most brilliant law examination test of that year. One of the examiners, who was himself the senior counsel for a local distillery company, said that even in his experience he had never seen anything like it. Undoubtedly I should have ranked first except for the fact that in my eagerness

to write and with my newly acquired sense of power, I had not waited to look at the examination questions, but had answered from my recollection of them without consulting them. It seems that for technical reasons the paper had been changed over night and my answers were no longer applicable. The point is one of mere college organization, easily understood by those acquainted with the matter and not in any way reflecting upon my capacity or memory. Indeed the senior examiner, who was also chairman of a large brewery company, said that I was just the kind of lad that needed encouragement, and would get it.

I remember that as I came out of the room my friend who had given me the soda slapped me on the back and said, "Well, Jack, you certainly wrote hard enough. Come along and have another soda." After that I recall nothing except being with a group of my fellow law students and drinking soda after soda and finally some one saying to me, "Brace up, Bill, it's time to get home."

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I pass over the circumstances of my gradual downfall. I will only say in my own defence that when I began drinking soda it was rather from a false sense of good fellowship than from any real craving for it. That only came later. What got me at first was the easy careless conviviality. Some one would knock at the door of my room and say, "Come along, Jack, and let's go and split a soda." We would often begin after breakfast,—or even start the day before breakfast with a long drink of ice water,—and keep it up sometimes till night. Frequently I have sat in my law lectures in my final year with perhaps six or eight quarts of soda in me. You ask me, how I could do it? I can only answer that the first, the immediate, effect was one of exhilaration, of expansion.

It was not long before I reached a second stage. Convivial drinking was not enough. I must needs keep a private stock of soda in my cupboard for furtive drinks at any hour of the day or the night. I well remember how I first mustered up my courage and went into a corner grocer's and said with all the assurance I could command, "I want a case of plain soda water sent over to my room." The man

demurred a little: said he must have twenty-five cents down: but in the end he sent it.

After that I was never without a supply. At the time of which I speak there was of course no legislation in the matter. Students might buy soda water, pop and even lemon sour without interference.

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I suppose that my story as I relate it has been that of countless other men. If drink went singly it would be bad enough. But as everybody knows, drink never does come singly: other dissipations, other wastes of time and life go with it; and most often women.

Women are, so it often seems to me, our best and at the same time our worst angels. I am not aware that the thought has ever been expressed before, but I say it now anyway. To my mind a good woman is one of the greatest things on earth, second only perhaps to a good child or a good man. But it is an old, old adage that for a young man at the susceptible age of life, women, and wine and song,—are dangerous things.

So it was that women came into my life and helped to wreck it. The beginning was simple enough. I chanced to meet one Sunday morning in the street a girl whom I had known years before in the country when she was a girl. She greeted me and asked me to come to church with her. I went. It cost me ten cents for the church plate and ten cents for street car fare to take her home. But it proved only a beginning. The next Sunday found me taking her again to the same church, but this time with her sister,—so that the car fare home now cost fifteen cents. The Sunday after she brought not only her sister but her mother, so the car fare had risen within sixteen days to twenty cents.

If I had had the wisdom of a mature man I should have stopped there on the threshold. But I was after all little more than a boy and half full of soda. Somehow, Ellen,—I think her name was Ellen, but it may have been Helen,—continued to introduce me to half

a dozen of her girl friends among the congregation. Somehow, I don't know how, I found myself turning up at Sunday school, where Helen,—or Aileen,—persuaded me to take a class. Then before I knew where I was I found myself hand in glove with a regular church crowd and going the pace as only a young man started that way does. I was in the Young People's Bible class, out at night with curate's young people's debating society and working early and late at the church bazaar. Often I would come rollicking home on the street car as late as ten at night with two or three girls and a couple of curates and would blow in as much as fifty cents' worth of car tickets in a couple of evenings. The pace was too swift. To keep myself going throughout the day I would have perpetual recourse to the soda-water bottle. At night when I came home to my room,—often not till nearly eleven,—I would rush at once to the soda water. My impatience was such that I found opening the bottles one after the other too slow and installed a five-quart siphon. At this I would make a rush after my return from the church at night and squirt it all over my face and head.

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Wine, women and song! So stands the familiar trinity of destruction. My own case was no exception to the rule. I don't remember just at what stage of downward course I bought a gramophone. But I can recall the surreptitious purchase, my waiting outside the music shop and looking furtively up and down the street for fear that I might be recognized, and my return home, the gramophone under my arm and my hat down to avoid the glances of the passers-by. After that, I would spend long hours in my room, sogged with soda, listening to coon songs, such as "Old Black Joe," "There Is a Happy Land, Far, Far Away," "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," and other negro melodies.

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Well, as everybody knows, if a young man once gets started with a fast crowd of associates such as that, gambling and cards inevitably turn up as an accompaniment. Till then I had never played cards in my life and indeed hardly knew one card from another. But one night as we were coming home from choir practice,—excited a

little no doubt by some of the hymns,—the mother of one of the girls said, "Come on into the house and let's play bridge." If I had had sense and recollection I should have quietly said, "I refuse." But the temptation was too much and I succumbed without an effort. The cards were produced, the game was explained and for the first time in my life I found myself sitting down to play cards for money. We played, I remember, for a tenth of a cent and I lost it. After that I played practically every night, always for a tenth of a cent and I lost it every night for ten nights. After that I had chance streaks of luck and three or four times running would win a tenth of a cent, but somehow by the end of each month I was always behind and began to have financial worry and embarrassment added to my own troubles. By the end of six months I owed the curate's wife ten cents, I owed the rector twenty-five cents and ten cents each to the choir and ten cents that I borrowed from one of the girls' mothers to pay the girl with. Nor could I see any way to pay it.

Meantime my law studies had degenerated into a mere farce. I would sit over my books, sogged with soda water, my brain unable to function.

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There is no need to follow in detail the stages of my downfall to my final disaster. I had soon abandoned all attempts at serious study; spent my whole evenings hanging around the Sunday school and choir practice.

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Then came the inevitable crash. I have noticed in reading memoirs similar to my own,—but inferior,—that the inevitable crash always comes. In fact it seems to be unavoidable. I was picked up one evening on the street,—I believe that victims such as myself are always finally picked up on the street. I believe that when found I was practically insensible from soda water, that I had five aces and the rules of bridge in one pocket, and in another a gramophone record, evidently just purchased, of "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

Luckily I fell in good hands. The medical man in whose care I was placed prescribed for me five months' complete rest on a truck farm, either that or driving a truck for five months on a rest farm.

He recommended also that I might put together the record of my experiences as a human document for magazine use as a means of paying his fee. It is while waiting for a truck to take me to the truck farm, that I have borrowed this condemned cell to write my confessions in. I can only hope they may be of service in saving others from the fate that has been mine.

## CHILDREN'S POETRY REVISED

### *With One Eye on the Eighteenth Amendment*

It has occurred to me that many of the beautiful old poems on which the present and preceding generations were brought up are in danger of passing into oblivion. The circumstances of this hurried, rapid age, filled with movement and crowded with mechanical devices, are rendering the older poetry quite unintelligible to the children of to-day.

For example, when "young Lochinvar had come out of the West"—we need to know at the start that this doesn't mean the Middle West. We learn also that he came on a "*steed*." What is a "*steed*"? Few children of to-day realize that the huge, clumsy animals that they see hauling the garbage wagons are "*steeds*." They would much more likely think that if young Lochinvar had "*a Steed*," it meant something the same as if he had a Chrysler or a Buick; in other words, he had a this year's *Steed*.

Similarly when the poem says, "He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone"—the meaning is taken to be that he left in such a hurry that he didn't go into the garage and get his brakes tightened up. And when the poem says, "He swam the Esk river where *Ford* there was none,"—well, the meaning seems obvious.

Or let us say that "*The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck*." Who cares? Certainly not a generation that thinks nothing of reading in its paper, "*Boy Falls in Burning Aeroplane*."

It seems reasonable, therefore, that if the older poetry, the heritage of our race, is to remain, some one has got to revise it. I wish I could offer to do it myself. I fear that I can lay so little claim to being a professional poet that I must leave the task to more competent hands. But I might perhaps indicate by a few samples the ways in which the necessary changes might be made.

Sometimes a mere alteration of the title would do a lot. Thus the "Charge of the Light Brigade" might be the *Light Brigade C. O. D.*

or perhaps *The Cash and Carry of the Light Brigade*. Then there is that melodious masterpiece of Edgar Allan Poe, which should read henceforth "*Quoth the Radio, Nevermore.*"

But in other cases the poem has got to be overhauled throughout. There is something in the environment it represents that does not correspond to the life that the children see to-day. I'll give an example. There was, when I was young, a poem that everybody knew and loved, that ran:

I remember, I remember  
The house where I was born  
And the little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn.  
Etc., etc., etc. . . .

---

I needn't quote the rest of it. The essential thought is in the lines above. But alas! The poem is dropping out; it no longer fits. Here, however, is a revised version that may keep it going for years.

I wish I could remember  
The house where I was born  
And the little window where perhaps  
The sun peeped in at morn.

But father can't remember  
And mother can't recall  
Where they lived in that December—  
If it was a house at all.  
It may have been a boarding-house  
Or family hotel,  
A flat or else a tenement.  
It's very hard to tell.  
There is only one thing certain from my questioning as yet,  
Wherever I was born, it was a matter of regret.

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That, I think, reproduces more or less the spirit of the age. If some one would just put it into really good up-to-date poetry—without any rhyme in it, and with no marks of feet in it, and without putting it into lines—it might go into any present-day anthology.

But it is, finally and chiefly, in the matter of the Eighteenth Amendment that the children's poetry has got to be revised. There used to be a poem, also put to music as a ballad, about a little girl begging her father to "come home." The opening stanza ran:

Father, dear father, come home with me now;  
The clock in the steeple strikes one.  
You promised, dear father, that you would come home  
As soon as your day's work was done.

The scene, of course, was laid on the other side of the Eighteenth Amendment. The picture that went with the song showed, from the outside, a little tavern, or saloon, with curtained windows and a warm red light behind them. Out in the snow was the girl, singing. And father was in behind the red curtains. And he wouldn't come out! That was the plot. Father's idea was that he would stay right where he was—that it had home beaten four ways.

Now all of that is changed. The little lighted tavern is gone. Father stays at home, and the children of to-day have got to have the poem recast, so as to keep as much of the pathos as may be, but with the scene reversed. Here it is, incomplete, perhaps, but suggestive.

## FATHER, DEAR FATHER, GO OUT

Oh, father, dear father, why won't you go out?  
Why sit here and spoil all the fun?  
We took it for granted you'd beat it down town  
As soon as your dinner was done.

With you in the parlour the boys are so glum,  
No music, no laughter about,  
Oh, father, you put our whole house on the bum,  
Oh, father, please, father, go out.

## EDDIE THE BARTENDER

### *A Ghost of the Bygone Past*

There he stands—or rather, there he used to stand—in his wicker sleeves, behind the tall mahogany, his hand on the lever of the beer pump—Eddie the Bartender.

Neat, grave, and courteous in the morning, was Eddie. "What's yours, sir?"

Slightly subdued in the drowsier hours of the afternoon, but courteous still. "What are you having, gentlemen?"

Cheerful, hospitable, and almost convivial in the evening. "What is it this time, boys?"

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All things to all men, was Eddie, quiet with the quiet, affable with the affable, cheerful with the exhilarated and the gay; in himself nothing, a perfect reflection of his customer's own mind.

"Have one yourself, Ed," said the customer.

"Thanks, I'll take a cigar."

Eddie's waistcoat pockets, as day drew slowly on to evening, bristled with cigars like a fortress with cannon.

"Here, don't take a smoke, have a drink!" said the customer.

"Thanks, I'll take a lemon sour. Here's luck." Lemon sours, sarsaparillas, and sickly beverages taken in little glassfuls, till the glassfuls ran into gallons—these were the price that Eddie paid for his abstemiousness.

"Don't you ever take anything, Ed?" asked the uninitiated. "I never use it," he answered.

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But Eddie's principal office was that of a receptive listener, and, as such, always in agreement.

"Cold, ain't it?" said the customer.

"It sure is!" answered Eddie with a shiver.

"By Gosh, it's warm!" said another ten minutes later.

"Certainly a hot day," Ed murmured, quite faint with the heat.

---

Out of such gentle agreement is fabricated the structure of companionship.

"I'll bet you that John L. will lick Jim Corbett in one round!"

"I wouldn't be surprised," says Eddie.

"I'll bet you that this young Jim Corbett will trim John L. in five minutes!"

"Yes, I guess he might easily enough," says Eddie.

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Out of this followed directly and naturally Eddie's function as arbitrator, umpire, and world's court.

"I'll leave it to Ed," calls the customer. "See here, Ed, didn't Maud S. hold the record at 2.35 before ever Jay Eye See ran at all? Ain't that so? I bet him a dollar and I says, 'I'll leave it to Ed,' says I."

That was the kind of question that Eddie had to arbitrate—technical, recondite, controversial. The chief editor of the Encyclopædia Britannica couldn't have touched it. And he had to do it with peace and good will on both sides, and make it end somehow with the interrogation, "What are you having, gentlemen?"

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But Eddie was not only by profession a conversationalist, a companion, and a convivialist, he was also in his degree a medical man, prescribing for his patients.

This was chiefly in the busy early morning, when the bar first opened up for the day.

Eddie's "patients" lined up before him, asking for eye-openers, brain-clearers, head-removers.

Behind Eddie, on little shelves, was a regular pharmacopœia; a phalanx of bottles—ticketed, labelled—some with marbles in the top stopper, some with little squirting tubes in the mouth. Out of these came bitters, sweets, flavours, peppers—things that would open the eyes, lift the hair, and renovate the whole man.

Eddie, shaking and mixing furiously, proceeded to open their eyes, clear up their brains, and remove their heads.

"I've got a head this morning, Ed. Fix me up something to take it away."

"Sure," said Eddie in return, "I'll fix it for you."

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By eight A.M. Eddie had them all straightened up and fixed. Some were even able to take a drink and start over.

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This was in the early morning. But at other times, as for example, quite late at night, Ed appeared in another rôle—that of the champion strong man. Who would suspect the muscles of steel concealed behind Eddie's wicker cuffs and his soft white shirt-sleeves? Who could expect anger from a countenance so undisturbed, a nature so unruffled, a mind so little given to argument?

But wait! Listen to that fierce quarrel punctuated with unpunctuable language between two "bums" out on the barroom floor. Lo! at the height of it Eddie clears the mahogany counter in a single leap, seizes the two "bums" each by the collar, and with a short rush and a flying throw hurls them both out of the swinging doors bang on the sidewalk!

Anger? No, not that; inspired indignation is the proper phrase. Ed represented the insulted majesty of a peaceful public anxious only to be let alone.

"Don't make no trouble in here," was Eddie's phrase. There must be "no trouble" within the sacred precincts. Trouble was for the outside, for the sidewalk, for the open street, where "trouble" could

lie breathing heavily in the gutter till a "cop" took it where it belonged.

Thus did Eddie, and his like, hurl "trouble" out into the street, and with it, had they only known it, hurled away their profession and their livelihood.

This was their downfall.

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Thus on the sunshine of Eddie's tranquil life descended, shadow by shadow, the eclipse of prohibition.

Eddie watched its approach, nearer and nearer.

"What are you going to go at, Ed?" they asked.

"I've been thinking of going into chicken farming," Eddie used to answer, as he swabbed off the bar. "They say there's good money in chickens."

Next week it was turkeys.

"A fellow was in here telling me about it," Ed said. "They says there's big money in turkeys."

After that it was a farm in Vermont, and then it was a ranch out in Kansas. But it was always something agricultural, bucolic, quiet.

Meanwhile Eddie stayed right there, pumping up the flooding beer and swabbing off the foam from the mahogany, till the days, the hours, and the minutes ticked out his livelihood.

Like the boy on the burning deck, he never left.

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Where is he now? Eddie and all the other Eddies, the thousands of them? I don't know. There are different theories about them. Some people say they turned into divinity students and that they are out as canvassers selling Bibles to the farmers. You may still recognize them, it is claimed, by the gentle way in which they say, "What's yours this morning?"

There is no doubt their tranquil existence, sheltered behind the tall mahogany, unfitted them for the rough and tumble of ordinary life.

Perhaps, under prohibition, they took to drink. In the cities, even their habitat has gone. The corner saloon is now a soda fountain, where golden-headed blondes ladle out red and white sundaes and mushy chocolates and smash eggs into orange phosphates.

But out in the solitude of the country you may still see, here and there, boarded up in oblivion and obliquity, the frame building that was once the "tavern." No doubt at night, if it's late enough and dark enough, ghostly voices still whisper in the empty barroom, haunted by the spectres of the Eddies—"What's yours, gentlemen?"

# FIRST CALL FOR SPRING

—or—

*Oh, Listen to the Birds*

I gather that spring is approaching. I am not an observant man, but as the days go by, the signs begin to multiply. Even for me that means that spring is at hand.

I take this early occasion to notify the public of my opinion and to support it with collateral facts. I am anxious this year to be among the first in the field. Among the signs on which I base my views that spring is near, I may mention that I observe that the snow has gone: that the income tax declarations are being distributed at the post-office; and that the sign BOCK BEER is hung out at the Marshal Foch Café, formerly the Kaiserhof.

Spring then is upon us. The first call for spring has come: and I should like to suggest that this year we meet it firmly and quietly and with none of the hysterical outburst that it usually provokes in people of a certain temperament. I refer to those unfortunate beings called "lovers of nature."

Each year I have been pained to notice that the approach of spring occasions a most distressing aberration in the conduct of many of my friends. Beside my house, a few doors on the right, I have an acquaintance who is a Nature Man. All through the winter he is fairly quiet, and an agreeable friendly fellow, quite fit for general society. I notice him, it is true, occasionally grubbing under the snow. I have once or twice seen him break off a frozen twig from a tree, and examine it. On one occasion, indeed, last winter he was temporarily unmanned by seeing a black bird (otherwise harmless) sitting on a bough. But for the most part his conduct during the colder weather is entirely normal.

Spring, however, at once occasions in my Nature friend a distressing disturbance. He seems suddenly to desire, at our every



meeting, to make himself a channel of information as between the animate world and me. From the moment that the snow begins to melt, he keeps me posted as to what the plants and the birds and the bees are doing. This is a class of information which I do not want, and which I cannot use. But I have to bear it.

My Nature friend passes me every morning with some new and bright piece of information: something that he thinks so cheery that irradiates his face. "I saw a finch this morning," he says. "Oh, did you?" I answer. "I noticed a scarlet tanager this afternoon," says my friend. "You don't say so!" I reply. What a tanager is I have never known: I hope I never shall. When my Nature friend says things of this sort all I can do is to acquiesce. I can't match his information in any way. In point of ornithology I only know two birds, the crow and the hen. I can tell them at once either by their plumage or by their song. I can carry on a Nature conversation up to the limit of the crow and the hen; beyond that, not.

So for the first day or so in spring, I am able to say, "I saw a crow yesterday," or "I noticed a hen out walking this morning." But somehow my crow and hen seem to get out of date awfully quickly. I get ashamed of them and never refer to them again. But my friend keeps up his information for weeks, running through a whole gamut of animals. "I saw a gopher the other day," he says. "Guess what the little fellow was doing?" If only he knew it I'd like to break out and answer, "I don't care what the Hades the little fellow was doing." But, like everybody else, I suppose, I have not the assurance or the cruelty to break in upon the rapture of the Nature Man. Some day I shall: and when I do, let him watch out.

My particular anger with these Nature Men such as my friend, springs, I think, from the singularly irritating kind of language that they use: a sort of ingratiating wee-wee way in which they amalgamate themselves, as it were, with nature. They really seem to feel so cute about it. If a wee hepatica peeps above the snow they think they've done it. They describe it to you in a peculiar line of talk almost like baby language. "What do you think I

saw?" says the Nature Man. "Just the tiniest little shoot of green peeping from the red-brown of the willow!" He imitates it with his thumb and finger to show the way the tiny little shoot shoots. I suppose he thinks he's a little bud himself. I really believe that my particular friend actually imagines himself in springtime to be a wee hepatica, or a first crocus, or the yellow-underleaf of a daffodil.

And notice, too, the way in which they refer to colours; never plain and simple ones like red or black or blue; always stuff like "red-brown" or "blue-green." My friend asks me if I have noticed the peculiar soft "yellow-brown" that the water-fowl puts on in spring. Answer: No, I haven't: I haven't seen any water-fowl: I don't know where you look for them and I didn't know that they put anything on. As for "yellow-brown" I didn't know that there was any such colour. I have seen a blue-black crow this year, and I have noticed a burnt-indigo-sepia hen: but beyond that I have not seen anything doing.

Worst of all, and, in fact, verging on paresis is the state of mind of the Nature Man in regard to the birds. When he speaks of them his voice takes on a peculiar whine. My Nature friend told me yesterday that he had seen two orioles just beginning to build a nest behind his garage. He said he "tiptoed" to the spot (notice the peculiar wee-wee language that these people use)—and then stood rooted there watching them. I forget whether he said "rooted" or "riveted": on occasions like this he sometimes reports himself as one and sometimes as the other. But why on earth, if he is once fairly rooted, does he come unrooted again?

I therefore wish to give this plain and simple notice, meant without malice: If any other of my friends has noticed a snowdrop just peeping above the edge of the turf, will he mind not telling me? If any of them has noticed that the inner bark of the oak is beginning to blush a faint blue-red, would he mind keeping it to himself? If there is any man that I know who has seen two orioles starting to build a nest behind his garage, and if he has stood rooted to

the ground with interest and watched the dear little feathered pair fluttering to and fro, would he object to staying rooted and saying nothing about it?

I am aware that I ought long ago to have spoken out openly to my Nature friends. But I have, I admit, the unfortunate and weak-minded disposition that forces me to smile with hatred in my heart. My unhappy neighbour does not suspect that I mean to kill him. But I do. I have stood for all that tanager and oriole stuff that I can. The end is coming. And as for that hepatica just putting its tiny face above the brown of the leaf—well, wait, that's all. Some day, I know it, I shall all of a sudden draw a revolver on my friend and say, "Listen. This has gone far enough. Every spring for many years you have stopped me in the street and told me of this nature stuff. And I have stood for it and smiled. You told me when the first touch of brown appeared on the underwing of the lark, and I let you say it. You kept me posted as to when the first trillium appeared from a pile of dead oak leaves under a brush-heap: and I let you tell it to me and never said that all I knew of trilliums was in connection with the German reparations indemnity. But the thing is exhausted. Meet your fate as you can. You are going where the first purple-pink of the young rhododendron will be of no interest to you."

I don't want to appear surly. But I am free to admit that I am the kind of man who would never notice an oriole building a nest unless it came and built it in my hat in the hat room of the club. There are other men like me too: and the time has come when we must protect ourselves. There are signs of spring that every sensible man respects and recognizes. He sees the oysters disappear from the club bill-of-fare, and knows that winter is passing; he watches boiled new California potatoes fall from 25 to 10 cents a portion and realizes that the season is advancing. He notes the first timid appearance of the asparagus just peeping out of its melted butter: and he sees the first soft blush on the edge of the Carolina Strawberry at one-dollar-and-fifty cents a box. And he

watches, or he used to watch, in the old day beyond recall, for the sign BOCK BEER TO-DAY that told him that all nature was glad.

These are the signs of spring that any man can appreciate. They speak for themselves. Viewed thus, I am as sensitive to the first call for spring as any of my fellows. I like to sit in my club with my fellow members of like mind and watch its coming and herald its approach.

But for the kind of spring that needs a whole text book of biology to interpret it, I have neither use nor sympathy.

## AN EXPERIMENT WITH POLICEMAN HOGAN

Mr. Scalper sits writing in the reporters' room of *The Daily Eclipse*. The paper has gone to press and he is alone; a wayward talented gentleman, this Mr. Scalper, and employed by *The Eclipse* as a delineator of character from handwriting. Any subscriber who forwards a specimen of his handwriting is treated to a prompt analysis of his character from Mr. Scalper's facile pen. The literary genius has a little pile of correspondence beside him, and is engaged in the practice of his art. Outside the night is dark and rainy. The clock on the City Hall marks the hour of two. In front of the newspaper office Policeman Hogan walks drearily up and down his beat. The damp misery of Hogan is intense. A belated gentleman in clerical attire, returning home from a bed of sickness, gives him a side-look of timid pity and shivers past. Hogan follows the retreating figure with his eye; then draws forth a notebook and sits down on the steps of *The Eclipse* building to write in the light of the gas lamp. Gentlemen of nocturnal habits have often wondered what it is that Policeman Hogan and his brethren write in their little books. Here are the words that are fashioned by the big fist of the policeman:

"Two o'clock. All is well. There is a light in Mr. Scalper's room above. The night is very wet and I am unhappy and cannot sleep—my fourth night of insomnia. Suspicious-looking individual just passed. Alas, how melancholy is my life! Will the dawn never break! Oh, moist, moist stone."

Mr. Scalper up above is writing too, writing with the careless fluency of a man who draws his pay by the column. He is delineating with skill and rapidity. The reporters' room is gloomy and desolate. Mr. Scalper is a man of sensitive temperament and the dreariness of his surroundings depresses him. He opens the letter of a correspondent, examines the handwriting narrowly, casts his eye around the room for inspiration, and proceeds to delineate:

"G. H. You have an unhappy, despondent nature; your circumstances oppress you, and your life is filled with an infinite sadness. You feel that you are without hope—"

Mr. Scalper pauses, takes another look around the room, and finally lets his eye rest for some time upon a tall black bottle that stands on the shelf of an open cupboard. Then he goes on:

"—and you have lost all belief in Christianity and a future world and human virtue. You are very weak against temptation, but there is an ugly vein of determination in your character, when you make up your mind that you are going to have a thing—"

Here Mr. Scalper stops abruptly, pushes back his chair, and dashes across the room to the cupboard. He takes the black bottle from the shelf, applies it to his lips, and remains for some time motionless. He then returns to finish the delineation of G. H. with the hurried words:

"On the whole I recommend you to persevere; you are doing very well." Mr. Scalper's next proceeding is peculiar. He takes from the cupboard a roll of twine, about fifty feet in length, and attaches one end of it to the neck of the bottle. Going then to one of the windows, he opens it, leans out, and whistles softly. The alert ear of Policeman Hogan on the pavement below catches the sound, and he returns it. The bottle is lowered to the end of the string, the guardian of the peace applies it to his gullet, and for some time the policeman and the man of letters remain attached by a cord of sympathy. Gentlemen who lead the variegated life of Mr. Scalper find it well to propitiate the arm of the law, and attachments of this sort are not uncommon. Mr. Scalper hauls up the bottle, closes the window, and returns to his task; the policeman resumes his walk with a glow of internal satisfaction. A glance at the City Hall clock causes him to enter another note in his book.

"Half-past two. All is better. The weather is milder with a feeling of young summer in the air. Two lights in Mr. Scalper's room.

Nothing has occurred which need be brought to the notice of the roundsman."

Things are going better upstairs too. The delineator opens a second envelope, surveys the writing of the correspondent with a critical yet charitable eye, and writes with more complacency.

"William H. Your writing shows a disposition which, though naturally melancholy, is capable of a temporary cheerfulness. You have known misfortune but have made up your mind to look on the bright side of things. If you will allow me to say so, you indulge in liquor but are quite moderate in your use of it. Be assured that no harm ever comes of this moderate use. It enlivens the intellect, brightens the faculties, and stimulates the dormant fancy into a pleasurable activity. It is only when carried to excess—"

At this point the feelings of Mr. Scalper, who had been writing very rapidly, evidently become too much for him. He starts up from his chair, rushes two or three times around the room, and finally returns to finish the delineation thus: "It is only when carried to excess that this moderation becomes pernicious."

Mr. Scalper succumbs to the train of thought suggested and gives an illustration of how moderation to excess may be avoided, after which he lowers the bottle to Policeman Hogan with a cheery exchange of greetings.

The half-hours pass on. The delineator is writing busily and feels that he is writing well. The characters of his correspondents lie bare to his keen eye and flow from his facile pen. From time to time he pauses and appeals to the source of his inspiration; his humanity prompts him to extend the inspiration to Policeman Hogan. The minion of the law walks his beat with a feeling of more than tranquillity. A solitary Chinaman, returning home late from his midnight laundry, scuttles past. The literary instinct has risen strong in Hogan from his connection with the man of genius above him, and the passage of the lone Chinese gives him occasion to write in his book:

"Four-thirty. Everything is simply great. There are four lights in Mr. Scalper's room. Mild, balmy weather with prospects of an earthquake, which may be held in check by walking with extreme caution. Two Chinamen have just passed—mandarins, I presume. Their walk was unsteady, but their faces so benign as to disarm suspicion."

Up in the office Mr. Scalper has reached the letter of a correspondent which appears to give him particular pleasure, for he delineates the character with a beaming smile of satisfaction. To the unpractised eye the writing resembles the prim, angular hand of an elderly spinster. Mr. Scalper, however, seems to think otherwise, for he writes:

"Aunt Dorothea. You have a merry, rollicking nature. At times you are seized with a wild, tumultuous hilarity to which you give ample vent in shouting and song. You are much addicted to profanity, and you rightly feel that this is part of your nature and you must not check it. The world is a very bright place to you, Aunt Dorothea. Write to me again soon. Our minds seem cast in the same mould."

Mr. Scalper seems to think that he has not done full justice to the subject he is treating, for he proceeds to write a long private letter to Aunt Dorothea in addition to the printed delineation. As he finishes the City Hall clock points to five, and Policeman Hogan makes the last entry in his chronicle. Hogan has seated himself upon the steps of *The Eclipse* building for greater comfort and writes with a slow, leisurely fist:

"The other hand of the clock points north and the second longest points south-east by south. I infer that it is five o'clock. The electric lights in Mr. Scalper's room defy the eye. The roundsman has passed and examined my notes of the night's occurrences. They are entirely satisfactory, and he is pleased with their literary form. The earthquake which I apprehended was reduced to a few minor oscillations which cannot reach me where I sit—"



The lowering of the bottle interrupts Policeman Hogan. The long letter to Aunt Dorothea has cooled the ardour of Mr. Scalper. The generous blush has passed from his mind and he has been trying in vain to restore it. To afford Hogan a similar opportunity, he decides not to haul the bottle up immediately, but to leave it in his custody while he delineates a character. The writing of this correspondent would seem to the inexperienced eye to be that of a timid little maiden in her teens. Mr. Scalper is not to be deceived by appearances. He shakes his head mournfully at the letter and writes:

"Little Emily. You have known great happiness, but it has passed. Despondency has driven you to seek forgetfulness in drink. Your writing shows the worst phase of the liquor habit. I apprehend that you will shortly have delirium tremens. Poor little Emily! Do not try to break off; it is too late."

Mr. Scalper is visibly affected by his correspondent's unhappy condition. His eye becomes moist, and he decides to haul up the bottle while there is still time to save Policeman Hogan from acquiring a taste for liquor. He is surprised and alarmed to find the attempt to haul it up ineffectual. The minion of the law has fallen into a leaden slumber, and the bottle remains tight in his grasp. The baffled delineator lets fall the string and returns to finish his task. Only a few lines are now required to fill the column, but Mr. Scalper finds on examining the correspondence that he has exhausted the subjects. This, however, is quite a common occurrence and occasions no dilemma in the mind of the talented gentleman. It is his custom in such cases to fill up the space with an imaginary character or two, the analysis of which is a task most congenial to his mind. He bows his head in thought for a few moments, and then writes as follows:

"Policeman H. Your hand shows great firmness; when once set upon a thing you are not easily moved. But you have a mean, grasping disposition and a tendency to want more than your share.

You have formed an attachment which you hope will be continued throughout life, but your selfishness threatens to sever the bond."

Having written which, Mr. Scalper arranges his manuscript for the printer next day, dons his hat and coat, and wends his way home in the morning twilight, feeling that his pay is earned.

## HOW TO BE A DOCTOR

Certainly the progress of science is a wonderful thing. One can't help feeling proud of it. I must admit that I do. Whenever I get talking to any one—that is, to any one who knows even less about it than I do—about the marvellous development of electricity, for instance, I feel as if I had been personally responsible for it. As for the linotype and the aeroplane and the vacuum house-cleaner, well, I am not sure that I didn't invent them myself. I believe that all generous-hearted men feel just the same way about it.

However, that is not the point I am intending to discuss. What I want to speak about is the progress of medicine. There, if you like, is something wonderful. Any lover of humanity (or of either sex of it) who looks back on the achievements of medical science must feel his heart glow and his right ventricle expand with the pericardiac stimulus of a permissible pride.

Just think of it. A hundred years ago there were no bacilli, no ptomaine poisoning, no diphtheria, and no appendicitis. Rabies was but little known, and only imperfectly developed. All of these we owe to medical science. Even such things as psoriasis and parotitis and trypanosomiasis, which are now household names, were known only to the few, and were quite beyond the reach of the great mass of the people.

Or consider the advance of the science on its practical side. A hundred years ago it used to be supposed that fever could be cured by the letting of blood; now we know positively that it cannot. Even seventy years ago it was thought that fever was curable by the administration of sedative drugs; now we know that it isn't. For the matter of that, as recently as thirty years ago, doctors thought that they could heal a fever by means of low diet and the application of ice; now they are absolutely certain that they cannot. This instance shows the steady progress made in the treatment of fever. But there has been the same cheering advance all along the line. Take rheumatism. A few generations ago people with rheumatism used

to have to carry round potatoes in their pockets as a means of cure. Now the doctors allow them to carry absolutely anything they like. They may go round with their pockets full of water-melons if they wish to. It makes no difference. Or take the treatment of epilepsy. It used to be supposed that the first thing to do in sudden attacks of this kind was to unfasten the patient's collar and let him breathe; at present, on the contrary, many doctors consider it better to button up the patient's collar and let him choke.

In only one respect has there been a decided lack of progress in the domain of medicine, that is in the time it takes to become a qualified practitioner. In the good old days a man was turned out thoroughly equipped after putting in two winter sessions at a college and spending his summers in running logs for a sawmill. Some of the students were turned out even sooner. Nowadays it takes anywhere from five to eight years to become a doctor. Of course, one is willing to grant that our young men are growing stupider and lazier every year. This fact will be corroborated at once by any man over fifty years of age. But even when this is said it seems odd that a man should study eight years now to learn what he used to acquire in eight months.

However, let that go. The point I want to develop is that the modern doctor's business is an extremely simple one, which could be acquired in about two weeks. This is the way it is done.

The patient enters the consulting-room. "Doctor," he says, "I have a bad pain." "Where is it?" "Here." "Stand up," says the doctor, "and put your arms up above your head." Then the doctor goes behind the patient and strikes him a powerful blow in the back. "Do you feel that?" he says. "I do," says the patient. Then the doctor turns suddenly and lets him have a left hook under the heart. "Can you feel that?" he says viciously, as the patient falls over on the sofa in a heap. "Get up," says the doctor, and counts ten. The patient rises. The doctor looks him over very carefully without speaking, and then suddenly fetches him a blow in the stomach that doubles him up speechless. The doctor walks over to the window

and reads the morning paper for a while. Presently he turns and begins to mutter more to himself than the patient. "Hum!" he says, "there's a slight anæsthesia of the tympanum." "Is that so?" says the patient, in an agony of fear. "What can I do about it, doctor?" "Well," says the doctor, "I want you to keep very quiet; you'll have to go to bed and stay there and keep quiet." In reality, of course, the doctor hasn't the least idea what is wrong with the man; but he *does* know that if he will go to bed and keep quiet, awfully quiet, he'll either get quietly well again or else die a quiet death. Meantime, if the doctor calls every morning and thumps and beats him, he can keep the patient submissive and perhaps force him to confess what is wrong with him.

"What about diet, doctor?" says the patient, completely cowed.

The answer to this question varies very much. It depends on how the doctor is feeling and whether it is long since he had a meal himself. If it is late in the morning and the doctor is ravenously hungry, he says: "Oh, eat plenty, don't be afraid of it; eat meat, vegetables, starch, glue, cement, anything you like." But if the doctor has just had lunch and if his breathing is short-circuited with huckleberry-pie, he says very firmly: "No, I don't want you to eat anything at all: absolutely not a bite; it won't hurt you, a little self-denial in the matter of eating is the best thing in the world."

"And what about drinking?" Again the doctor's answer varies. He may say: "Oh, yes, you might drink a glass of lager now and then, or, if you prefer it, a gin and soda or a whiskey and Apollinaris, and I think before going to bed I'd take a hot Scotch with a couple of lumps of white sugar and bit of lemon-peel in it and a good grating of nutmeg on the top." The doctor says this with real feeling, and his eye glistens with the pure love of his profession. But if, on the other hand, the doctor has spent the night before at a little gathering of medical friends, he is very apt to forbid the patient to touch alcohol in any shape, and to dismiss the subject with great severity.

Of course, this treatment in and of itself would appear too transparent, and would fail to inspire the patient with a proper

confidence. But nowadays this element is supplied by the work of the analytical laboratory. Whatever is wrong with the patient, the doctor insists on snipping off parts and pieces and extracts of him and sending them mysteriously away to be analyzed. He cuts off a lock of the patient's hair, marks it, "Mr. Smith's Hair, October, 1910." Then he clips off the lower part of the ear, and wraps it in paper, and labels it, "Part of Mr. Smith's Ear, October, 1910." Then he looks the patient up and down, with the scissors in his hand, and if he sees any likely part of him he clips it off and wraps it up. Now this, oddly enough, is the very thing that fills the patient up with that sense of personal importance which is worth paying for. "Yes," says the bandaged patient, later in the day to a group of friends much impressed, "the doctor thinks there may be a slight anæsthesia of the prognosis, but he's sent my ear to New York and my appendix to Baltimore and a lock of my hair to the editors of all the medical journals, and meantime I am to keep very quiet and not exert myself beyond drinking a hot Scotch with lemon and nutmeg every half-hour." With that he sinks back faintly on his cushions, luxuriously happy.

And yet, isn't it funny?

You and I and the rest of us—even if we know all this—as soon as we have a pain within us, rush for a doctor as fast as a hack can take us. Yes, personally, I even prefer an ambulance with a bell on it. It's more soothing.

## A STUDY IN STILL LIFE.—THE COUNTRY HOTEL

The country hotel stands on the sunny side of Main Street. It has three entrances.

There is one in front which leads into the Bar. There is one at the side called the Ladies' Entrance which leads into the Bar from the side. There is also the Main Entrance which leads into the bar through the Rotunda.

The Rotunda is the space between the door of the bar-room and the cigar-case.

In it is a desk and a book. In the book are written down the names of the guests, together with marks indicating the direction of the wind and the height of the barometer. It is here that the newly arrived guest waits until he has time to open the door leading to the Bar.

The bar-room forms the largest part of the hotel. It constitutes the hotel proper. To it are attached a series of bedrooms on the floor above, many of which contain beds.

The walls of the bar-room are perforated in all directions with trap-doors. Through one of these drinks are passed into the back sitting-room. Through others drinks are passed into the passages. Drinks are also passed through the floor and through the ceiling. Drinks once passed never return. The Proprietor stands in the doorway of the bar. He weighs two hundred pounds. His face is immovable as putty. He is drunk. He has been drunk for twelve years. It makes no difference to him. Behind the bar stands the bartender. He wears wicker sleeves, his hair is curled in a hook, and his name is Charlie.

Attached to the bar is a pneumatic beer pump, by means of which the bartender can flood the bar with beer. Afterwards he wipes up the beer with a rag. By this means he polishes the bar. Some of the beer that is pumped up spills into glasses and has to be sold.

Behind the bar-tender is a mechanism called a cash-register, which, on being struck a powerful blow, rings a bell, sticks up a card marked NO SALE, and opens a till from which the bar-tender distributes money.

There is printed a tariff of drinks and prices on the wall.

It reads thus:

Beer	5 cents
Whiskey	5 cents
Whiskey and Soda	5 cents
Beer and Soda	5 cents
Whiskey and Beer and Soda	5 cents
Whiskey and Eggs	5 cents
Beer and Eggs	5 cents
Champagne	5 cents
Cigars	5 cents
Cigars, extra fine	5 cents

All calculations are made on this basis and are worked out to three places of decimals. Every seventh drink is on the house and is not followed by a distribution of money.

The bar-room closes at midnight, provided there are enough people in it. If there is not a quorum the proprietor waits for a better chance. A careful closing of the bar will often catch as many as twenty-five people. The bar is not opened again till seven o'clock in the morning; after that the people may go home. There are also, nowadays, Local Option Hotels. These contain only one entrance, leading directly into the bar.



## THE LOST ILLUSIONS OF MR. SIMS

In the club to which I belong, in a quiet corner where the sunlight falls in sideways, there may be seen sitting of an afternoon my good friend of thirty years' standing, Mr. Edward Sims. Being somewhat afflicted with gout, he generally sits with one foot up on a chair. On a brass table beside him are such things as Mr. Sims needs. But they are few. Wealthy as he is, the needs of Mr. Sims reach scarcely further than Martini cocktails and Egyptian cigarettes. Such poor comforts as these, brought by a deferential waiter, with, let us say, a folded newspaper at five o'clock, suffice for all his wants. Here sits Mr. Sims till the shadows fall in the street outside, when a limousine motor trundles up to the club and rolls him home.

And here of an afternoon Mr. Sims talks to me of his college days when he was young. The last thirty years of his life have moved in so gentle a current upon so smooth a surface that they have been without adventure. It is the stormy period of his youth that preoccupies my friend as he sits looking from the window of the club at the waving leaves in the summer time and the driving snow in the winter.

I am of that habit of mind that makes me prone to listen. And for this, perhaps, Mr. Sims selects me as the recipient of the stories of his college days. It is, it seems, the fixed belief of my good friend that when he was young he belonged at college to a particularly nefarious crowd or group that exists in his mind under the name of the "old gang." The same association, or corporate body or whatever it should be called, is also designated by Mr. Sims, the "old crowd," or more simply and affectionately "the boys." In the recollection of my good friend this "old gang" were of a devilishness since lost off the earth. Work they wouldn't. Sleep they despised. While indoors they played poker in a blue haze of tobacco smoke with beer in jugs and mugs all round them. All

night they were out of doors on the sidewalk with linked arms, singing songs in chorus and jeering at the city police.

Yet in spite of life such as this, which might appear to an outsider wearing to the intellect, the "old gang" as recollected by Mr. Sims were of a mental brilliancy that eclipses everything previous or subsequent. McGregor of the Class of '85 graduated with a gold medal in Philosophy after drinking twelve bottles of lager before sitting down to his final examination. Ned Purvis, the football half-back, went straight from the football field after a hard game with his ankle out of joint, drank half a bottle of Bourbon Rye and then wrote an examination in Greek poetry that drew tears from the President of the college.

Mr. Sims is perhaps all the more prone to talk of these early days insomuch that, since his youth, life, in the mere material sense, has used him all too kindly. At an early age, indeed at about the very time of his graduation, Mr. Sims came into money,—not money in the large and frenzied sense of a speculative fortune, begetting care and breeding anxiety, but in the warm and comfortable inheritance of a family brewery, about as old and as well-established as the Constitution of the United States. In this brewery, even to-day, Mr. Sims, I believe, spends a certain part, though no great part, of his time. He is carried to it, I understand, in his limousine in the sunnier hours of the morning; for an hour or so each day he moves about among the warm smell of the barley and the quiet hum of the machinery murmuring among its dust.

There is, too, somewhere in the upper part of the city a huge, silent residence, where a noiseless butler adjusts Mr. Sims's leg on a chair and serves him his dinner in isolated luxury.

But the residence, and the brewery, and with them the current of Mr. Sims's life move of themselves.

Thus has care passed Mr. Sims by, leaving him stranded in a club chair with his heavy foot and stick beside him.

Mr. Sims is a bachelor. Nor is he likely now to marry: but this through no lack of veneration or respect for the sex. It arises, apparently, from the fact that when Mr. Sims was young, during his college days, the beauty and charm of the girls who dwelt in his college town was such as to render all later women mere feeble suggestions of what might have been. There was, as there always is, one girl in particular. I have not heard my friend speak much of her. But I gather that Kate Dashaway was the kind of girl who might have made a fit mate even for the sort of intellectual giant that flourished at Mr. Sims's college. She was not only beautiful. All the girls remembered by Mr. Sims were that. But she was in addition "a good head" and "a good sport," two of the highest qualities that, in Mr. Sims's view, can crown the female sex. She had, he said, no "nonsense" about her, by which term Mr. Sims indicated religion. She drank lager beer, played tennis as well as any man in the college, and smoked cigarettes a whole generation in advance of the age.

Mr. Sims, so I gather, never proposed to her, nor came within a measurable distance of doing so. A man so prone, as is my friend, to spend his time in modest admiration of the prowess of others is apt to lag behind. Miss Dashaway remains to Mr. Sims, as all else does, a retrospect and a regret.

But the chief peculiarities of the old gang—as they exist in the mind of Mr. Sims—is the awful fate that has overwhelmed them. It is not merely that they are scattered to the four corners of the continent. That might have been expected. But, apparently, the most awful moral ruin has fallen upon them. That, at least, is the abiding belief of Mr. Sims.

"Do you ever hear anything of McGregor now?" I ask him sometimes.

"No," he says, shaking his head quietly. "I understand he went all to the devil."

"How was that?"

"Booze," says Mr. Sims. There is a quiet finality about the word that ends all discussion.

"Poor old Curly!" says Mr. Sims, in speaking of another of his classmates. "I guess he's pretty well down and out these days."

"What's the trouble?" I say.

Mr. Sims moves his eyes sideways as he sits. It is easier than moving his head.

"Booze," he says.

Even apparent success in life does not save Mr. Sims's friends.

"I see," I said one day, "that they have just made Arthur Stewart a Chief Justice out West."

"Poor old Artie," murmured Mr. Sims. "He'll have a hard time holding it down. I imagine he's pretty well tanked up all the time these days."

When Mr. Sims has not heard of any of his associates for a certain lapse of years, he decides to himself that they are down and out. It is a form of writing them off. There is a melancholy satisfaction in it. As the years go by Mr. Sims is coming to regard himself and a few others as the lonely survivors of a great flood. All the rest, brilliant as they once were, are presumed to be "boozed," "tanked," "burnt out," "bust-up," and otherwise consumed.

After having heard for so many years the reminiscences of my good friend about the old gang, it seemed almost incredible that one of them should step into actual living being before my eyes. Yet so it happened.

I found Mr. Sims at the club one day, about to lunch there, a thing contrary to his wont. And with him was a friend, a sallow, insignificant man in the middle fifties, with ragged, sandy hair, wearing thin.

"Shake hands with Tommy Vidal," said Mr. Sims proudly.

If he had said, "Shake hands with Aristotle," he couldn't have spoken with greater pride.

This then was Tommy Vidal, the intellectual giant of whom I had heard a hundred times. Tommy had, at college, so Mr. Sims had often assured me, the brightest mind known since the age of Pericles. He took the prize in Latin poetry absolutely "without opening a book." Latin to Tommy Vidal had been, by a kind of natural gift, born in him. In Latin he was "a whale." Indeed in everything. He had passed his graduation examination with first class honours, "plastered." He had to be held in his seat, so it was recorded, while he wrote.

Tommy, it seemed, had just "blown in" to town that morning. It was characteristic of Mr. Sims's idea of the old gang that the only way in which any of them were supposed to enter a town was to "blow in."

"When did you say you 'blew in,' Tommy?" he asked about half a dozen times during our lunch. In reality, the reckless, devil-may-care fellow Vidal had "blown in" to bring his second daughter to a boarding school—a thing no doubt contemplated months ahead. But Mr. Sims insisted in regarding Tommy's movements as purely fortuitous, the sport of chance. He varied his question by asking, "When do you expect to 'blow out,' Tommy?" Tommy's answers he forgot at once.

We sat and talked after lunch, and it pained me to notice that Tommy Vidal was restless and anxious to get away. Mr. Sims offered him cigars, thick as ropes and black as night, but he refused them. It appeared that he had long since given up smoking. It affected his eyes, he said. The deferential waiter brought brandy and curaçao in long thin glasses. But Mr. Vidal shook his head. He hadn't had a drink, he said, for twenty years. He found it affected his hearing. Coffee, too, he refused. It affected, so it seemed, his sense of smell. He sat beside us, ill at ease, and anxious, as I could see, to get back to his second daughter and her schoolmistresses. Mr. Sims, who is geniality itself in his heart, but has no great

powers in conversation, would ask Tommy if he remembered how he acted as Antigone in the college play, and was "plastered" from the second act on. Mr. Vidal had no recollection of it, but wondered if there was any good book-store in town where he could buy his daughter an Algebra. He rose when he decently could and left us. As Mr. Sims saw it, he "blew out."

Mr. Sims is kindness itself in his judgments. He passed no word of censure on his departed friend. But a week or so later he mentioned to me in conversation that Tommy Vidal had "turned into a kind of stiff." The vocabulary of Mr. Sims holds no term of deeper condemnation than the word "stiff." To be a "stiff" is the last form of degradation.

It is strange that when a thing happens once, it forthwith happens twice or even more. For years no member of the "old gang" had come in touch with Mr. Sims. Yet the visit of Tommy Vidal was followed at no great distance of time by the "blowing in" of Ned Purvis.

"Well, well!" said Mr. Sims, as he opened one afternoon a telegram that the deferential waiter brought upon a tray. "This beats all! Old Ned Purvis wires that he's going to blow in to town to-night at seven."

Forthwith Mr. Sims fell to ordering dinner for the three of us in a private room, with enough of an assortment of gin cocktails and Scotch high-balls to run a distillery, and enough Vichy water and imported soda for a bath. "I know old Ned!" he said as he added item after item to the list.

At seven o'clock the waiter whispered, as in deep confidence, that there was a gentleman below for Mr. Sims.

It so happened that on that evening my friend's foot was in bad shape, and rested on a chair. At his request I went from the lounge room of the club downstairs to welcome the new arrival.

Purvis I knew all about. My friend had spoken of him a thousand times. He had played half-back on the football team—a big hulking brute of a fellow. In fact, he was, as pictured by Mr. Sims, a perfect colossus. And he played football—as did all Mr. Sims's college chums—"plastered." "Old Ned," so Mr. Sims would relate, "was pretty well 'soused' when the game started: but we put a hose at him at half-time and got him into pretty good shape." All men in any keen athletic contest, as remembered by Mr. Sims, were pretty well "tanked up." For the lighter, nimbler games such as tennis, they were reported "spifflocated" and in that shape performed prodigies of agility.

"You'll know Ned," said Mr. Sims, "by his big shoulders." I went downstairs.

The reception room below was empty, except for one man, a little, gentle-looking man with spectacles. He wore black clothes with a waistcoat reaching to the throat, a white tie and a collar buttoned on backwards. Ned Purvis was a clergyman! His great hulking shoulders had gone the way of all my good friend's reminiscences.

I brought him upstairs.

For a moment, in the half light of the room, Mr. Sims was still deceived.

"Well, Ned!" he began heartily, with a struggle to rise from his chair—then he saw the collar and tie of the Rev. Mr. Purvis, and the full horror of the thing dawned upon him. Nor did the three gin cocktails, which Mr. Sims had had stationed ready for the reunion, greatly help its geniality. Yet it had been a maxim, in the recollections of Mr. Sims, that when any of the boys blew in anywhere the bringing of drinks must be instantaneous and uproarious.

Our dinner that night was very quiet.

Mr. Purvis drank only water. That, with a little salad, made his meal. He had a meeting to address that evening at eight, a meeting

of women—"dear women" he called them—who had recently affiliated their society with the work that some of the dear women in Mr. Purvis's own town were carrying on. The work, as described, boded no good for breweries. Mr. Purvis's wife, so it seemed, was with him and would also "take the platform."

As best we could we made conversation.

"I didn't know that you were married," said Mr. Sims.

"Yes," said Mr. Purvis, "married, and with five dear boys and three dear girls." The eight of them, he told us, were a great blessing. So, too, was his wife—a great social worker, it seemed, in the cause of women's rights and a marvellous platform speaker in the temperance crusade.

"By the way, Mr. Sims," said Mr. Purvis (they had called one another "Mr." after the first five minutes), "you may remember my wife. I think perhaps you knew her in our college days. She was a Miss Dashaway."

Mr. Sims bowed his head over his plate, as another of his lost illusions vanished into thin air.

After Mr. Purvis had gone, my friend spoke out his mind—once and once only, and more in regret than anger.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that old Ned has turned into a SISSY."

It was only to be expected that the visits of later friends—the "boys" who happened to "blow in"—were disappointments. Art Hamilton, who came next, and who had been one of the most brilliant men of the Class of '86 had turned somehow into a "complete mutt." Jake Todd, who used to write so brilliantly in the college paper, as recollected by Mr. Sims, was now the editor of a big New York daily. Good things might have been expected of him, but it transpired that he had undergone "wizening of the brain." In fact, a number of Mr. Sims's former friends had suffered from this cruel disease, consisting apparently of a shrinkage or contraction of the cerebellum.



Mr. Sims spoke little of his disappointments. But I knew that he thought much about them. They set him wondering. There were changes here that to the thoughtful mind called for investigation.

So I was not surprised when he informed me that it was his intention to visit "the old place" and have a look at it. The "old place," called also the "old shop," indicated, as I knew, Mr. Sims's college, the original scene of the exploits of the old gang. In the thirty years since he had graduated, though separated from it only by two hundred miles, Mr. Sims had never revisited it. So is it always with the most faithful of the sons of learning. The illumination of the inner eye is better than the crude light of reality. College reunions are but for the noisy lip service of the shallow and the interested. The deeper affection glows in the absent heart.

My friend invited me to "come along." We would, he said, "blow in" upon the place and have a look at it.

It was in the fulness of the springtime that we went, when the leaves are out on the college campus, and when Commencement draws near, and when all the college, even the students, are busy.

Mr. Sims, I noted when I joined him at the train, was dressed as for the occasion. He wore a round straw hat with a coloured ribbon, and light grey suit, and a necktie with the garish colours of the college itself. Thus dressed, he leaned as lightly as his foot allowed him upon a yellow stick, and dreamed himself again an undergraduate.

I had thought the purpose of his visit a mere curiosity bred in his disappointment. It appeared that I was wrong. On the train Mr. Sims unfolded to me that his idea in "blowing in" upon his college was one of benefaction. He had it in his mind, he said, to do something for the "old place," no less a thing than to endow a chair. He explained to me, modestly as was his wont, the origin of his idea. The brewing business, it appeared, was rapidly reaching a stage when it would have to be wound up. The movement of prohibition would necessitate, said Mr. Sims, the closing of the

plant. The prospect, in the financial sense, occasioned my friend but little excitement. I was given to understand that prohibition, in the case of Mr. Sims's brewery, had long since been "written off" or "written up" or at least written somewhere where it didn't matter. And the movement itself Mr. Sims does not regard as permanent. Prohibition, he says, is bound to be washed out by a "turn of the tide"; in fact, he speaks of this returning wave of moral regeneration much as Martin Luther might have spoken of the protestant reformation. But for the time being the brewery will close. Mr. Sims had thought deeply, it seemed, about putting his surplus funds into the manufacture of commercial alcohol, itself a noble profession. For some time his mind has wavered between that and endowing a chair of philosophy. There is, and always has been, a sort of natural connection between the drinking of beer and deep quiet thought. Mr. Sims, as a brewer, felt that philosophy was the proper thing.

We left the train, walked through the little town and entered the university gates.

"Geel!" said Mr. Sims, pausing a moment and leaning on his stick, "were the gates only as big as that?"

We began to walk up the avenue.

"I thought there were more trees to it than these," said Mr. Sims.

"Yes," I answered. "You often said that the avenue was a quarter of a mile long."

"So the thing used to be," he murmured.

Then Mr. Sims looked at the campus. "A dinky-looking little spot," he said.

"Didn't you say," I asked, "that the Arts Building was built of white marble?"

"Always thought it was," he answered. "Looks like rough cast from here, doesn't it?"

"We'll have to go in and see the President, I suppose," continued Mr. Sims. He said it with regret. Something of his undergraduate soul had returned to his body. Although he had never seen the President (this one) in his life, and had only read of his appointment some five years before in the newspapers, Mr. Sims was afraid of him.

"Now, I tell you," he went on. "We'll just make a break in and then a quick get-away. Don't let's get anchored in there, see? If the old fellow gets talking, he'll go on forever. I remember the way it used to be when a fellow had to go in to see Prexy in my time. The old guy would start mooning away and quoting Latin and keep us there half the morning."

At this moment two shabby-looking, insignificant men who had evidently come out from one of the buildings, passed us on the sidewalk.

"I wonder who those guys are," said Mr. Sims. "Look like bums, don't they?"

I shook my head. Some instinct told me that they were professors. But I didn't say so.

My friend continued his instructions.

"When the President asks us to lunch," he said, "I'll say that we're lunching with a friend down town, see? Then we'll make a break and get out. If he says he wants to introduce us to the Faculty or anything like that, then you say that we have to get the twelve-thirty to New York, see? I'm not going to say anything about a chair in philosophy to-day. I want to read it up first some night so as to be able to talk about it."

To all of this I agreed.

From a janitor we inquired where to find the President.

"In the Administration Building, eh?" said Mr. Sims. "That's a new one on me. The building on the right, eh? Thank you."

"See the President?" said a young lady in an ante-office. "I'm not sure whether you can see him just now. Have you an appointment?"

Mr. Sims drew out a card. "Give him that," he said. On the card he had scribbled "Graduate of 1887."

In a few minutes we were shown into another room where there was a young man, evidently the President's secretary, and a number of people waiting.

"Will you kindly sit down," murmured the young man, in a consulting-room voice, "and wait? The President is engaged just now."

We waited. Through the inner door leading to the President people went and came. Mr. Sims, speaking in whispers, continued to caution me on the quickness of our get-away.

Presently the young man touched him on the shoulder.

"The President will see you now," he whispered.

We entered the room. The "old guy" rose to meet us, Mr. Sims's card in his hand. But he was not old. He was at least ten years younger than either of us. He was, in fact, what Mr. Sims and I would almost have called a boy. In dress and manner he looked as spruce and busy as the sales manager of a shoe factory.

"Delighted to see you, gentlemen," he said, shaking hands effusively. "We are always pleased to see our old graduates, Mr. Simpson—No, I beg pardon, Mr. Sims—class of '97, I see— No, I beg your pardon, class of '67, I read it wrongly—"

I heard Mr. Sims murmuring something that seemed to contain the words "a look around."

"Yes, yes, exactly," said the President. "A look round, you'll find a great deal to interest you in looking about the place, I'm sure, Mr. Simpson, great changes. I'm extremely sorry I can't offer to take you round myself." Here he snapped a gold watch open and shut.

"The truth is I have to catch the twelve-thirty to New York—so sorry."

Then he shook our hands again, very warmly.

In another moment we were outside the door. The get-away was accomplished.

We walked out of the building and towards the avenue.

As we passed the portals of the Arts Building, a noisy, rackety crowd of boys—evidently, to our eyes, schoolboys—came out, jostling and shouting. They swarmed past us, accidentally, no doubt, body-checking Mr. Sims, whose straw hat was knocked off and rolled on the sidewalk. A janitor picked it up for him as the crowd of boys passed.

"What pack of young bums are those?" asked Mr. Sims. "You oughtn't to let young roughs like that come into the buildings. Are they here from school or something?"

"No, sir," said the janitor. "They're students."

"Students?" repeated Mr. Sims. "And what are they shouting like that for?"

"There's a notice up that their professor is ill, and so the class is cancelled, sir."

"Class!" said Mr. Sims. "Are those a class?"

"Yes, sir," said the janitor. "That's the Senior Class in Philosophy."

Mr. Sims said nothing. He seemed to limp more than his custom as we passed down the avenue.

On the way home on the train he talked much of crude alcohol and the possibilities of its commercial manufacture.

So far as I know, his only benefaction up to date has been the two dollars that he gave to a hackman to drive us away from the college.

# COOL DRINKS FOR THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

*As Treated in the Bygone Almanacs*

The part of the year known in ballad poetry as the Good Old Summer Time begins with what is popularly called the Merry Month of May. The winter is then over except in the city of Quebec, in Butte, Montana, and in the Back Bay regions of Boston. The gathering warmth of the sun calls all nature to life.

## THE HEAVENS IN MAY

In the older almanacs of the kind that used to be made for farmers, the first items under this month always dealt with the aspect of the heavens. The farmer was told that in May the sun, passing out of the sign of Taurus, moved into the constellation of Gemini; that the apparent declination of the sun was 15 degrees and 4 minutes and that the neap tides fell on the thirteenth and twenty-seventh of the month. He was also informed that Mars and Mercury during May are both in opposition and that Sirius is the dog star.

In the city this information is now useless. Nobody can see the heavens even if he wants to; the open space between the skyscrapers formerly called the sky is now filled with electric lights, pictures of motor wheels turning round, and men eating breakfast food with a moving spoon.

We doubt also if the up-to-date farmer is really concerned with the Zodiac. We will therefore only say that in this month if the farmer will on any clear night ascend to the cupola of his pergola with his binoculars and with his radio plugs in his ears and his insulators on his feet and view the heavens from midnight till three in the morning, he will run a first-class chance of getting pneumonia.

## THE GARDEN IN MAY

For those to whom gardening—even in the limited restrictions of a city back yard—is a hobby and a passion, the month of May is the most enticing month of the year. It seems strange to think that so many men with a back yard at their disposal—a back yard, let us say, twenty feet by fifteen—should nevertheless spend the long evenings and the Saturday afternoons of the month of May striding up and down the golf links or wandering along a trout stream. How much better to be out in the back yard with a spade and hoe, pickaxe and sledge hammer and a little dynamite preparing the exuberant soil for the luxuriant crop.

In the amateur garden in the back yard no great technical knowledge is needed. Our citizen gardener who wishes to begin should go out into his back yard and having stripped himself to his waist, all but his undershirt, should proceed first to dig out his ground.

He must excavate a hole ten by fifteen, by ten by two; of course, the hole won't be as big as that, but it will *seem* to be. He must carefully remove on his back all large boulders, volcanic rocks, and other accumulated débris. These if he likes he may fashion tastefully into a rockery or a rookery, or also, if he likes, he may throw them over the fence into his neighbour's back yard. He must then proceed to fill the hole half full of sweet-smelling fertilizer.

This will almost complete his first evening's work. In fact, he will be just about filling in his stuff when the other men come past on their way home from golf. He will then finish his task by putting back a fourth of the soil, which he will carefully pulverize by lying down and rolling in it. After this he can then take a bath (or two baths) and go to bed.

The ground thus carefully prepared, the amateur gardener should wait a day or so and then, proceeding to his back yard, should draw on his overalls up to his neck and proceed to plant his bulbs and seeds.

The tulip is a favourite flower for early planting owing to its fine raucous appearance. Excellent tulip bulbs may be had of any florist for one dollar, which with proper care will turn into a flower worth thirty cents. The dahlia, the most handsome of the ganglions, almost repays cultivation, presenting a splendid carboniferous appearance with unsurpassed efflorescence. The potato is not bad, either.

When the garden plot is all filled up with buried bulbs and seeds, the gardener should roll the dirt down flat, by rolling it, and then for the rest of the month of May, sit and look at it.

### A COOL DRINK FOR MAY

The month of May is the time of year when dandelion wine, owing to the presence of dandelions, is perhaps easier to make than at any other time. An excellent recipe is as follows:

1. Pluck, or pick, a small basketful of dandelion heads.
2. Add to them a quart of water and leave the mixture to stand for five minutes.
3. Pour off the water, remove the dandelions, and add as flavouring a quart of 1872 champagne.
4. Drink it.

### THE COUNTRYSIDE IN MAY

It is in the month of May that the countryside, for the true lover of nature, is at its best. For one who knows by name and can distinguish and classify the flora of the lanes and fields, a country walk among the opening buds is a scene of unalloyed joy. The tiny hibiscus is seen peeping out from under the grass while everywhere in the spring air is the sweet scent of the ornithorhynchus and the megalotherium. One should watch in this month for the first shoots of the spigot, while the trained eye will easily distinguish the lambswort, the dogsfoot, and the cowslip.



Nor are the birds, for any one who knows their names, less interesting than the flowers. The corvex americanus is building its nest in the tall timber. The sharp whistling notes of the ilex and the pulex and the index are heard in the meadows, while the marshes are loud with the song of the ranunculus. But of course for those who do not know these names nothing is happening except that a lot of birds are singing and the grass is growing. That, of course, is quite worthless and uninteresting.

## GREAT EVENTS IN MAY

May 1. Birth of Shakespeare.

May 5. End of the Trojan war.

May 10. Beginning of the Trojan war.

May 15. Birth of Shakespeare.

May 20. Shakespeare born.

May 25. Trojan war ends again.

May 30. Death of Shakespeare and beginning of the Trojan war.

## LITERATURE AND THE EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

I am privileged to make a unique announcement on behalf of the Mayor and Council of my place of residence, the City of Montreal. To be more exact, let me add that this announcement has not yet been sanctioned by the Mayor and Council, but I feel certain that as soon as they hear of it, they will be all for it.

It concerns, in a word, a proposal to extend to United States authors and playwrights an invitation to use the peculiar facilities enjoyed by the City of Montreal for the laying of plots, scenes, etc., and for the domicile of literary characters. Put quite simply, this new plan will restore to the American author the literary setting lost under the Eighteenth Amendment.

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Ever since the Eighteenth Amendment was appended to the Constitution of the United States, writers of fiction, poetry, and the drama have found themselves under a handicap. In the stories of to-day they are unable to give their characters a drink. At first sight this seems nothing. But when we realize how much of our literature both in America and in England for centuries past has depended, rightly or wrongly, for conviviality on the drinking of toasts and healths, on wassail and on Xmas, on stirrup cups and Auld Lang Syne—we can see how hard it is, in literature, to do without it.

Let me illustrate:

I met casually the other day in New York a writer whom I knew to have been, only a few years ago, one of the most successful writers of fiction of our day. He looked despondent. And I was pained to notice that his clothes were ill kept and his appearance seedy.

"You look down on your luck, old man," I said.

"I am," he answered.

"Come along, then," I said, "and have a chocolate ice-cream sundae to pick you up."

A few minutes later we were standing beside the counter of a drug store with a smoking chocolate ice-cream sundae in our hands.

"That's better," said my friend, as he drained his sundae at one draught.

"Have another," I suggested, "and then tell me of your troubles."

Warmed and invigorated by the ice-cream, to which was presently added, on my proposal, a pint of buttermilk, my friend proceeded to explain.

"I can't get used to this new situation," he said. "You see all my stories are novels of to-day, with the plot laid in the present time—you understand?"

"Perfectly," I said, "have some more buttermilk."

"Thank you. Well, the trouble is, I can't get used to the present situation at all. For instance, in my last novel (you haven't seen it for the simple reason that I can't sell it) I bring in a dinner party. In fact, I nearly always bring in a dinner party. It makes such a good setting, don't you know."

"Quite so," I answered. "What about a quart of sour milk?"

"No, thanks," he said, "not now, I want to keep my head clear. Well, I always used, as I say, to have descriptions of dinner parties, in which there were tables smothered with flowers, and glittering glass, and at which—let me see—"

Here he paused and pulled out some scraps of paper, evidently literary notes, from his pocket.

"Yes, at which, for example, 'Meadows (that was always the butler) noiselessly passed the champagne'; in which 'The conviviality of the party had now reached its height. Lord Dangerdog pledged his beautiful vis-à-vis in a brimming glass of champagne'; and in which 'Lady Angela and the Duchess

exchanged smiles over their claret'; and in which finally 'the host instructed Meadows to bring up some of the port, the old port, from the dusty bin in the cellar where it had been first laid down by Winthrop Washington Beverly Robinson, his ancestor, in the year of the Declaration of Independence; a "noble port," said Lord Dangerdog as he sipped the tawny wine with the air of a connoisseur . . .'

"How's that?" said my friend, breaking off in his reading.

"Excellent," I answered, "and it is amazing how really dependent our literature used to be for its mirth and happiness on just that kind of thing."

"Precisely," he answered, "that is what I am finding. I can't replace it. Here's what I put into my new story (the one that I can't sell) for the dinner party scene:

"As the pea soup circulated freely, a new animation seemed to come to the guests. Lord Dangerdog, already at his second plateful, smiled across at Lady Angela . . . while the young girl herself hid her blushing face in her soup to avoid the boldness of his eye.

"Come," said the host, turning to his English guest, "let me pledge you in another stick of celery," and, suiting the action to the word, he held aloft a magnificent bunch of Kalamazoo celery, and with the words, "Let us eat to our English visitor," he devoured the entire bunch in a single mouthful.

"Then beckoning to the noiseless butler to whom he passed at the same time the key of the cellar, "Meadows," he said, "fetch me up some of the *old* soup: it's in the fourth trough on the left."

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"There!" said my friend as he finished reading. "What do you think of it?"

"You're quite right," I said. "It hardly seems the same."

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Since then I have been looking more closely into this question of conviviality and literature. I find that drink of some kind is

associated not only with scenes of gaiety, but with almost every aspect of literature. Take the familiar literary theme of the gradual ruin and downfall of a young man, happily married, and with all life before him.

In the stories of yesterday we used to read, for example:

"It was with a devastating sense of despair that Agatha watched her husband go to the sideboard and with a shaking hand pour himself out a glass of neat brandy, which he drained at a gulp . . ." etc., etc.

In an up-to-date story all that we can say is something of this sort:

"It was with a devastating sense of despair that Agatha realized that her husband was becoming addicted to consommé. She watched him as he surreptitiously drank a second ladleful of it, and asked herself what would happen if he took a tureenful."

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There is only one thing to be done. Move the stories and scenes up to the city of Montreal, where the old and familiar literary background still survives, where Xmas is Xmas, and a Party is a Party and not a Stuffing Match.

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Let any writer of one-act plays in the United States consider, for instance, the brightness of such an opening as this:

Scene: The Bar of a Montreal hotel. There are present Lord Dangerdog, Lady Evelina, The Bishop of Labrador, General the Hon. Sir Evelyn Everhard.

THE BISHOP (*Wiping his face*)—What an excellent cocktail.

THE GENERAL—Is it not, and so mild! It's only American rum and absinthe, I believe.

LADY EVELINA (*Putting down twenty-five cents*)—Mix  
the boys up another of those.

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When Montreal offers a chance for a scene like this, what a shame  
to lay a plot in Indianapolis.

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Now I am entitled, in fact, I am invited, by a hotel in Montreal to  
say that any American dramatists visiting it are entirely welcome  
to lay one-act plays in the bar-room. Another hotel also announces  
that authors may lay one-act plays in the bar or in the grill room  
and serve liquor to their characters at any time up to midnight.

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And if any author has occasion to entertain his characters in a  
club—a *real* club, such, I have been told, as no longer exists in  
the United States—I invite him, as a personal matter, to put them  
into the University Club, Montreal, where they will find everything  
needed for the best class of fiction.

They will then be able to reinsert into their stories such little lost  
touches as:

"It was the habit of Sir John to drop into his club for a glass of  
sherry and bitters before driving home to dinner."

There is so much more *class* in that than in saying that he generally  
stopped at a soda fountain for a pint of chocolate squash.

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If the plan that I have outlined is carried through, the first train-  
load of American authors will probably be shipped in within a  
month. Scene-laying will begin at once. And next season's crop of  
novels will begin:

"The sun was slowly setting on both sides of the St. Lawrence,  
illuminating with its dying beams the windows of the hotels and  
clubs of Montreal, in one of which, licensed to sell wine and beer  
up till midnight, a man and a woman—"

And the story is off to a good start and literature comes into its own again.

## MORE MESSAGES FROM MARS

### *A Personal Encounter with the First Martian Across*

For some little time back it has become only too evident that we are on the brink of getting into communication with planet Mars.

Everybody knows that Mars is a planet just like our own. It is only forty million—or forty billion—miles away.

During this very winter the most distinguished of British mathematical astronomers has assured the press that there is life on Mars; that the conditions are such that there cannot fail to be life there. At the same time a London medical scientist, an expert in radio communication, has announced the receipt of actual messages from the planet.

The announcement has been followed by similar news from other quarters, of messages partly radioactive, and partly telepathic, messages which of course were imperfect and at times undecipherable, but still, from their very content, undoubtedly messages. To those who have the will to believe and who have not hardened their understanding into scepticism, the thing is achieved. Communication has begun.

Messages have been coming across the gulf of forty million—or forty billion—miles of empty space. I confess that I, like many other people, have been following every development with the greatest interest, an interest that has amounted almost to absorption.

But till just the other evening I should never have dreamed that it would be my individual good fortune to come into contact with an actual Martian, the first, so I am entitled to believe, who ever made his way to the surface of the globe.

Where I met him was at the dark end of a railway platform, in the night, at a lost railway junction, where trains meet and go on.



He sat there alone, huddled up in the dark against an express truck. The very outline of him told me that there was something strange about him, and yet I don't know why. His figure was frail, but certainly human; his clothes queerly cut, but yet not so very different from ours. No, there was nothing external, but merely something psychic, to tell me that he was a being different from the common terrestrial kind.

He spoke.

"Is there a train south?" he said. His voice was the voice of a person framing the syllables to be understood. But the words were English and the sounds at least intelligible.

At the sudden sound of his voice I had not been able to restrain a start for which I apologized.

"I beg your pardon," I said. "I am afraid you startled me; to tell the truth, I was lost in thought. I was thinking of the Martians."

"Martians?" he said. "That's me. I am a Martian."

"A Martian!" I exclaimed. "Great heavens, a Martian! From Mars? But how did you get here?"

"I wish I knew," he said. "I'm from back there all right," and he pointed his thumb over his shoulder to the south, to where the planet Mars glowed red just above the horizon. "But as to how I got here, with all these trains and things, I've lost all track of it."

"Poor fellow," I reflected, "he doesn't understand." I knew, of course, from what our leading scientists have told us that he had come to this earth by a process that will one day be as familiar as the passage of light and radioacting. He had been disembodied and sent over.

I could have explained to him, in a rough and ready sort of way, that his atomic structure had been broken loose and sent across the gulf of empty space and then had reassembled itself on this planet. Five minutes ago, so I could have told him, he was in Mars. But it seemed cruel to mention it. Those who had sent him over

could reassemble him again, and bring him back—full of territorial information.

Even at the present stage of our scientific development there is no mystery in this; nothing but the need of the further elaboration of processes already known.

I determined, while there was still time, to make full use of him.

"There is no train south," I said, "for over half an hour. But tell me about the Martians."

"About the Martians?" he repeated. "What about them?"

"Yes," I said, "about their life, how they live and what it feels like and what they do and what they think about things."

The Man from Mars seemed amazed and puzzled at the question. "What they do and what they think?" he repeated. "Why—much like any other people, I guess."

I realized that of course this extraordinary being, the denizen of another world, could have no idea that he was extraordinary. He took himself and his Martian world for granted.

I decided to approach things more gently.

"Have the Martians," I asked, "ever heard of Mr. Hoover?"

"Of Mr. Hoover!" he answered with surprise. "Why, what do you take us for? Of course we have. We had the radio for a long time before the elections."

I hadn't realized that of course our terrestrial radio messages had reached the planet Mars as easily, or almost as easily, as they encircle our little globe. I saw myself on the brink of wonderful information.

"Wait a minute," I said, "till I get out a note book. Even in this imperfect light I can jot down what you tell me. Now then, what are the principal things that the Martians are discussing, or were discussing when you left?"

"Well—prohibition—" he said.

"And what is their feeling about it?"

"Most of them think it a good thing in the business sense, but a lot of them think it would be better still if a man could get a good drink when he really needs it. As we see it in Mars"—he pronounced the name of his planet with a peculiar lisp—"the real solution would be some way of having total prohibition with honest enforcement and good liquor."

I wrote it all down.

"What do they think about the women's vote?" I asked.

"Oh, we've accepted that long ago," the Martian said. "There's no question of going back on their having the vote; the only trouble is that they seem to be using it too much."

"Do the Martians," I asked, "know anything about the question of the United States building a big navy?"

"Oh, sure," he answered, "we all say that the United States needs a navy big enough to guarantee peace by licking all the European nations one after the other."

"It is amazing," I said, as I wrote his answers down, "what you Martians know about our big question. What about the St. Lawrence Waterways scheme?"

"We're all for it," answered the Martian. "We think it a good idea. It will help the Middle West."

"And what are they saying over there about Church Union in the United States?"

"We ourselves," he replied, "are about evenly divided among Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians. But we think that union is coming. But I tell you—" He broke off with something like impatience. "Naturally, we don't spend most of our time talking over things like that. We are more interested in our own local concerns, the things that interest ourselves—"

"Of course, of course," I said, "tell me about those."

"Well, you see, just at this time of year there are the hockey matches every Saturday, and they draw a big crowd; and then there's a good deal of excitement over the question of the new post office, and this coming week we are to take a vote on having a new radial railway to Philadelphia—"

"To where?" I exclaimed.

"To Philadelphia. Why not?"

A feeling of uncertainty began to come over me.

"Excuse me," I said, "you are a Martian, are you not?"

"Certainly," he said, "I am."

"From Mars?"

"Not Mars," he corrected me, "Marsh. It's in Chester County, Pennsylvania, just a little place, but you seemed to have heard of it. Though how I got mixed up on these trains and got away up here is more than I can tell."

"And this information," I said, "that you've been giving me is not from the Martians of the Planet Mars but from the Marshians of Marsh, Pennsylvania?"

"Sure," he answered.

"Well, never mind," I said, as I turned away, "from all I've seen of the Martian communications from Mars up to now they are not any different from yours. That's your train pulling in now. Good night."

## CONVERSATIONS I CAN DO WITHOUT

### *Enough of Some People's Talk to Explain Why*

#### I

##### *When the Man at the Next Table Is Reproving the Waiter*

"Waiter! Waiter! psst!! Waiter! Look here, waiter, I've been sitting at this table for *fifteen* and a half minutes—"

"I'm sorry, sir—"

"When I came in, it was exactly half a minute to nine and now it's a quarter past. For *fifteen* minutes, and a half—"

"I'm sorry, sir."

"All I ordered was just some bacon and eggs with French fried potatoes and toast and coffee. You couldn't take a quarter of an hour to cook that if you tried! I could go out there to the kitchen—"

"I'm sorry, sir, but—"

"You can just tell the head waiter or the chef, or whoever it is, that I don't propose to stand for it. Just as soon—"

"Well, sir, if—"

"Just as soon as I'm through, I shall report the whole thing to the management. And you can go to the head waiter right now and tell him that if that order is not on this table in one minute—by this—watch—"

"I'm sorry, sir, but if you will kindly look on the table it's there now. I think you covered it up, sir, with part of your paper. You were reading, sir, when I put it down . . ."

"Eh, what! That! Well, what the— What! What! . . ." And the rest is silence.

## II

*The Conversation in the Smoking End of the  
Pullman Between Two Men Talking  
of Their Bootleggers*

"As a matter of fact, all I have to do is just call up my bootlegger and tell him what I want and it comes right to the door—"

"Same with me. I just say to this feller that I want a case of rye or a case of Scotch and he fetches it right to the house—"

"Of course, I won't touch it unless I know it's all right."

"Me, too. I don't believe in taking chances on it. Last week a feller had some stuff at his house, moonshine—something he'd picked up out in the country. But I said, 'No, thanks, not for me. It may be all right or it may not. But I don't want it.'"

"No, that's the way I am, too. All this stuff I get sent up to the house is labelled—all of it case goods, you understand, right from Scotland."

"So's mine. I won't drink it unless it's the real thing. I tried some last week, fierce stuff, I could hardly drink it."

"Of course it's hard to get the real old pre-war stuff any longer."

"No, you just can't get it."

"Say, I've got a flask of stuff here in my bag. I'm not just so sure what it is. But the bell boy said it was all right. If you care to take a little touch of it. I haven't tried it out yet. . . ."

"Oh, let's try it, anyway. I guess it won't kill us."

## III

*Opening Half of Conversation in the Club from*

*Armchair No. 1 to Armchair No. 2, Mine  
Being Armchair No. 3*

"I held the king and the jack, but I couldn't tell where the ace was. Dummy had only two low spots and all the trumps were out. Of course, my problem was—"

(But I never stay to hear what it was. I've heard others like it too often.)

IV

*The Conversation Held by Two Women at the  
Close of a Dinner Party While I Stand  
Waiting with the Other Men to  
Say Good Night*

"Well, good night, dear, your party has been perfectly lovely—"

"Well, it's been just lovely to have you—"

(Telepathic thought of the group of men: "Yes, yes, lovely—but now—beat it!")

"And really such a wonderful dinner. You know, I suppose it's rude to talk about the things you are given to eat, but that fish soufflé was simply wonderful! How ever is it made? I must get you to give me the recipe."

"Why, my dear, Bertha just makes it in her own way. But I'll see if I can get her to write down the recipe and I'll send it—"

(Telepathic chorus of the men all thinking the same thing: "Yes, yes, for heaven's sake, let her send it, let her write it out, let her print it—only let us beat it.")

"Will you? That's so kind! Well, good-bye, again, and thank you for such a lovely party, and I liked your friend so much—the

gentleman who left early. I thought I'd just die laughing at some of his funny stories at dinner—"

"Oh, but really he wasn't half as funny as he generally is! I was just thinking at dinner that I wished you could have heard him some night when he's *really* funny—"

"But I thought him *ever* so funny to-night. I thought I'd die—"

(The telepathic chorus of the men: "Well, then beat it and beat it right now or perhaps you'll die right here.")

"Well, good-bye. If you see Amelia and John, tell them I was asking about them—"

"Oh, we just never see them now since they built their big mansion. They're far too grand for us in this house!"

"Too grand! Why, my dear, I think your house is just charming and that little sun-room, I mean that sun-room, is too cute for anything, especially if you put some flowers— My dear, I saw some of the loveliest early wild flowers to-day when we were out in the country in the car. I simply must drive you out there—"

(Telepathic chorus, as before, "Yes, take her, take her now. Drive her clear to Mexico.")

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And then, just at this moment by Heaven's special providence a butler or a maid or some one says politely:

"Your taxi's waiting, madame."

And the woman gives one wild leap toward the door. Women will talk forever when it's only a matter of the men's time, but when it comes to the moving finger of a taxi-metre, they wouldn't buy five cents' worth of talk from Shakespeare himself.

After all, these modern inventions are not wholly without advantage.



## THE ERRORS OF SANTA CLAUS

It was Christmas Eve.

The Browns, who lived in the adjoining house, had been dining with the Joneses.

Brown and Jones were sitting over wine and walnuts at the table. The others had gone upstairs.

"What are you giving to your boy for Christmas?" asked Brown.

"A train," said Jones. "New kind of thing—automatic."

"Let's have a look at it," said Brown.

Jones fetched a parcel from the sideboard and began unwrapping it.

"Ingenious thing, isn't it?" he said. "Goes on its own rails. Queer how kids love to play with trains, isn't it?"

"Yes," assented Brown, "how are the rails fixed?"

"Wait, I'll show you," said Jones. "Just help me to shove these dinner things aside and roll back the cloth. There! See! You lay the rails like that and fasten them at the ends, so—"

"Oh, yes, I catch on, makes a grade, doesn't it? Just the think to amuse a child, isn't it? I got Willie a toy aeroplane."

"I know, they're great. I got Edwin one on his birthday. But I thought I'd get him a train this time. I told him Santa Claus was going to bring him something altogether new this time. Edwin, of course, believes in Santa Claus absolutely. Say, look at this locomotive, would you? It has a spring coiled up inside the fire box."

"Wind her up," said Brown with great interest, "let's see her go."

"All right," said Jones, "just pile up two or three plates or something to lean the end of the rails on. There, notice the way it buzzes before it starts. Isn't that a great thing for a kid, eh?"

"Yes," said Brown, "and say! see this little string to pull the whistle. By Gad, it toots, eh? Just like real?"

"Now then, Brown," Jones went on "you hitch on those cars and I'll start her. I'll be engineer, eh!"

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Half an hour later Brown and Jones were still playing trains on the dining-room table.

But their wives upstairs in the drawing room hardly noticed their absence. They were too much interested.

"Oh, I think it's perfectly sweet," said Mrs. Brown, "just the loveliest doll I've seen in years. I must get one like it for Ulvina. Won't Clarisse be perfectly enchanted?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Jones, "and then she'll have all the fun of arranging the dresses. Children love that so much. Look! there are three little dresses with the doll, aren't they cute? All cut out and ready to stitch together."

"Oh, how perfectly lovely," exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "I think the mauve one would suit the doll best—don't you?—with such golden hair—only don't you think it would make it much nicer to turn back the collar, so, and to put a little band—so?"

"*What* a good idea!" said Mrs. Jones. "Do let's try it. Just wait, I'll get a needle in a minute. I'll tell Clarisse that Santa Claus sewed it himself. The child believes in Santa Claus absolutely."

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And half an hour later Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Brown were so busy stitching dolls' clothes that they could not hear the roaring of the little train up and down the dining table, and had no idea what the four children were doing.

Nor did the children miss their mothers.

"Dandy, aren't they?" Edwin Jones was saying to little Willie Brown, as they sat in Edwin's bedroom. "A hundred in a box, with

cork tips, and see, an amber mouthpiece that fits into a little case at the side. Good present for dad, eh?"

"Fine!" said Willie, appreciatively, "I'm giving father cigars."

"I know, I thought of cigars too. Men always like cigars and cigarettes. You can't go wrong on them. Say, would you like to try one or two of these cigarettes? We can take them from the bottom. You'll like them, they're Russian,—away ahead of Egyptian."

"Thanks," answered Willie. "I'd like one immensely. I only started smoking last spring—on my twelfth birthday. I think a feller's a fool to begin smoking cigarettes too soon, don't you? It stunts him. I waited till I was twelve."

"Me too," said Edwin, as they lighted their cigarettes. "In fact, I wouldn't buy them now if it weren't for dad. I simply *had* to give him something from Santa Claus. He believes in Santa Claus absolutely, you know."

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And while this was going on, Clarisse was showing little Ulvina the absolutely lovely little bridge set that she got for her mother. "Aren't these markers perfectly charming?" said Ulvina, "and don't you love this little Dutch design—or is it Flemish, darling?"

"Dutch," said Clarisse. "Isn't it quaint? And aren't these the dearest little things—for putting the money in when you play. I needn't have got them with it—they'd have sold the rest separately—but I think it's too utterly slow playing without money, don't you?"

"Oh, abominable," shuddered Ulvina, "but your mamma never plays for money, does she?"

"Mamma! Oh, gracious, no. Mamma's far too slow for that. But I shall tell her that Santa Claus insisted on putting in the little money boxes."

"I suppose she believes in Santa Claus, just as my Mamma does."

"Oh, absolutely," said Clarisse, and added, "What if we play a little game! With a double dummy, the French way, or Norwegian Skat, if you like. That only needs two."

"All right," agreed Ulvina, and in a few minutes they were deep in a game of cards with a little pile of pocket money beside them.

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About half an hour later, all the members of the two families were down again in the drawing room. But of course nobody said anything about the presents. In any case they were all too busy looking at the beautiful big Bible, with maps in it, that the Joneses had bought to give to grandfather. They all agreed that with the help of it, Grandfather could hunt up any place in Palestine in a moment, day or night.

But upstairs, away upstairs in a sitting room of his own, Grandfather Jones was looking with an affectionate eye at the presents that stood beside him. There was a beautiful whiskey decanter, with silver filigree outside (and whiskey inside) for Jones, and for the little boy a big nickel-plated Jew's harp.

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Later on, far in the night, the person, or the influence, or whatever it is called Santa Claus, took all the presents and placed them in the people's stockings.

And, being blind as he always has been, he gave the wrong things to the wrong people—in fact, he gave them just as indicated above.

But the next day, in the course of Christmas morning, the situation straightened itself out, just as it always does.

Indeed, by ten o'clock, Brown and Jones were playing with the train, and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jones were making dolls' clothes, and the boys were smoking cigarettes, and Clarisse and Ulvina were playing cards for their pocket money.

And upstairs—away up—Grandfather was drinking whiskey and playing the Jew's harp.

And so Christmas, just as it always does, turned out all right after all.

## THIS STRENUOUS AGE

Something is happening, I regret to find, to the world in which we used to live. The poor old thing is being "speeded up." There is "efficiency" in the air. Offices open at eight o'clock. Millionaires lunch on a baked apple. Bankers eat practically nothing. A college president has declared that there are more foot pounds of energy in a glass of peptonized milk than in—something else, I forget what. All this is very fine. Yet somehow I feel out of it.

My friends are failing me. They won't sit up after midnight. They have taken to sleeping out of doors, on porches and pergolas. Some, I understand, merely roost on plain wooden bars. They rise early. They take deep breathing. They bathe in ice water. They are no good.

This change, I am sure, is excellent. It is, I am certain, just as it ought to be. I am merely saying, quietly and humbly, that I am not in it. I am being left behind. Take, for example, the case of alcohol. That, at least, is what it is called now. There were days when we called it Bourbon whiskey and Tom Gin, and when the very name of it breathed romance. That time is past.

The poor stuff is now called alcohol, and none so low that he has a good word for it. Quite right, I am certain. I don't defend it. Alcohol, they are saying to-day, if taken in sufficient quantities, tears all the outer coating off the diaphragm. It leaves the epigastric tissue, so I am informed, a useless wreck.

This I don't deny. It gets, they tell me, into the brain. I don't dispute it. It turns the prosencephalon into mere punk. I know it. I've felt it doing it. They tell me—and I believe it—that after even one glass of alcohol, or shall we say Scotch whiskey and soda, a man's working power is lowered by twenty per cent. This is a dreadful thing. After three glasses, so it is held, his capacity for sustained rigid thought is cut in two. And after about six glasses the man's working power is reduced by at least a hundred per cent. He merely

sits there—in his armchair, at his club, let us say, with all power, even all *desire* to work gone out of him, not thinking rigidly, not sustaining his thought, a mere shapeless chunk of geniality, half hidden in the blue smoke of his cigar.

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Very dreadful, not a doubt. Alcohol is doomed; it is going; it is gone. Yet when I think of a hot Scotch on a winter evening, or a Tom Collins on a summer morning, or a gin rickey beside a tennis court, or a stein of beer on a bench beside a bowling green—I wish somehow that we could prohibit the use of alcohol and merely drink beer and whiskey and gin as we used to. But these things, it appears, interfere with work. They have got to go.

But turn to the broader and simpler question of WORK itself. In my time one hated it. It was viewed as the natural enemy of man. Now the world has fallen in love with it. My friends, I find, take their deep breathing and their porch sleeping because it makes them work better. They go for a week's vacation in Virginia not for its own sake, but because they say they can work better when they get back. I know a man who wears very loose boots because he can work better in them: and another who wears only soft shirts because he can work better in a soft shirt. There are plenty of men now who would wear dog-harness if they thought they could work more in it. I know another man who walks away out into the country every Sunday: not that he likes the country: he wouldn't recognize a bumblebee if he saw it: but he claims that if he walks on Sunday his head is as clear as a bell for work on Monday.

Against work itself, I say nothing. But I sometimes wonder if I stand alone in this thing. Am I the *only* person left who hates it?

Nor is work all. Take food. I admit, here and now, that the lunch I like best—I mean for an ordinary plain lunch, not a party—is a beefsteak about one foot square and two inches thick. Can I work on it? No, I can't, but I can work in spite of it. That is as much as one used to ask, twenty-five years ago.

Yet now I find that all my friends boast ostentatiously about the meagre lunch they eat. One tells me that he finds a glass of milk and a prune is quite as much as he cares to take. Another says that a dry biscuit and a glass of water is all that his brain will stand. One lunches on the white of an egg. Another eats merely the yolk. I have only two friends left who can eat a whole egg at a time.

I understand that the fear of these men is that if they eat more than an egg or a biscuit, they will feel heavy after lunch. Why they object to feeling heavy, I do not know. Personally, I enjoy it. I like nothing better than to sit round after a heavy lunch with half a dozen heavy friends, smoking heavy cigars. I am well aware that that is wicked. I merely confess the fact. I do not palliate it.

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Nor is food all, nor drink, nor work, nor open air. There has spread abroad along with the so-called physical efficiency a perfect passion for *information*. Somehow if a man's stomach is empty and his head clear as a bell, and if he won't drink and won't smoke, he reaches out for information. He wants facts. He reads the newspapers all through, instead of only reading the headings. He clamours for articles filled with statistics about illiteracy and alien immigration and the number of battleships in the Japanese navy.

I know quite a lot of men who have actually bought the new Encyclopædia Britannica. What is more, they *read* the thing. They sit in their apartments at night with a glass of water at their elbow reading the encyclopædia. They say that it is literally filled with facts. Other men spend their time reading the Statistical Abstract of the United States (they say the figures in it are great) and the Acts of Congress, and the list of Presidents since Washington (or was it Washington?).

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Spending their evenings thus, and topping it off with a cold baked apple, and sleeping out in the snow, they go to work in the morning, so they tell me, with a positive sense of exhilaration. I



have no doubt that they do. But for me, I confess that once and for all I am out of it. I am left behind.

Add to it all such rising dangers as total prohibition, and the female franchise, the daylight saving, and eugenic marriage, together with proportional representation, the initiative and the referendum, and the duty of the citizen to take an intelligent interest in politics—and I admit that I shall not be sorry to go away from here.

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But before I *do* go, I have one hope. I understand that down in Hayti things are very different. Bull fights, cock fights, dog fights, are openly permitted. Business never begins till eleven in the morning. Everybody sleeps after lunch, and the bars remain open all night. Marriage is but a casual relation. In fact, the general condition of morality, so they tell me, is lower in Hayti than it has been anywhere since the time of Nero. Me for Hayti.

## IN DRY TORONTO

### *A Local Study of a Universal Topic*

NOTE—Our readers—our numerous readers—who live in Equatorial Africa, may read this under the title "In Dry Timbuctoo"; those who live in Central America will kindly call it "In Dry Tehuantepec."

It may have been, for aught I know, the change from a wet to a dry atmosphere. I am told that, biologically, such things profoundly affect the human system.

At any rate I found it impossible that night—I was on the train from Montreal to Toronto—to fall asleep.

A peculiar wakefulness seemed to have seized upon me, which appeared, moreover, to afflict the other passengers as well. In the darkness of the car I could distinctly hear them groaning at intervals.

"Are they ill?" I asked, through the curtains, of the porter as he passed.

"No, sir," he said, "they're not ill. Those is the Toronto passengers."

"All in this car?" I asked.

"All except that gen'lman you may have heard singing in the smoking compartment. He's booked through to Chicago."

But, as is usual in such cases, sleep came at last with unusual heaviness. I seemed obliterated from the world till, all of a sudden, I found myself, as it were, up and dressed and seated in the observation car at the back of the train, awaiting my arrival.

"Is this Toronto?" I asked of the Pullman conductor, as I peered through the window of the car.

The conductor rubbed the pane with his finger and looked out. "I think so," he said.

"Do we stop here?" I asked.

"I think we do this morning," he answered. "I think I heard the conductor say that they have a lot of milk cans to put off here this morning. I'll just go and find out, sir."

"Stop here!" broke in an irascible-looking gentleman in a grey tweed suit who was sitting in the next chair to mine. "Do they *stop* here? I should say they did indeed. Don't you know," he added, turning to the Pullman conductor, "that any train is *compelled* to stop here. There's a by-law, a municipal by-law of the City of Toronto, *compelling* every train to stop?"

"I didn't know it," said the conductor humbly.

"Do you mean to say," continued the irascible gentleman, "that you have never read the by-laws of the City of Toronto?"

"No, sir," said the conductor.

"The ignorance of these fellows," said the man in grey tweed, swinging his chair round again towards me. "We ought to have a by-law to compel them to read the by-laws. I must start an agitation for it at once." Here he took out a little red note book and wrote something in it, murmuring—"We need a new agitation anyway."

Presently he shut the book up with a snap. I noticed that there was a sort of peculiar alacrity in everything he did.

"You, sir," he said, "have, of course, read our municipal by-laws?"

"Oh, yes," I answered. "Splendid, aren't they? They read like a romance."

"You are most flattering to our city," said the irascible gentleman with a bow. "Yet you, sir, I take it, are not from Toronto."

"No," I answered, as humbly as I could, "I'm from Montreal."

"Ah!" said the gentleman, as he sat back and took a thorough look at me. "From Montreal? Are you drunk?"

"No," I replied, "I don't think so."

"But you are *suffering* for a drink," said my new acquaintance eagerly. "You need it, eh? You feel already a kind of craving, eh, what?"

"No," I answered. "The fact is it's rather early in the morning—"

"Quite so," broke in the irascible gentleman, "but I understand that in Montreal all the saloons are open at seven, and even at that hour are crowded, sir, crowded."

I shook my head. "I think that has been exaggerated," I said. "In fact, we always try to avoid crowding and jostling as far as possible. It is generally understood, as a matter of politeness, that the first place in the line is given to the clergy, the Board of Trade, and the heads of the universities."

"Is it conceivable!" said the gentleman in grey. "One moment, please, till I make a note. 'All clergy (I think you said *all*, did you not?) drunk at seven in the morning.' Deplorable! But here we are at the Union Station—commodious, is it not? Justly admired, in fact, all over the known world. Observe"—he continued as we alighted from the train and made our way into the station—"the upstairs and the downstairs, connected by flights of stairs—quite unique and most convenient—if you don't meet your friends downstairs all you have to do is to look upstairs. If they are not there, you simply come down again. But stop, you are going to walk up the street? I'll go with you."

At the outer door of the station—just as I had remembered it—stood a group of hotel bus-men and porters.

But how changed!

They were like men blasted by a great sorrow. One, with his back turned, was leaning against a post, his head buried on his arm.

"Prince George Hotel," he groaned at intervals—"Prince George Hotel."

Another was bending over a little handrail, his head sunk, his arms almost trailing to the ground.

"King Edward," he sobbed—"King Edward."

A third, seated on a stool, looked feebly up, with tears visible in his eyes.

"Walker House," he moaned. "First Class accommodation for—" Then he broke down and cried.

"Take this handbag," I said to one of the men, "to the Prince George."

The man ceased his groaning for a moment and turned to me with something like passion.

"Why do you come to *us*?" he protested. "Why not go to one of the others. Go to *him*," he added, as he stirred with his foot a miserable being who lay huddled on the ground and murmured at intervals, "Queen's! Queen's Hotel."

But my new friend, who stood at my elbow, came to my rescue.

"Take his bag," he said. "You've got to. You know the by-law. Take it or I'll call a policeman. You know *me*. My name's Narrowpath. I'm on the council."

The man touched his hat and took the bag with a murmured apology.

"Come along," said my companion, whom I now perceived to be a person of dignity and civic importance. "I'll walk up with you, and show you the city as we go."

We had hardly got well upon the street before I realized the enormous change that total prohibition had effected. Everywhere were the bright smiling faces of working people, laughing and

singing at their tasks, and, early though it was, cracking jokes and asking one another riddles as they worked.

I noticed one man, evidently a city employé, in a rough white suit, busily cleaning the street with a broom and singing to himself—

*"How does the little busy bee improve the shining hour."*

Another employé, who was handling a little hose was singing—"*Little drops of water, little grains of sand, Tra, la, la, la, la, la, Prohibition's grand.*"

"Why do they sing?" I asked. "Are they crazy?"

"Sing?" said Mr. Narrowpath. "They can't help it. They haven't had a drink of whiskey for four months."

A coal cart went by with a driver, no longer grimy and smudged, but neatly dressed with a high white collar and a white silk tie.

My companion pointed at him as he passed. "Hasn't had a glass of beer for four months," he said. "Notice the difference. That man's work is now a pleasure to him. He used to spend all his evenings sitting round in the back parlours of the saloons beside the stove. Now what do you think he does?"

"I have no idea."

"Loads up his cart with coal and goes for a drive—out in the country. Ah, sir, you who live still under the curse of the whiskey traffic, little know what a pleasure work itself becomes when drink and all that goes with it is eliminated. Do you see that man, on the other side of the street, with the tool bag?"

"Yes," I said, "a plumber, is he not?"

"Exactly, a plumber—used to drink heavily—couldn't keep a job more than a week. Now, you can't drag him from his work—came to my house to fix a pipe under the kitchen sink—wouldn't quit at six o'clock—got in under the sink and begged to be allowed to stay—said he hated to go home. We had to drag him out with a rope. But here we are at your hotel."

We entered.

But how changed the place seemed.

Our feet echoed on the flagstones of the deserted rotunda.

At the office desk sat a clerk, silent and melancholy, reading the Bible. He put a marker in the book and closed it, murmuring "Leviticus Two."

Then he turned to us.

"Can I have a room," I asked, "on the first floor?"

A tear welled up into the clerk's eye.

"You can have the whole first floor," he said, and he added, with a half sob, "and the second, too, if you like."

I could not help contrasting his manner with what it was in the old days, when the mere mention of a room used to throw him into a fit of passion, and when he used to tell me that I could have a cot on the roof till Tuesday, and after that, perhaps, a bed in the stable.

Things had changed indeed.

"Can I get breakfast in the grill room?" I inquired of the melancholy clerk.

He shook his head sadly.

"There is no grill room," he answered. "What would you like?"

"Oh, some sort of eggs," I said, "and—"

The clerk reached down below his desk and handed me a hard-boiled egg with the shell off.

"Here's your egg," he said, "and there's ice water there at the end of the desk."

He sat back in his chair and went on reading.

"You don't understand," said Mr. Narrowpath, who still stood at my elbow. "All that elaborate grill room breakfast business was

just a mere relic of the drinking days—sheer waste of time and loss of efficiency. Go on and eat your egg. Eaten it? Now, don't you feel efficient? What more do you want? Comfort, you say? My dear sir! more men have been ruined by comfort—Great heavens, comfort! The most dangerous, deadly drug that ever undermined the human race. But, here, drink your water. Now you're ready to go and do your business, if you have any."

"But," I protested, "it's still only half-past seven in the morning—no offices will be open—"

"Open!" exclaimed Mr. Narrowpath. "Why! they all open at daybreak now."

I had, it is true, a certain amount of business before me, though of no very intricate or elaborate kind—a few simple arrangements with the head of a publishing house such as it falls to my lot to make every now and then. Yet in the old and unregenerate days it used to take all day to do it: the wicked thing that we used to call a comfortable breakfast in the hotel grill room somehow carried one on to about ten o'clock in the morning. Breakfast brought with it the need of a cigar for digestion's sake and with that, for very restfulness, a certain perusal of the *Toronto Globe*, properly corrected and rectified by a look through the *Toronto Mail*. After that it had been my practice to stroll along to my publishers' office at about eleven-thirty, transact my business, over a cigar, with the genial gentleman at the head of it, and then accept his invitation to lunch, with the feeling that a man who has put in a hard and strenuous morning's work is entitled to a few hours of relaxation.

I am inclined to think that in those reprehensible bygone times, many other people did their business in this same way.

"I don't think," I said to Mr. Narrowpath musingly, "that my publisher will be up as early as this. He's a comfortable sort of man."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Narrowpath. "Not at work at half-past seven! In Toronto! The thing's absurd. Where is the office? Richmond



Street? Come along, I'll go with you. I've always a great liking for attending to other people's business."

"I see you have," I said.

"It's our way here," said Mr. Narrowpath with a wave of his hand. "Every man's business, as we see it, is everybody else's business. Come along, you'll be surprised how quickly your business will be done."

Mr. Narrowpath was right.

My publishers' office, as we entered it, seemed a changed place. Activity and efficiency was stamped all over it. My good friend the publisher was not only there, but there with his coat off, inordinately busy, bawling orders (evidently meant for a printing room) through a speaking tube. "Yes," he was shouting, "put WHISKEY in black letter capitals, old English, double size, set it up to look attractive, with the legend MADE IN TORONTO in long clear type underneath—

"Excuse me," he said, as he broke off for a moment. "We've a lot of stuff going through the press this morning—a big distillery catalogue that we are rushing through. We're doing all we can, Mr. Narrowpath," he continued, speaking with the deference due to a member of the City Council, "to boom Toronto as a Whiskey Centre."

"Quite right, quite right!" said my companion, rubbing his hands.

"And now, sir," added the publisher, speaking with rapidity, "your contract is all here—only needs signing—I won't keep you more than a moment—write your name here—Miss Sniggins will you please witness this so help you God how's everything in Montreal good morning."

"Pretty quick, wasn't it?" said Mr. Narrowpath, as we stood in the street again.

"Wonderful!" I said, feeling almost dazed. "Why, I shall be able to catch the morning train back again to Montreal—"

"Precisely. Just what everybody finds. Business done in no time. Men who used to spend whole days here, clear out now in fifteen minutes. I knew a man whose business efficiency has so increased under our new régime that he says he wouldn't spend more than five minutes in Toronto if he were paid to."

"But what is this?" I asked as we were brought to a pause in our walk at a street crossing by a great block of vehicles. "What are all these drays? Surely, those look like barrels of whiskey!"

"So they are," said Mr. Narrowpath, proudly. "*Export* whiskey. Fine sight, isn't it?—must be what?—twenty—twenty-five—loads of it. This place, sir, mark my words, is going to prove, with its new energy and enterprise, one of the greatest seats of the distillery business, in fact, *the* whiskey capital of the North—"

"But I thought," I interrupted, much puzzled, "that whiskey was prohibited here since last September?"

"Export whiskey—*export*, my dear sir," corrected Mr. Narrowpath. "We don't interfere, we have never, so far as I know, proposed to interfere with any man's right to make and export whiskey. That, sir, is a plain matter of business; morality doesn't enter into it."

"I see," I answered. "But will you please tell me what is the meaning of this other crowd of drays coming in the opposite direction? Surely, those are beer barrels, are they not?"

"In a sense they are," admitted Mr. Narrowpath. "That is, they are *import* beer. It comes in from some other province. It was, I imagine, made in this city (our breweries, sir, are second to none), but the sin of *selling* it"—here Mr. Narrowpath raised his hat from his head and stood for a moment in a reverential attitude—"rests on the heads of others."

The press of vehicles had now thinned out and we moved on, my guide still explaining in some detail the distinction between business principles and moral principles, between whiskey as a

curse and whiskey as a source of profit, which I found myself unable to comprehend.

At length I ventured to interrupt.

"Yet it seems almost a pity," I said, "that with all this beer and whiskey around an unregenerate sinner like myself should be prohibited from getting a drink."

"A drink!" exclaimed Mr. Narrowpath. "Well, I should say so. Come right in here. You can have anything you want."

We stepped through a street door into a large, long room.

"Why!" I exclaimed in surprise; "this is a bar!"

"Nonsense!" said my friend. "The *bar* in this province is forbidden. We've done with the foul thing, forever. This is an Import Shipping Company's Delivery Office."

"But this long counter?"

"It's not a counter, it's a desk."

"And that bar-tender in his white jacket?"

"Tut! Tut! He's not a bar-tender. He's an Import Goods Delivery Clerk."

"What'll you have, gentlemen?" said the Import Clerk, polishing a glass as he spoke.

"Two whiskey and sodas," said my friend. "Long ones."

The Import Clerk mixed the drinks and set them on the desk.

I was about to take one, but he interrupted. "One minute, sir," he said.

Then he took up a desk telephone that stood beside him and I heard him calling up Montreal. "Hullo, Montreal! Is that Montreal? Well, say, I've just received an offer here for two whiskey and sodas at sixty cents, shall I close with it? All right, gentlemen, Montreal has effected the sale. There you are."

"Dreadful, isn't it?" said Mr. Narrowpath. "The sunken, depraved condition of your City of Montreal; actually *selling* whiskey. Deplorable!" and with that he buried his face in the bubbles of the whiskey and soda.

"Mr. Narrowpath," I said, "would you mind telling me something? I fear I am a little confused, after what I have seen here, as to what your new legislation has been. You have *not* then, I understand, prohibited the making of whiskey?"

"Oh, no, we see no harm in that."

"Nor the sale of it?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Narrowpath, "not if sold *properly*."

"Nor the drinking of it?"

"Oh, no, that least of all. We attach no harm whatever, under our law, to the mere drinking of whiskey."

"Would you tell me then," I asked, "since you have not forbidden the making, nor the selling, nor the buying, nor the drinking of whiskey—just what it is that you have prohibited? What is the difference between Montreal and Toronto?"

Mr. Narrowpath put down his glass on the "desk" in front of him. He gazed at me with open-mouthed astonishment.

"Toronto?" he gasped. "Montreal and Toronto! The difference between Montreal and Toronto—my dear sir—Toronto—Toronto—"

I stood waiting for him to explain. But as I did so I seemed to become aware that a voice—not Mr. Narrowpath's, but a voice close at my ear, was repeating "Toronto—Toronto—Toronto—"

I sat up with a start—still in my berth in the Pullman car—with the voice of the porter calling through the curtains "Toronto—Toronto."

So! It had only been a dream. I pulled up the blind and looked out of the window and there was the good old city, with the bright sun sparkling on its church spires and on the bay spread out at its feet. It looked quite unchanged—just the same pleasant old place, as cheerful, as self-conceited, as kindly, as hospitable, as quarrelsome, as wholesome, as moral, as loyal and as disagreeable as ever.

"Porter," I said, "is it true that there is prohibition here now?" The Porter shook his head. "I ain't heard of it," he said.

## LETTERS TO A PROHIBITIONIST

MY DEAR SIR:

Before I begin this letter let me explain that, of course, I am myself a believer in prohibition. I think that water, especially clear, cold water—I don't care for muddy water—is a beautiful drink. I had a glass of it the other day, and it seemed wonderfully limpid and transparent—almost like gin.

Moreover, in the town in which I live, my friends and I have seen prohibition in actual operation, and we are all enthusiastic over it. Crime is lessening every day. Murder is becoming almost unknown. Not a single one of my friends was murdered all last summer. The sale of boys' boots had increased a hundred per cent. Some of the boys here have no less than eight or ten pairs. Bank deposits are rising. Credit is expanding, and work is almost ceasing.

These are very gratifying things, and when we look back upon the old days, my friends and I wonder how we could have led the life that we did. I remember that very often in the middle of the morning we used deliberately to go out from our business and drink a glass of lager beer. Why we did this I cannot now conceive. Beer, sir, as you yourself are aware contains neither proteids nor albumen. It has less nitrogen in it than common starch, and is not nearly so rich in effervescent hydrogen as ordinary baking soda: in short, its food value is not to be compared with tan bark or with common mucilage. Nowadays, if I find that I flag at all in morning work, I take a little nip of baking soda and a couple of licks of mucilage and in a moment I am willing and anxious to work again.

I remember, too, that in the old times in the winter evenings we used to sit around the fire in one another's houses smoking and drinking hot toddy. No doubt you remember the awful stuff. We generally used to make ours with Bourbon whiskey and hot water, with just a dash of rum, with half a dozen lumps of white sugar

in it, and with nutmeg powdered over the top. I think we used to put a curled slice of lemon peel into the rotten stuff and then served it in a tall tumbler with a long spoon in it. We used to sit and sup this beastly mixture all evening and carry on a perfectly aimless conversation with no selected subject of discussion, and with absolutely no attempt to improve our minds at all.

As things are now I have entirely cut all such idle acquaintanceship and such waste of time. I like to come home after my work and, after drinking four or five glasses of water, spend the evening with some good book of statistics, improving myself. I am then ready to converse, should an occasion arise, in such a way as to put conversation where it ought to be.

You will, therefore, readily understand that all my friends and I are enthusiastic over prohibition. If you were to ask us to go back to things as they were (but please do not do so), we should vote against it by a majority of easily two hundred per cent. It is on this account, with all the more confidence, that I am able to draw your attention to one or two points, in themselves very small things, in which we think that the present régime might be amended.

The first of these is the mere percentage, as it is commonly called, of the beer that is permitted to be sold. This is evidently a matter of very secondary concern and one on which no one would wish to dogmatize. But my friends and I feel that this percentage might profitably be placed at about, say, in rough numbers—twenty per cent. We should feel that at twenty per cent we were getting a more adequate return upon the money expended. At the same time we lay no great stress on the particular figure itself. Twenty, thirty, or possibly still better, forty per cent would prove quite acceptable to us.

Another point is the abolition of the bar. Here we are all agreed. The bar is done with forever. We never want to see it back. But we do feel that if we could have some quiet place where one could purchase beverages of the kind I have described, some plain room with tables and a seat or two and possibly a free lunch counter and

a weighing machine, we should feel better able to carry out the general purport of the prohibition idea. There are several of my friends who have not been weighed since the first of July of 1919, and are suffering grave inconvenience thereby.

I do not suggest that such a place should be allowed to operate after the old unrestrained fashion of the bars that kept open practically all night. It should be placed under sharp regulation. My friends and I feel that any such place should be rigidly closed at two o'clock A.M. with perhaps special facilities for access at a later hour to the weighing machine and the lunch counter. These, however, are mere details of organization which, as we see it, do not in the least impair the general principle.

As to whiskey and the stronger spirits, we feel that there is not a single word to be said for them. My friends and I are convinced that the use of these things as a beverage is deleterious to the last degree. We unite in declaring that they should be regarded as medicine and as medicine only. Two or three small incidents have occurred among us lately which have corroborated our opinion upon this point. Not very long ago one of my friends was taken, just outside of my door, with a very sharp pain, or stitch, in his side. For the moment I was at a loss what to do when it occurred to me that possibly a medicinal application of whiskey might prove effective. I took him into my house and administered it at once and was delighted to observe the colour come back to his cheeks. It was some hours before I was enabled to remove him: but I finally ventured to put him into a hack, crosswise on the two seats, and the poor fellow was, I believe, safely placed against his own door by the hackman without further mishap.

Such incidents as this have convinced us that the sale of whiskey should be rigidly restricted to those who need it at the time when they need it, and in the quantity that they happen to need.

These suggestions, my dear sir, are intended merely as suggestions, as mere adumbrations of possible modifications of the present system. We understand that there is some talk of



reconsidering and redrafting the eighteenth amendment to the constitution. If this is so, I think it would be well to embody these suggestions in the new amendment. I am certain that upon these terms the Supreme Court of the United States would have no trouble with its interpretation.

## THE DRY BANQUET

I had once a good friend, now gone from this scene, whose custom it was, on any and each occasion when a topic of importance came up, to say, "Well! let us start a national movement about it."

As I remember it, he never got very far with any of them. He generally started them at our club at lunch, which is always the brightest hour of the social reformer. "Let us organize ourselves, into an informal committee," he would say. And he organized us. It was done, as I recall it, merely by pushing the bell and ordering another bottle of claret.

But after lunch my friend always fell asleep, and somehow, by the time he woke, the national movement had vanished. He is gone now where there are no national movements and no organization. But I have served, I hope with distinction, on so great a number of his informal committees that something of the habit clings to me.

I have a national movement that I want to organize now. And I know no better way of doing it than through the pages of this book. I want to gather together into one single compact body all my fellow sufferers of the dry banquet, and, when I have us together, I want to hurl us with irresistible impact at the walls of society. Of our power there can be no doubt. I believe that if we were extended in a single line we would reach nearly to Havana. Unfortunately, not quite.

But observe that I am not saying a word, here and now, against prohibition. I am only talking of the obvious insanity, under prohibition, of keeping up the peculiar institution called a BANQUET. Even the most ardent prohibitionist will admit that the original meaning of a Banquet was a gathering for the sake of eating and drinking. It may have been wrong. But that was the idea. And what is more, they didn't drink water.

At Belshazzar's Feast, when Belshazzar arose and said, "Gentlemen, I want you to rise and fill your glasses and drink to

the health of a man whom this city of Babylon delights to honour, a man whom we have the privilege of entertaining to-night, Mr. Nebuchadnezzar,"—when he said that, the Babylonians did not fill up their glasses with water, or lift up their coffee cups and make a pretence of drinking from the cold dregs of a *demi-tasse*.

If you remove the drinking of toasts from a banquet, you are acting the play of Hamlet without Hamlet. For the eating part of it is at best only Ophelia.

If there is anything more conspicuously silly than a group of two or three hundred men being invited to "fill up their glasses" and drink pint after pint of water to the health of their fellow sufferer, I want to see it. If you add to this the fact that heavy eating has already brought them to the verge of somnolence, that their native spirits are buried under four pounds of beefsteak, some idea may be formed of the ironic misery of a dry "banquet."

Speaking in a personal sense, I do not want to seem ungrateful for the hospitality that I have received. But I have attended four dry banquets in the last four weeks, and am suffering still. At the latest of them I drank a pint of water to the health of the President of the United States. I drank, as a loyal British subject, nearly a quart for King George. I drank half a pint to the Supreme Court of the United States; one pint to our great universities; two each to our larger railroads, and one gill to the League of Nations. It is, speaking frankly, just a little too much.

Even more dreadful to contemplate is the awful quantity of food devoured, in sheer ennui, at the dry banquet. With the absence of wine, the lightness of the thing is lost. There is nothing to do but eat. I have seen a man sit and eat celery, at the opening of a dry banquet, for twenty minutes from sheer misery of soul. I have watched another eat forty-two olives one after the other. I have even noticed men pick the table decorations off the cloth and eat them; and last week I saw a man eat a flag without observing what it was. When the different meats are brought, the guests go on

eating automatically and undiscerningly; they only stop when there is no more.

Last month at one single sitting we each ate:

- 10 olives
- 2 yards of celery
- 1 half a bucket of soup
- 12 sq. inches Filet de Sole Mornay
- 16 ozs. avoirdup. Virginia Ham
- 16 " " Beef au J.
- 108 Cubic Centimetres Soufflé

and after that we lost track, and sat among a welter of French pastry, cheese, and fruit, scarcely conscious. And right at the end I saw my left-hand neighbour reach out and eat a radish. Some of us would have eaten nuts, but we had no strength to crack them.

And then, it is at this moment of the dry banquet that the toastmaster, merry fellow, rises with his glass of water and starts up the oratory of the evening.

In the wicked old days, now amended constitutionally, the speeches were supposed to be gay. Laughter was the order of the evening. I am quite sure that, at Belshazzar's Feast, Mr. Nebuchadnezzar had no sooner got upon his feet than the whole room was filled with a pleasant expectancy. "Well, gentlemen," he would say, "I want to tell you that I am glad to be here!" That was all that was needed. The company burst into a roar of merriment. There was, or was supposed to be, something so droll in the way in which Mr. Nebuchadnezzar got up, something so inimitable in the way in which he looked about him round the room, that the impulse to laughter was irresistible. And when Mr. Nebuchadnezzar went on to say: "I want to tell you, gentlemen, a little story about a commercial traveller who was going from Babylon to Damascus," the room became a mere uproar of laughter and applause.

But now! *O Tempora, O Mores!* The after-dinner speeches have changed into after-dinner lectures. Nebuchadnezzar rises in his place, serious, lantern-jawed and dull. Who ever could have thought the fellow amusing! He faces an audience, heavy, somnolent, bored to death already, hating everything and everybody, and only wanting to be gone.

Then he makes a speech on the Babylonian Canal System. There are reporters sitting all around him writing it down on tablets of mud. He gives all the statistics of the mileage of the Babylonian canals, he goes into the technique of the siltage of the mud, he touches lightly on the new mud shovel, he assures the auditors that we can now lift fifty tons of mud per hour. You can almost feel him lifting it as he talks. And the next day the Babylonian papers record the gay gathering with a great capital heading. FIFTY TONS OF MUD PER HOUR—enjoyable gathering at the Belshazzar Banquet.

This is what is going on about us every evening. And for some reason or other there has arisen a sort of conspiracy of silence in regard to it. There is such a decent tradition abroad among us about the acceptance of hospitality that no invited guest cares to refuse his invitation. He accepts. He goes. He stands, mournful and resigned, among the little group of the reception committee waiting for the banquet to begin. He walks like a dumb sheep into the banquet hall to the music of "Hail, Columbia!" He eats with due submission his four pounds of beefsteak. He endures the full mud-shovel of statistics that is dumped over him; and, still suffering, reaches at last the happy moment when he may wrap his fur-lined coat about him and step out into the night. Not even the immortal words of Bryant's "Thanatopsis" can present, to our minds, a deeper picture of the welcome of everlasting sleep.

If we must be prohibitionists, why not do the thing properly? If the wine is out, away with the Banquet. Let us do all things in order. Let us gather without food or drink and bring our knitting and our crochet work instead. Then, to the cheerful clicking of the busy

needles, let us hear with pleased attentiveness the proud statistics of our transportation system.

I have reason to know that there are others, thousands of others who suffer as I do. Some of them are so highly placed that to mention their names might crack the Constitution. One is an Ambassador, several are Governors of States, many, a great many, are Generals, and one a Prince. I can only hope that when the definite announcement of my New Movement is made they will get their knitting needles together and join in.

## IS PROHIBITION COMING TO ENGLAND?

In the United States and Canada the principal topic of polite conversation is now prohibition. At every dinner party the serving of the cocktails immediately introduces the subject: the rest of the dinner is enlivened throughout with the discussion of rum-runners, bootleggers, storage of liquor and the State constitution of New Jersey. Under this influence all social and conversational values are shifted and rearranged. A "scholarly" man no longer means a man who can talk well on literary subjects but a man who understands the Eighteenth Amendment and can explain the legal difference between implementing statutes such as the Volstead Act and the underlying state legislation. A "scientist" (invaluable in these conversations) is a man who can make clear the distinction between alcoholic percentages by bulk and by weight. And a "brilliant engineer" means a man who explains how to make home-brewed beer with a kick in it. Similarly, a "raconteur" means a man who has a fund of amusing stories about "bootleggers" and an "interesting traveller" means a man who has been to Havana and can explain how wet it is. Indeed, the whole conception of travel and of interest in foreign countries is now altered: as soon as any one mentions that he has been in a foreign country, all the company ask in one breath, "Is it dry?" The question "How is Samoa?" or "How is Turkey?" or "How is British Columbia?" no longer refers to the climate or natural resources: it means "Is the place dry?" When such a question is asked and the answer is "It's wet," there is a deep groan all around the table.

I understand that when the famous disarmament conference met at Washington just as the members were going to sit down at the table Monsieur Briand said to President Harding, "How dry is the United States, anyway?" And the whole assembly talked about it for half an hour. That was why the first newspaper bulletins merely said, "Conference exchanges credentials."

As a discoverer of England I therefore made it one of my chief cares to try to obtain accurate information of this topic. I was well aware that immediately on my return to Canada the first question I would be asked would be "Is England going dry?" I realized that in any report I might make to the National Geographical Society or to the Political Science Association, the members of these bodies, being scholars, would want accurate information about the price of whiskey, the percentage of alcohol, and the hours of opening and closing the saloons.

My first impression on the subject was, I must say, one of severe moral shock. Landing in England after spending the summer in Ontario, it seemed a terrible thing to see people openly drinking on an English train. On an Ontario train, as everybody knows, there is no way of taking a drink except by climbing up on the roof, lying flat on one's stomach, and taking a suck out of a flask. But in England in any dining car one actually sees a waiter approach a person dining and say, "Beer, sir, or wine?" This is done in broad daylight with no apparent sense of criminality or moral shame. Appalling though it sounds, bottled ale is openly sold on the trains at twenty-five cents a bottle and dry sherry at eighteen cents a glass.

When I first saw this I expected to see the waiter arrested on the spot. I looked around to see if there were any "spotters," detectives, or secret service men on the train. I anticipated that the train conductor would appear and throw the waiter off the car. But then I realized that I was in England and that in the British Isles they still tolerate the consumption of alcohol. Indeed, I doubt if they are even aware that they are "consuming alcohol." Their impression is that they are drinking beer.

At the beginning of my discussion I will therefore preface a few exact facts and statistics for the use of geographical societies, learned bodies and government commissions. The quantity of beer consumed in England in a given period is about 200,000,000 gallons. The life of a bottle of Scotch whiskey is seven seconds.



The number of public houses, or "pubs," in the English countryside is one to every half mile. The percentage of the working classes drinking beer is 125: the percentage of the class without work drinking beer is 200.

Statistics like these do not, however, give a final answer to the question, "Is prohibition coming to England?" They merely show that it is not there now. The question itself will be answered in as many different ways as there are different kinds of people. Any prohibitionist will tell you that the coming of prohibition to England is as certain as the coming eclipse of the sun. But this is always so. It is in human nature that people are impressed by the cause they work in. I once knew a minister of the Scotch Church who took a voyage round the world: he said that the thing that impressed him most was the growth of Presbyterianism in Japan. No doubt it did. When the Orillia lacrosse team took their trip to Australia, they said on their return that lacrosse was spreading all over the world. In the same way there is said to be a spread all over the world of Christian Science, proportional representation, militarism, peace sentiment, barbarism, altruism, psychoanalysis and death from wood alcohol. They are what are called world movements.

My own judgment in regard to prohibition in the British Isles is this: In Scotland, prohibition is not coming: if anything, it is going. In Ireland, prohibition will only be introduced when they have run out of other forms of trouble. But in England I think that prohibition could easily come unless the English people realize where they are drifting and turn back. They are in the early stage of the movement already.

Turning first to Scotland, there is no fear, I say, that prohibition will be adopted there: and this from the simple reason that the Scotch do not drink. I have elsewhere alluded to the extraordinary misapprehension that exists in regard to the Scotch people and their sense of humour. I find a similar popular error in regard to the use of whiskey by the Scotch. Because they manufacture

the best whiskey in the world, the Scotch, in popular fancy, are often thought to be addicted to the drinking of it. This is purely a delusion. During the whole of two or three pleasant weeks spent in lecturing in Scotland, I never on any occasion saw whiskey made use of *as a beverage*. I have seen people take it, of course, as a medicine, or as a precaution, or as a wise offset against a rather treacherous climate; but as a beverage, never.

The manner and circumstance of their offering whiskey to a stranger amply illustrates their point of view towards it. Thus at my first lecture in Glasgow where I was to appear before a large and fashionable audience, the chairman said to me in the committee room that he was afraid that there might be a draft on the platform. Here was a serious matter. For a lecturer who has to earn his living by his occupation, a draft on the platform is not a thing to be disregarded. It might kill him. Nor is it altogether safe for the chairman himself, a man already in middle life, to be exposed to a current of cold air. In this case, therefore, the chairman suggested that he thought it might be "prudent"—that was his word, "prudent"—if I should take a small drop of whiskey before encountering the draft. In return I told him that I could not think of his accompanying me to the platform unless he would let me insist on his taking a very reasonable precaution. Whiskey taken on these terms not only seems like a duty but it tastes better.

In the same way I find that in Scotland it is very often necessary to take something to drink on purely meteorological grounds. The weather simply cannot be trusted. A man might find that on "going out into the weather" he is overwhelmed by a heavy fog or an avalanche of snow or a driving storm of rain. In such a case a mere drop of whiskey might save his life. It would be folly not to take it. Again,—"coming in out of the weather" is a thing not to be trifled with. A person coming in unprepared and unprotected might be seized with *angina pectoris* or *appendicitis* and die upon the spot. No reasonable person would refuse the simple precaution of taking a small drop immediately after his entry.

I find that, classified altogether, there are seventeen reasons advanced in Scotland for taking whiskey. They run as follows: Reason one, because it is raining; Two, because it is not raining; Three, because you are just going out into the weather; Four, because you have just come in from the weather; Five,—no, I forget the ones that come after that. But I remember that reason number seventeen is "because it canna do ye any harm." On the whole, reason seventeen is the best.

Put in other words this means that the Scotch make use of whiskey with dignity and without shame: and they never call it alcohol.

In England the case is different. Already the English are showing the first signs that indicate the possible approach of prohibition. Already all over England there are weird regulations about the closing hours of the public houses. They open and close according to the varying regulations of the municipality. In some places they open at six in the morning, close down for an hour from nine till ten, open then till noon, shut for ten minutes, and so on; in some places they are open in the morning and closed in the evening; in other places they are open in the evening and closed in the morning. The ancient idea was that a wayside public house was a place of sustenance and comfort, a human need that might be wanted any hour. It was in the same class with the life boat or the emergency ambulance. Under the old common law the innkeeper must supply meat and drink at any hour. If he was asleep the traveller might wake him. And in those days meat and drink were regarded in the same light. Note how great the change is. In modern life in England there is nothing that you dare wake up a man for except gasoline. The mere fact that you need a drink is no longer held to entitle you to break his rest.

In London especially one feels the full force of the "closing" regulations. The bars open and shut at intervals like daisies blinking at the sun. And like the flowers at evening they close their petals with the darkness. In London they have already adopted the deadly phrases of the prohibitionist, such as "alcohol" and "liquor

traffic" and so on: and already the "sale of spirits" stops absolutely at about eleven o'clock at night.

This means that after theatre hours London is a "city of dreadful night." The people from the theatre scuttle to their homes. The lights are extinguished in the windows. The streets darken. Only a belated taxi still moves. At midnight the place is deserted. At 1 A.M., the lingering footfalls echo in the empty street. Here and there a restaurant in a fashionable street makes a poor pretence of keeping open for after-theatre suppers. Odd people, the shivering wrecks of theatre parties, are huddled here and there. A gloomy waiter lays a sardine on the table. The guests charge their glasses with Perrier Water, Lithia Water, Citrate of Magnesia, or Bromo Seltzer. They eat the sardine and vanish into the night. Not even Osh-kosh, Wisconsin, or Middlebury, Vermont, is quieter than is the night life of London. It may no doubt seem a wise thing to go to bed early. But it is a terrible thing to go to bed early by Act of Parliament.

All of which means that the people of England are not facing the prohibition question fairly and squarely. If they see no harm in "consuming alcohol" they ought to say so and let their code of regulations reflect the fact. But the "closing" and "regulating" and "squeezing" of the "liquor traffic," without any outspoken protest, means letting the whole case go by default. Under these circumstances an organized and active minority can always win and impose its will upon the crowd.

When I was in England I amused myself one day by writing an imaginary picture of what England will be like when the last stage is reached and London goes the way of New York and Chicago. I cast it in the form of a letter from an American prohibitionist in which he describes the final triumph of prohibition in England. With the permission of the reader I reproduce it here:

## THE ADVENT OF PROHIBITION IN ENGLAND

*As written in the correspondence of an American visitor*

How glad I am that I have lived to see this wonderful reform of prohibition at last accomplished in England. There is something so difficult about the British, so stolid, so hard to move.

We tried everything in the great campaign that we made, and for ever so long it didn't seem to work. We had processions, just as we did at home in America, with great banners carried round bearing the inscription: "Do you want to save the boy?" But these people looked on and said, "Boy? Boy? What boy?" Our workers were almost disheartened. "Oh, sir," said one of them, an ex-barkeeper from Oklahoma, "it does seem so hard that we have total prohibition in the States and here they can get all the drink they want." And the good fellow broke down and sobbed.

But at last it has come. After the most terrific efforts we managed to get this nation stampeded, and for more than a month now England has been dry. I wish you could have witnessed the scenes, just like what we saw at home in America, when it was known that the bill had passed. The members of the House of Lords all stood up on their seats and yelled, "Rah! Rah! Rah! Who's bone dry? We are!" And the brewers and innkeepers were emptying their barrels of beer into the Thames just as at St. Louis they emptied the beer into the Mississippi.

I can't tell you with what pleasure I watched a group of members of the Athenæum Club sitting on the bank of the Thames and opening bottles of champagne and pouring them into the river. "To think," said one of them to me, "that there was a time when I used to lap up a couple of quarts of this terrible stuff every evening." I got him to give me a few bottles as a souvenir, and I got some more souvenirs, whiskey and liqueurs, when the

members of the Beefsteak Club were emptying out their cellars into Green Street; so when you come over, I shall still be able, of course, to give you a drink.

We have, as I said, been bone dry only a month, and yet already we are getting the same splendid results as in America. All the big dinners are now as refined and as elevating and the dinner speeches as long and as informal as they are in New York or Toronto. The other night at a dinner at the White Friars Club I heard Sir Owen Seaman speaking, not in that light futile way that he used to have, but quite differently. He talked for over an hour and a half on the State ownership of the Chinese Railway System, and I almost fancied myself back in Boston.

And the working class too. It is just wonderful how prohibition has increased their efficiency. In the old days they used to drop their work the moment the hour struck. Now they simply refuse to do so. I noticed yesterday a foreman in charge of a building operation vainly trying to call the bricklayers down. "Come, come, gentlemen," he shouted, "I must insist on your stopping for the night." But they just went on laying bricks faster than ever.

Of course, as yet there are a few slight difficulties and deficiencies, just as there are with us in America. We have had the same trouble with wood-alcohol (they call it methylated spirit here), with the same deplorable results. On some days the list of deaths is very serious, and in some cases we are losing men we can hardly spare. A great many of our leading actors—in fact, most of them—are dead. And there has been a heavy loss, too, among the literary class and in the legal profession.

There was a very painful scene last week at the dinner of the Benchers of Gray's Inn. It seems that one of the chief justices had undertaken to make home brew for the

Benchers, just as the people do on our side of the water. He got one of the waiters to fetch him some hops and three raw potatoes, a packet of yeast and some boiling water. In the end, four of the Benchers were carried out dead. But they are going to give them a public funeral in the Abbey.

I regret to say that the death list in the Royal Navy is very heavy. Some of the best sailors are gone, and it is very difficult to keep admirals. But I have tried to explain to the people here that these are merely the things that one must expect, and that, with a little patience, they will have bone-dry admirals and bone-dry statesmen just as good as the wet ones. Even the clergy can be dried up with firmness and perseverance.

There was also a slight sensation here when the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought in his first appropriation for maintaining prohibition. From our point of view in America, it was modest enough. But these people are not used to it. The Chancellor merely asked for ten million pounds a month to begin on; he explained that his task was heavy; he has to police, not only the entire coast, but also the interior; for the Grampian Hills of Scotland alone he asked a million. There was a good deal of questioning in the House over these figures. The Chancellor was asked if he intended to keep a hired spy at every street corner in London. He answered, "No, only on every other street." He added also that every spy must wear a brass collar with his number.

I must admit further, and I am sorry to have to tell you this, that now we have prohibition it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a drink. In fact, sometimes, especially in the very early morning, it is most inconvenient and almost impossible. The public houses

being closed, it is necessary to go into a drug store—just as it is with us—and lean up against the counter and make a gurgling sound like apoplexy. One often sees these apoplexy cases lined up four deep.

But the people are finding substitutes, just as they do with us. There is a tremendous run on patent medicines, perfume, glue and nitric acid. It has been found that Shears' soap contains alcohol, and one sees people everywhere eating cakes of it. The upper classes have taken to chewing tobacco very considerably, and the use of opium in the House of Lords has very greatly increased.

But I don't want you to think that if you come over here to see me, your private life will be in any way impaired or curtailed. I am glad to say that I have plenty of rich connections whose cellars are very amply stocked. The Duke of Blank is said to have 5,000 cases of Scotch whiskey, and I have managed to get a card of introduction to his butler. In fact you will find that, just as with us in America, the benefit of prohibition is intended to fall on the poorer classes. There is no desire to interfere with the rich.



## WHY I REFUSE TO PLAY GOLF

I am old enough to remember very distinctly the first coming of the game of golf to the city where I live. It came in that insidious but forceful way that characterizes everything Scottish. It was similar to the spread of Scottish Banking, the Scottish Church, and Scotch whiskey.

The exact circumstances were these. One afternoon in April when the wind was on the new grass, three Scotsmen went out to a hill slope near the town. They carried with them three crooked sticks and a little ball. There was a firmness in their manner but nothing obviously criminal. They laid the ball down and began to beat it about on the grass. In fairness it must be admitted that they made no parade of the matter. They paid no attention to the few mystified people who watched them. At the end of about an hour they were seen to sit down under a briar bush: there they remained for some time: it was thought at the time that they were either praying or drinking whiskey. Opinion was divided. But the real truth was that they had formed themselves into a Golf Club.

This, I say, was on a Saturday. Had the city been well advised these men could have been arrested on the following Monday. A judicious application of the Vagrancy Laws or rather free interpretation of the Sedition Acts might have forestalled at the outset a grave national peril.

But nothing was done. Indeed at the moment little was thought of the matter, or, at any rate, little was manifested in the shape of public indignation or public protest. Even when six Scotsmen appeared on the ground the following Saturday, and twelve the week after, and twenty-four on the last Saturday in the month, few people, if any, realized the magnitude of what was happening. The news that a Golf Club had been formed in Montreal was presently printed quite openly, in the newspapers as if it were an ordinary event.

One must admit, even, that a very lively curiosity mixed with something approaching to envy began to surround the afternoon gatherings of the Scotsmen. There is something in the sweep of the wind over the April grass, something in the open space and the blue sky that conveys an insidious appeal to the lower side of a man's nature. It is difficult to sit indoors at one's desk and to know that other men are striding over the turf. Moreover the ingenious expedient of carrying out a ball and beating it round with sticks supplied a colour of activity and purpose that acted as a drug upon the conscience. Had it not been for this use of the sticks and the ball the players would have appeared as mere loafers. But the evident earnestness with which they followed their avocation robbed it of every appearance of idleness; and the public was entirely deceived as to its character.

In short, it was not long before the game began to exercise an evident effect upon those who at first had been idle spectators. They became anxious to join in. Here and there, by a very obvious and cunning piece of policy, they were invited to try their hand. The spectator then found to his surprise the peculiar difficulty of the game. He discovered that, simple though it looked, it was not possible for him to place the ball on the ground, take a drink of Scotch whiskey, and then hit it with the stick. He tried again and again but failed each time. The natural result was that he solicited membership in the Club, and reappeared on the following Saturday with a ball and stick of his own and with a flask of whiskey on his hip. The Saturday after that he turned up in a pair of knickerbocker trousers, a round tam o'shanter hat and a Cluny Macpherson tartan over his shoulder; after that, as far as any general utility to the community went, the man was lost.

I remember well, some eighteen months after the Club started, realizing how far already the movement had gone when I heard the head of our greatest bank accost the president of a railway, on St. James Street, with the words, "Hoot, mon! it's a braw morning the

day!" Up till that time language of the sort would have come under the criminal code.

I have since learned that this same kind of thing was going on all over the country just as it was in my own city. Men were appearing in the business streets in the Cluny Macpherson tartan. Some even had tall feathers stuck sideways in their tam o'shanter. At more than one public dinner the music of the bagpipes was not only tolerated but even applauded. On every Saturday and presently even on week days men were seen lifting long bags filled with crooked sticks onto the street cars.

In those days the public at large was still innocent and ignorant. We had not even heard the word "propaganda." Otherwise we should have seen under all this a dangerous organized movement for the spread of Presbyterianism and the sale of the poetry of Robert Burns.

The original Club of which I speak soon took further steps. They erected a kind of wooden structure on the ground where they played. It was a modest affair—merely two large rooms, one a sitting-room, with easy chairs, for talking about golf in, and the other a rest or silence room for thinking about golf in. The ground on which they played was supposedly public property. But any attempt at ejection was rendered out of the question by the fact that they had enrolled among their membership all the leaders of the bar and all the senior judges.

This last point, indeed, went strongly in their favour throughout. Even when they had left the modest building of which I speak and were spreading over the landscape, it was plain that the game of golf had insinuated itself most daringly into the structure of our legal institutions. A decision of the courts decided that the game of golf may be played on Sunday, not being a game within the view of the law, but being a form of moral effort. Another decision laid down the principle that a golf club need never close the bar, not being a bar within the legal meaning of the term, but a place of rest insomuch as the drinks sold are not drinks as known to the statute

but a form of recuperation. In the same way, the pay given to a boy attendant, or caddy, is not pay but a reward, and exempts him from the Cruelty to Children Act. The excess profits tax, the license tax and the property tax do not apply, it is held, to the premises of a golf club, as it is a religious institution; and both the Privy Council and the Supreme Courts are said to be preparing decisions to the effect that consuming whiskey in or near a golf club does not constitute a breach of the law provided that it is taken only when needed and in the proportion or quantity needed and that it is not made the subject of treating.

But I anticipate: these decisions belong, of course, to later days. I was saying that in my own town, and no doubt everywhere else, the golf club idea once started and established soon spread. The original ground was abandoned. A vast stretch of beautiful land that might easily have supported hundreds and hundreds of hogs was laid out into a golf course. It was whispered that the ground was not purchased but seized; this is no doubt untrue, but it is an undeniable fact that this beautiful hog pasture was presently laid out into flat lawns and greens. In reality, nothing more is needed for the driving of a golf ball except a straight piece of air two hundred yards long. But it is a nice pretence of the game that a whole landscape must be seized and occupied to the exclusion of agriculture, manufacture, and all other uses. In the case of which I speak, the vast purposelessness of the affair was concealed by the cunning device of setting out tomato cans and red flags at irregular intervals. By walking among these the players are made to appear as if pursuing some known object. The position of the flags is so contrived that each player is led in a circular course and returns at intervals to the club house where he may take a drink and start again. Each set of drinks is called a "round," and of course an expert player can make a round far more rapidly than a beginner.

One large club, I say, was established. Yet even after it was definitely in operation very few people realized the way in which it was disturbing our civic life. It was noticed, indeed, that the

schedule of trains of our greatest railway had undergone marked changes. A great number of suburban trains were introduced and a sharp discrimination made against transcontinental and other needless traffic. A branch line was built in a convenient situation to form a natural obstacle, or bunker, for the golf course. But few people connected these changes with the fact that the president of the railway and the entire directorate were members of the golf club.

A new stage of development presently appeared. There is a certain kind of animal, so biology teaches us, which increases its numbers by simply dividing itself in two. The original animal is called, I think, an *amœba*. But the real type of the species is the golf club. If you put one of them in the landscape and leave it there for a year or so you presently come back and find two; and if the two are left unmolested for a short period they presently turn into four. Where the landscape is especially favourable, where nature has spread out her fertile land all ready to make bunkers and her pure streams all ready to mix with Scotch whiskey, the two clubs will even turn into six.

Such has been the case in our city, and I imagine, in every other. There are now twelve golf clubs in the vicinity with ten others being organized. The area now covered occupies, it is said, twelve thousand acres. One passes in the train from the crowded confines of the city to the wide expanses of the golf clubs. Everywhere there are little greens, and tin-cans and red flags, and club members in knickerbockers. Each year the city is more and more crowded. Each year the golf area is bigger and bigger.

Nor is there any public protest. Each year more and more men, hitherto respectable God-fearing citizens, are being caught in the lure of it. It is difficult to say just what the fascination is. But it is there. Sometimes I think that it lies in pretending to be a Scotsman. It may be that: there are so many things about the Scotch that attract—their contempt of rain, their peculiar nerve in wearing a hen's feather in their hat, their comprehensive ideas on

damnation—that it may well be that the golf members are simply trying to be Scotsmen. In addition to that I blame Harry Lauder a good deal: and undoubtedly Robert Burns has a lot to answer for. But taking it as you will the golf club has become a grave national menace.

In my own city we are, I suppose, beyond redemption. We have golf tournaments, golf teas, and golf dinners: golf trains and golf cars and golf motors. The use of the bagpipes is everywhere tolerated and we eat Haggis on St. Andrew's Day. But if there are any cities in which this insidious movement is still in its infancy, I can only exhort them to suppress it while there is yet time.

## L'ENVOI IN PRAISE OF THE AMERICANS

THE AMERICANS ARE A QUEER PEOPLE: THEY CAN'T REST. They have more time, more leisure, shorter hours, more holidays and more vacations than any other people in the world. But they can't rest. They rush up and down across their continent as tourists; they move about in great herds to conventions, they invade the wilderness, they flood the mountains, they keep hotels full. But they can't rest. The scenery rushes past them. They learn it but they don't see it. Battles and monuments are announced to them in a rubber-neck bus. They hear them but they don't get them. They never stop moving: they rush up and down as Shriners, Masons, Old Graduates, Veterans, Bankers,—they are a new thing each day, always rushing to a Reunion of something.

So they go on rushing till the undertaker gathers them in to a last convention.

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THE AMERICANS ARE A QUEER PEOPLE: THEY CAN'T READ. They have more schools, and better schools, and spend more money on schools and colleges than all of Europe. But they can't read. They print more books in one year than the French print in ten. But they can't read. They cover their country with 100,000 tons of Sunday newspapers every week. But they don't read them. They're too busy. They use them for fires and to make more paper with. They buy eagerly thousands of new novels at two dollars each. But they only read page one. Their streets are full of huge signs. They won't look at them. Their street cars are filled with advertising. They turn their eyes away. Transparent colours, cartwheels and mechanical flares whirl and flicker in the crowded streets at night. No one sees them. Tons of circulars pour through the mails, through the houses and down the garbage chute. The last American who sat down to read died in about the days of Henry Clay.

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THE AMERICANS ARE A QUEER PEOPLE: THEY CAN'T DRINK. All of the American nation is haunted. They have a fierce wish to be

sober: and they can't. They pass fierce laws against themselves, shut themselves up, chase themselves, shoot themselves: and they can't stay sober and they can't drink. They have a furious idea that if they can ever get sober, all of them sober, they can do big things. But they can't hold it. They got this mentality straight out of home life in Ohio, copied from the wild spree and the furious repentance of the pioneer farmer. The nation keeps it yet. It lives among red spectres, rum devils, broken bottles, weeping children, penitentiary cells, barrooms and broken oaths. The last man who sat down and drank a quiet glass of beer, was found dead,—dead for twenty years,—in Milwaukee.

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THE AMERICANS ARE A QUEER PEOPLE: THEY CAN'T PLAY. Americans rush to work as soon as they get up. They want their work as soon as they wake. It's a stimulant: the only one they're not afraid of. They used to open their offices at 10 o'clock: then at 9: then at 8 : then at 7. Now they never shut them. Every business in America is turning into an open-all-day-and-night business. They eat all night, dance all night, build buildings all night, run cars all night, make a noise all night. They can't play. They try to, but they can't. They turn football into a fight, baseball into a lawsuit and yachting into machinery. They can't play. The little children can't play: they use mechanical toys instead: toy cranes hoisting toy loads: toy machinery spreading a toy industrial depression of infantile dulness. The grown-up people can't play: they use a mechanical gymnasium and a clockwork horse. They can't swim: they use a float. They can't run: they use a car. They can't laugh: they hire a comedian and watch him laugh.

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THE AMERICANS ARE A QUEER PEOPLE: THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN. All the world criticizes them and they don't give a damn. All the world writes squibs like this about them and they don't give a damn. Foreigner visitors come and write them up: they don't give a damn. Lecturers lecture at them: they don't care. They are told they have no art, no literature, and no soul. They never budge. Moralists cry over them, criminologists dissect them, writers shoot



epigrams at them, prophets foretell the end of them, and they never move. Seventeen brilliant books analyze them every month: they don't read them. The Europeans threaten to unite against them: they don't mind. Equatorial Africa is dead sour on them: they don't even know it. The Chinese look on them as full of Oriental cunning: the English accuse them of British stupidity: the Scotch call them close-fisted: the Italians say they are liars: the French think their morals loose, and the Bolsheviks accuse them of communism.

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But that's all right. The Americans don't give a damn: don't need to: never did need to. That is their salvation.

## THE END

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Transcriber's Note:

All printing errors, such as missing words or consistent spellings including hyphenation, have been retained with the exception of those listed below.

page 224 Filet de Sole Momay ==> Filet de Sole Mornay

[The end of Wet Wit and Dry Humour by Stephen Leacock]