

STEPHEN LEAOCK

THE  
DRY PICKWICK

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# THE DRY PICKWICK

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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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THE BODLEY HEAD

THE  
DRY PICKWICK  
AND OTHER INCONGRUITIES

by  
STEPHEN LEACOCK

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# CONTENTS

THE DRY PICKWICK

RATIFICATION OF THE NEW NAVAL DISAGREEMENT

A MEDIEVAL HOLE IN ONE

THE GREAT WAR AS RECORDED BY MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

IF THE GANDHI HABIT SPREADS

IN PRAISE OF THE AMERICANS

ONCE TO EVERYMAN

CONFESSIONS OF A SODA FIEND

A GUIDE TO THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

WHY THE NEXT WAR DIDN'T HAPPEN

A. B. AND C AFTER TWENTY YEARS

BREAKFAST AT THE SMITHS'

THE PERFECT OPTIMIST

CHILDREN'S POETRY REVISED

"TUM AND PLAY DOLF"

HO FOR HAPPINESS

TENNIS AT THE SMITHS'

A BUTLER OF THE OLD SCHOOL

THE FLYING CARPET

COME AND SEE OUR TOWN

INFLATION AND DEFLATION

L'ENVOI: WHAT NEXT?

# The Dry Pickwick and Other Incongruities

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## THE DRY PICKWICK

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

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### INTRODUCTION

The demand from the American 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 hundredweight; 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.

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So here follows:—

## 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 bedside 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 draught 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 awhile," he added. "There's an inn a little farther 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 awhile 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 makeshift stables at the back, the bar boarded up, the licence 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 the 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 oesophagus 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 drear 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 absences 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.”

“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 with 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.



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# RATIFICATION OF THE NEW NAVAL DISAGREEMENT

(*An Extract from the Annual Register of  
1933*)

The principal event of the year just passed (1932) was undoubtedly the successful discussion and ratification of the new international naval disagreement.

By the opening of that year practically all of the existing disagreements had either lapsed, or had gradually worn out. The international situation was rapidly sinking into stagnation, in which naval defence was discouraged and public interest diverted towards other channels. All the Chancelleries reported that a new and dangerous tendency towards international sports, puzzle competitions and international Tom Thumb golf was largely responsible for the lack of public enthusiasm over naval expenditure. Under these circumstances naval defence, instead of being a pleasure, was becoming a burden, and the public Press of all countries echoed and re-echoed this new nature of the heavy burden of naval armament. It was even whispered in diplomatic circles that the mind and conscience of the civilized world were set more and more against war.

It was felt, therefore, that what was needed was something to give tangible expression to this new feeling of brother love among the nations: in short, something to put a little "pep" into the naval idea. Nor was anything better calculated to do this than the idea of complete naval disarmament, subject only to the retention of such naval ships as might be needed for purposes of defence, that is to say, for the object of maritime combat, in other words, as combat. At the same time it was desired to cut down all coastal defence to the mere amount necessary to defend the coasts. The general suggestion of reducing the building of submarines and confining it to the construction of boats needed underwater, was further aided by the general wish to confine aerial defence to the air.

As a result of these motive forces of international goodwill, the opening of the year witnesses a series of gestures of mutual reassurance.

In January the British Government, in announcing the building of five new battle cruisers, declared that this was intended as a first stage in naval disarmament and that the new cruisers would be armed with 18-inch guns.

The Premier of France, referring in a speech before the Deputies to this splendid pacific gesture on the part of Britain, said that France cherished the ideal of peace as the true French policy and stated that in pursuit of this policy the government would at once lay down the keels of three battleships of the first class.

The British, he said, were a noble nation and it was gratifying to think that war between France and Britain was at once and for ever impossible; otherwise, he added, the British might get a bad licking.

Replying to this a few nights later in the House of Commons, the leader of the Government said that he regarded the French as his brothers; they might, he added, be our inferiors in many ways, but for his part, since he had recognized them as brothers, he felt himself bound to live up to the ideal of brotherhood; this, he said, would only apply as long as the French behaved themselves.

The naval debate thus originated in the British and French Parliaments was re-echoed in the other European countries. In the Reichstag, Herr Dudelsach explained that Germany was entirely pacific in character and deprecated all militaristic preparation.

The Germans were friends with everybody. The great guns that were being built at Kiel and about which so much misunderstanding had arisen were intended merely as demonstrations of friendship.

In the same way, the vast new chemical factory on the Elbe was entirely and only an expression of international unity and love.

The Italian Parliament, in accepting the Government's proposal for fifty new destroyers of high speed, called attention to the fact that these destroyers would merely enable Italy to convey messages of greeting to other nations more quickly than ever before. Italy was all for peace, declared the dictator, and if any one denied it, Italy would knock his block off.

It was at this junction that the United States, through its corps of ambassadors, offered its good offices to compose the growing unrest in Europe.

In a general ambassadorial message, it was explained that America viewed with concern the lack of harmony among the European powers. If the European powers would only try to realize what a poor set of snipes they were, they would cease to quarrel. They would feel too sorry for themselves.

The United States, in order to allay the growing danger in Europe, offered to build twelve more battle cruisers of the highest efficiency. If need be, it would build more; in fact, it would build just as many as the European nations needed to keep them quiet.

These ships, it was added, would be built entirely at the expense of the United

States and would cost Europe nothing, but would be ready for use in the interests of Europe at any moment. The United States had no interests of its own; no interests, no designs, no ideas, no prejudices, no thoughts—nothing.

Unfortunately, the American naval rescript, while undoubtedly helpful in general, provoked in certain circles an unreasoning resentment. Lord Bulkinthehead, the leader of downright opinion in England, asked the Americans plainly who they thought they were. The French Minister of Finance stated that he might reluctantly be compelled to raise the hotel rates against the Americans.

The rising trouble was somewhat appeased by a pacific speech from the British Prime Minister, in connection with the building of thirty new submersible warships.

The Americans, he said, were tied to the British by bonds far more lasting than mere iron and steel. The original kinship between the two nations had been strengthened by a century of unbroken friendship.

He said it was pleasant to think that it was over a hundred years since the Shannon had whipped the Chesapeake, and he had every hope that it would probably not need to be done again.

The Prime Minister's speech was warmly received in the American Press, and his sentiments in regard to the long-continued peace were everywhere echoed with approval.

It was recalled also that it was now nearly a hundred and fifty years since General Jackson licked the British at New Orleans and drowned them in the Gulf of Mexico.

It was this increasingly satisfactory situation that brought about the famous Naval Disagreement Agreement of 1932, which may be expected to have settled for a long time to come all outstanding naval problems.

The conference was summoned by the Government of Liberia, and consisted of delegates sent from each of the great governments of Europe and America, each Government paying its own expenses, except laundry.

Its proceedings resulted in the drafting and ratification of the 1933 Naval Disagreement. Its principal terms may be summarized as follows:

I. All participating nations agree that war is very wicked.

This resolution, presented to the conference by the Ladies' Fortnightly Club of Monrovia, Liberia, was almost unanimously carried, China and Nicaragua alone dissenting. It was felt that the recognition of this principle alone would go far to prevent future conflicts.

II. It is agreed that no nation will ever begin a war without announcing it over the radio the same evening.

III. Each contracting nation pledges itself never to carry on a war unless it has something to gain by it.

IV. Each of the great naval powers limits itself to building enough ships to lick all the others.

The compact thus drafted was accepted and ratified with enthusiasm by the delegates of all the great nations concerned. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, in accepting the honorary degree of D.F. awarded him by the University of Liberia in recognition of his work for peace, declared that Britain accepted the new regime wholeheartedly and would at once build half a dozen new dry docks to help the United States carry out the Eighteenth Amendment.

The American minister, on whom the Negus of Abyssinia conferred the Legion of Honour (Class A.1 guaranteed two years), declared that the United States would lend fifty cents each to any other peace delegates, without interest for two years.

The French, Germans, and other delegates to the Liberian conference, in expressing their thanks for an annual pass over the Street Railway System of Monrovia, joined in the sentiment that world peace was now assured.

At the close of the year all the delegates left for home in order to get their naval budgets in good shape for Christmas.

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# 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, bull-fight, archery match or rat-hunt anywhere from A.D. 1000 to 1500.

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 A.D. 1215 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 Cowstable, 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 cup-bearer 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 on to 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 Goffè, or Gouffè—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 avoirdupois. 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 hindquarters.

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 A.D. 1215.

"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 wellnigh 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.”

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THE GREAT WAR AS RECORDED BY  
MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
extraordinary war play discovered at  
stratford-on-avon

*EDITORIAL NOTE.—As everybody knows, the Great War, as it drifts into retrospect, is becoming more and more the theme of literature and drama. Already more than one masterpiece of the drama or of the film has depicted for us the reality and the tragedy, the lights and the shadows of the Great War. But how many people must have felt the wish that Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of all times, could have been alive to clothe the war with the wonder of his genius.*

*And now comes the glad news by cable from Stratford-upon-Avon that there has been discovered a most extraordinary manuscript. It is evidently a play dealing with the Great War and written, without a doubt, by William Shakespeare, the famous dramatist of three hundred years ago. How Shakespeare, who is known to have died at Stratford in the reign of James I, could have written a play dealing with the war of fourteen years ago is a mystery. It can only be explained, as everything nowadays is explained, by some form of spiritualistic action. In any case the authorship of the play is proved beyond a doubt by the internal evidence of its contents. For instance, Shakespeare, who called his play dealing with the Hundred Years War in France "Henry V," very naturally called this new drama "George V." That's Shakespeare's touch exactly. But the text of the play may speak for itself with one or two slight alterations or explanations to make it clear to those who are not Shakespeare scholars.*

ACT I.—A CAMP IN FLANDERS.

*Enter the King of the Belgians with the Belgian Army (two men) followed by My Lord French with the English Army (two men) and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies with the French Army (one man).*

*My Lord French:* How now, my liege?

*The King:*

. . . But ill, my noble French,

Town after town, the jewels of my crown,  
Lost to these dirty Pups; in sooth,  
Good French, the thing begins to get me.

*The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies:*

Not so, Lord King, we are not licked by half  
Our army, sore reduced, can still make head.  
Let us fall on again.

*The French Army (waving his sword).* Fall on.

*(Exeunt the three armies.)*

*Lord French:*

Well said, O noble France,  
Let them fall on. Mark me,—let them, not us,  
And when they do, let us take cognizance  
Of how it fares with them.

*The King:* How stands our cause in England?

*Lord French:*

Not half bad,  
Our armies multiply, while on the seas  
From each far corner of the distant world  
Comes the full tide of Empire.

*The King:* Exactly, you mean that the various  
Dominions of the British Empire have shown an  
entire willingness to participate in the war.

*Lord French:* Didn't I say that?

*The King:*

Belike, perhaps, yet, couched in subtle verse,  
It reached me not. And tell me, noble France,  
What is the latest word from Washington?

*The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies:*

The noble Wilson walketh in his room  
And times he will and other times he won't,  
Whether to seize the sword and cut the knot  
Or hold the equal poise of statesmanship.

*The King:* Thank you. I get the idea without  
further difficulty. You mean that it is still

uncertain whether the United States will enter  
the war.

*The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies:* Yes.

*Enter an illiterate peasant.*

*The Illiterate Peasant:* My liege, my lord, alas!

*All:* What bring you! What news.

*The Illiterate Peasant:*

Sad is the news, my lord. The infuriate Hun,  
Wreaking his wrath in ever-widening sweep,  
That will not take denial of advance,  
Hath met and overwhelmed our weakened force  
And all are gone,—

*The King:* All five?

*The Illiterate Peasant:* All five, my lord.

*The King:* Alas! this day! good French,  
commend me to my cousin George.

*(King stabs himself and falls dead.)*

*Lord French:* Alas, good King, I am a soldier  
too. I follow still.

*(Stabs himself and falls dead.)*

*The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies:*

Be it not said that in this Big Idea  
A Frenchman failed.

*(Stabs himself and falls dead.)*

*The Illiterate Peasant:*

I, too, the last to the Hyrcanean shades,  
Where gloomy Pluto reigns o'er slumbering souls,  
Will down.

*(Stabs himself and falls dead.)*

*Enter Winston Churchill, with a link and an historical note-book.*

What scene is this! *(looks at the bodies)*

A dreadful sight in sooth I witness here,  
A king distended on a German bier.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.—A HALL IN CASTLE IN LORRAINE.

*Enter the Emperor of Alleman accompanied by his army (three) and the Dukes of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. A tucket sounds.*

*The Emperor:* Who comes?

*Enter the King of Austria.*

Welcome, noble Austria. What news bring you, and how are our Brothers Bavaria and Bulgaria?

*The King of Austria:*

Sweet William, all are well, the noble Fred Drives all his enemies before him.

*The Emperor:* Us too? Not so, my Lord Dukes?

*Dukes Hindenburg and Ludendorff:* It is.

*The Emperor:* We lick the world.

*Dukes Hindenburg and Ludendorff:* We do.

*The Emperor (raising a Goblet):* Gesundheit!

*At this moment the ghost of Abraham Lincoln, wearing a frock-coat and hat and looking very solid, walks around the back of the room.*

*The Emperor (affrighted):* What is it!

*All (affrighted):*

Lo, where it walks  
'Twould speak . . .

*The Ghost of Lincoln:* Beware the Ides of April.

*The Ghost vanishes by walking across to a door and going out of it.*

*The Emperor:* What means it?

*Dukes of Hindenburg and Ludendorff:* It means that the United States has entered the war on April 5th.

*The Emperor:* Give me poison, quick!

*Hindenburg:* Not. Wait till the last Act. You  
get it then and get it good.

*The Emperor (speaking in rhyme to end the Act):*

Oh what an April idiot I am  
Fighting France, England, America and Siam.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.—A CAMP IN EASTERN FRANCE.

*Moonlight. Enter My Lord Pershing of Paterson, New Jersey. He addresses the moon:*

Oh thou bright orb, whose incandescent beam  
Looks down each night on the United States,  
Floods Porto Rico and the Philippines,  
Gilds with its gold the Zone of Panama,  
Alaska's snow, and Hikkitikki Beach  
In Honolulu—shine but one more night,  
One more—we have them pinched.

*Enter the Earl of Philadelphia leading the American Army (four men).*

*Pershing:* How now, good Philadelphia?

*Philadelphia:*

All is well.  
Our noble army landing from New York  
Hath pushed its way across the map of France,  
Leaving a track of cigarettes and gum,  
Nought can avail against its driving force,  
Onward and forward goes our dry canteen,  
Y.M.C.A. and lecture for the Boys,  
In vain they try to dam us and they don't.

*Pershing:* They dam us not.

*Philadelphia:*

They don't and now behold we have them pinched.



Our boys in front, stout England on the flank,  
And in between, the boys from Canada,  
While farther East the army of Siam  
Joins hands with France and noble Portugal.  
The thing's a cinch.

*Noise of battle is heard, occasioned by some one beating with a stick.*

*Pershing:* The fight approaches. Stand fast.

*All:* Stand fast!

*Enter the Emperor of Alleman in flight, pursued by My Lord Currie of Strathray and the Canadian Army (both of them), followed by the King of Austria pursued by George V of England, followed by the Duke of Hindenburg pursued by Woodrow Wilson, followed by King Ferdinand of Bulgaria pursued by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the King of Bavaria pursued by the Speaker of the French Senate. Alarms and Excursions—in fact, it is a real Shakespearian climax—all fight, two by two, round the scene.*

*The Emperor of Alleman:* Oh! I am killed. (*Falls dead.*)

*The King of Austria:* So am I. (*Falls dead.*)

*The Duke of Hindenburg:* Me, too. (*Falls dead.*)

*All the enemies fall dead, while Lord Pershing, the Earl of Philadelphia, Baron Currie of Strathray and the others stand looking at the bodies of the four dead kings and their dead Field-Marschals.*

*The Ghost of Abraham Lincoln (appearing in the moonlight):*

I think, gentlemen, I may say without hypocrisy  
That this sort of thing looks pretty safe for Democracy.

CURTAIN.

FINIS

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# IF THE GANDHI HABIT SPREADS

## what if all the politicians strip to the waist

All the world has its eyes on Mahatma Gandhi, the strange emaciated little Indian who is said to hold in his hand the destinies of three hundred and fifty million people. All the world has been struck by the wave of enthusiasm which greeted in England Gandhi's appearance at the All India Round Table Conference. The strange little man, with his large spectacles, his loincloth, his bottle of goat's milk, has made an impression on the public mind greater than that of Kings and Emperors in glittering uniform.

But it has not yet occurred to the public that Gandhi's appearance in London carries with it a grave danger. What if the other politicians of the world follow suit—follow Gandhi's suit? The probable result can be clearly seen from the following Press despatches, the first of which has already come over the wires, while the others will follow later.

### I

#### *Gandhi in London*

Mahatma Gandhi has literally carried London by storm. He appeared at the All India Round Table Conference, clad only in his spectacles and his loincloth. His little brown enfeebled body bore witness to his long fasting and privations. Gandhi's arms, it was remarked with a thrill of enthusiasm, are hardly bigger than billiard cues. The exuberant and admiring crowd which accompanied Gandhi from the Victoria Station to the Conference at the India House noted that his legs were little more than tubes with flexible joints. His stomach, however, is rather better, which makes his general appearance that of a compressed-air vacuum cleaner. Gandhi carried in one hand a paper bag filled with curdled goat's milk and in the other a portable spinning-wheel, model of 100 B.C. As he took his seat at the Conference amid overwhelming applause it was felt by all the assembled statesmen that Gandhi had conquered. "We can't go up against that," said one leading Conservative peer with characteristic British sportsmanship, "the man has out-trained us and we know it." It is said that Gandhi can now dictate his own terms by threatening to upset his goat's milk and take off his loincloth. "If he does," said the same peer, "we must withdraw from

India.”

## II

### *Snowden goes One Better*

England has been saved from the sudden and overwhelming crisis into which the country was plunged by Mahatma Gandhi. To the wild delight of the supporters of the National Government, the Chancellor, Philip Snowden, appeared on the second morning of the India Conference wearing nothing except spectacles, sandals and a Lancashire bath-towel. Snowden, it was seen at once, has a daintier figure than Gandhi, with better arms and a cute little neck and shoulders. His skin is excellent and excited the immediate admiration of every poultry-fancier. Snowden carried a beautiful Hampshire cabbage which is all that he proposes to eat during the deliberations. He has entirely thrown Gandhi's spinning-wheel into the shade.

## III

### *Ramsay MacDonald Joins*

The wavering allegiance of the Labour Party was welded again into solid bonds of cohesion by the appearance of Ramsay MacDonald in the full (Gandhi) costume of his native Scotland. The Prime Minister's rugged and magnificent figure was revealed clad only in the MacDonald one-piece tartan. His chest was thrown open to the public. He had a tin-can of Haggis tied to his waist and he carried a sledgehammer in his right hand. He has sworn to eat nothing but Haggis till Scotland is moved away from England and given Dominion status without expense. As he brandished his hammer and shouted "Bring me that Budget," the crowd went wild with excitement. Meanwhile Mr. Gandhi was carried unobserved to a hospital, suffering from an inflation of goat's milk.

## IV

### *And the House of Commons*

English politics last night were restored to a new basis of stable equilibrium by a meeting of the House of Commons which showed the universal adoption of the new Gandhi method. All the members appeared in the full costumes of ancient Britain, wearing only about the loins a chaplet of oak leaves, or in some cases only a mere paragraph of mistletoe. Their bodies were stained blue and it was plain that they had allowed their beards to grow during the long vacation. They carried heavy clubs with which they beat upon the floor with loud cries of Rah! Rah! England! Skoll! Skoll!

Hooroo!

The one remark heard through the galleries and corridors was, "This is England again! To hell with the pound sterling!"

## V

### *Mahatma Briand Gandhies France*

The new Gandhi tactics have rapidly spread to Europe where they are accomplishing the same terrific political results. The first consequence in France has been to effect the political salvation of President Briand and Monsieur Laval, his Prime Minister. Briand appeared this morning on the Champs Elysées wearing only a dainty little frilled pantalonette, style Marie Antoinette, with a light chemisette of transparent batiste, style Charlotte Corday, thrown over his shoulders. He carried a dainty little parasol and a basket of fresh eggs. The wildest enthusiasm greeted him as he walked down the Champs Elysées to join the Premier at the Palais Bourbon. "*Comme il est beau!*" exclaimed the ladies, and again and again one heard the remark, *Quel joli petit derrière, et comme ça se trémousse!* On the steps of the Palais Bourbon the President was received by Prime Minister Laval, who wore eyeglasses and a pretty little blue-silk fichu looped round the hips and nailed on with tinctacks. Of the two, Laval has perhaps the more upright figure, but Briand undoubtedly the more girlish. The attempt of the Opposition to raise the cry that he needed a shave was lost in the general enthusiasm. The Government is now safe till the cold weather.

## VI

### *And America—*

Latest advices from Washington report the White House as closed absolutely to the public since yesterday at noon. It is known, however, that messengers have been sent out to fetch a bunch of California Asparagus, and a mountain goat from Idaho together with an electric milking machine. Among the large crowd gathered about the White House the one subject of speculation is, "Will he do it?"

"If he does," said a leading Democrat disconsolately, "there will be no presidential election next year."

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# IN PRAISE OF THE AMERICANS

thoughts suggested by writing the first  
story in this book

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, bar-rooms 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 dullness. 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 analyse 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.

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# ONCE TO EVERYMAN

People often say to me, "What is the sensation of flying? How does it feel to be up in the air? I would like to go up," they say, "but I am nervous as to how I should feel if I do."

To which I always reply—and I have answered the question a hundred times—"The first sensation, the first lift off the ground as you find yourself rising above the tree-tops is perhaps one of the most delicious sensations ever experienced. I shall always recall that wonderful feeling—the first time I ever went up." I add in a quiet, modest tone, "It is a good many years ago, of course, but I shall never forget that sense of soaring above the tops of the trees."

What I take care *not* to say is that the first time I went up is also the *last* time I went up. That is my own private business. I went up in an aeroplane just once—about ten years ago. I was up in the sky for quite a time, I am not sure just how long, but say a week. Then I came down. And I found that when I came down I had passed into a new class. I was a man who had the right to talk of flying. *Once* is all you need.

Notice how easy it is: I speak modestly of "the *first* time I ever went up, many years ago of course." The fair inference from that is that in the intervening years that have since passed, I have been pretty well up in the air all the time—just down for meals, so to speak. If people say to me, "Is flying really dangerous?" I can truly answer, "Well, it's ten years since I first went up in a machine and I have never had the slightest accident"—then I correct myself—"well, once perhaps a little trouble in landing." That, you see, is true, because on the only occasion when I landed I was in such a hurry to get out that I broke one of the straps. That made a little trouble, about fifty cents' worth.

Please observe, anyone who wishes to follow my example, the use of that word "machine." If you want to qualify as an indoor aviator, don't call an aeroplane by its own name. Call it a "machine," or a "bus" or an "old horse," or better still "a freight car." Speak of it with contempt. Act as if you weren't afraid of it: I always say, "I shall never forget the first old box I went up in: nothing would tempt me to go up again in an old banjo like that." I don't add that nothing would tempt me either to go up in a new banjo, with Colonel Lindbergh to run it.

The reader must take careful notice that sometimes questions and answers become a little embarrassing. It needs a really good command of English to fit them

in. But a little reflection and practice will do a lot. Thus at times people say to me, point-blank:

“Do you fly much?”

The answer to this is—“Not *now!*” with a very strong and serious emphasis on the now. I don’t fly much *now*. This implies, you see, that there was a time when I flew like all Hades—a regular dragon-fly. Then you may add, if you like—“I don’t think one ever gets tired of it, though.” In my case I am sure I didn’t get tired of it. I was tired of it before I started.

But I repeat I did actually fly once, and most people won’t do even that. I may not be a Colonel Lindbergh but I have the right to lord it over the ordinary man in conversation.

Somebody once even asked me, “Did you ever fly much?” That seems a hard one, but the answer was after all quite easy. I merely said in a deprecatory way, “Oh, no, I *never* flew *much*. I don’t suppose I was even in a plane more than once in any one week.” Quite so, and I might have added—“in any one century.”

What I have described above, however, is only one aspect of the peculiar consequences which follow for anybody who has ventured “once up.” There are other things as well. I find, for instance, that my casual conversations on aerial navigation have acted as an incentive to others. After hearing what I had to say many a quiet listener has gone away with the determination to venture into the air in the hope that he may some day become a veteran aviator like me. Some of these “pupils” of mine have taken to aviation in the full sense of the word and one or two have become distinguished aviators. Looking back on it now over the increasing years I am cultivating a convenient confusion of mind as to just when I began aerial flight and just whom I encouraged and helped in his earlier days. Baron Richtoffen was, perhaps, a pupil of mine. I am not sure. Billy Bishop, the great Canadian flier, I am certain—almost certain—was one of my disciples. At any rate, I am sure I remember buying lunch for him either just before he became celebrated or just after. Indeed, when I get really started talking aviation from my arm-chair at the University Club, Montreal (under the statutory legislation of the Province of Quebec), I am not sure that I didn’t have a good deal to do with the training of Santos Dumont, the Wright Boys (both intimate friends) and Professor Langley of the Smithsonian institute and the Brothers Montgolfiers.

Any one of my readers can enjoy the same increasing reputation and the same glowing retrospect who will merely go “once up” in the air and then come down and talk about it for ten years.

More than that, I recall the case of a young man who actually took my advice,



acted on my example, and came down a transformed man. The morning after his flight he walked into his employer's private office with that resolute compelling look that any man wears who faces the floating clouds three thousand feet above the earth. Afraid! afraid to ask the senior partner for a mere increase of a hundred dollars a month! A man who has seen his plane's wings bank at an angle of forty-seven degrees to the tangent of the visible horizon, afraid of a smuffy business man in a sack suit who never left the surface of the globe. Nonsense. And the senior partner rose with a pleasant smile and said, "I think I guess what you've come in about, Johnson; as a matter of fact, the firm were going to take up that question on their own account." So the thing was done in a minute.

From the office that afternoon young Johnson went straight to a residence in the costlier and leafier part of the city where there was a certain house into which he had never before entered without a certain trembling of the heart: because there was in it a drawing-room in which he always felt a peculiar palpitation of nervousness: because in the corner of it was a sofa, and on the sofa, in the afternoons, an expensive-looking girl in a flowing dress fortified behind flowers and a silver teapot. But what did he care now? He had "flown over" her darned house—girl, teapot, rubber trees and all. Any man who has "flown over" a girl—well, after that the thing is simple. So Johnson walked in with that exalted look on his face and that quiet friendly steadiness in his blue eyes that one can only get at an altitude of three thousand feet, and nowhere else. And the girl just rose and put out her two hands with a sort of wonder in her face and said—"Oh, Edward." The rest was over in ten minutes. The girl's father went down before the aviator like a ninepin. They are married now and live in their own house on which they have paid an instalment—just once—and there has come to them the sweetest little baby—just once—and there you are.

I hope that by this time, my dear reader, you have realized that this article is a direct personal appeal and exhortation to yourself. Are you aware that, just outside your own city, there is a station of the Aircraft Company? If you go out in that direction you will see a large empty field with two or three aeroplanes trundling round on it, and one or two neat, efficiently looking young "air-men," waiting round. Those boys will take you up any time, ride you round the sky and bring you back for five dollars. You *do* know this. In fact, you have known it for years, but you try *not* to know it. And you've got the five dollars—you must have, because you spent as much as that yesterday buying Russian cigarettes and French tea-cakes for the same girl that you brought the violets for last Saturday.

Come. Be a man. Drive out to that aviation place—one minute of resolution.

Step into the machine—up you go—and when you come down, you're a hero. And when you go back to the girl, buy her a ten-cent plug of tobacco and a Scotch thistle. She'll know her place all right enough after this.

That is all; except just to say this. It is just possible that the Aircraft Company of Montreal (back of the Mountain, first turn to the left), seeing this article might be so pleased with it as to offer me a free ride in one of their machines. If so, please don't let them bother. I have found for some time past that aeroplaning gives me a twinge of rheumatism, just a touch of inflammation in the mesencephalon—in short, I don't suppose I've been up in a "machine" for months and months.

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# 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 effected 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.

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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 say, "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 overnight 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.



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# 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

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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 guidebook 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 colour, 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 . . .”

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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 licence 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 whisky, 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 whisky blanc, or white whisky 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 licences 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 the 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 licences 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 barrellful 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 licences.

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 whisky 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 labourer on the street has his can of beer beside him as he eats his dinner.

Ah! Here is the hotel, our destination. The hotel is 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 call 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.



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# WHY THE NEXT WAR DIDN'T HAPPEN

## an attempt to reassure the public

Along with a great many other people, I begin to feel that it is time that something was done about the "Next War." The public are constantly being too much alarmed about it, and it is fitting that some one should undertake to reassure them.

I am well aware of the terrific prophecies that are being made. I know that Major-General Fitz-Bung, the great artillery expert, has told the Press that in the "coming war" the range of guns will be a hundred miles; that Admiral O'Breezy has declared that in the next war submarines a quarter of a mile long will be pitted against battleships five hundred feet high; that the great chemical expert, Herr Schwefelstink, says that in the next war poisonous gas will pour over the whole civilized world and especially on civilians, women and children, hospitals, homes for incurables, and golf clubs. The aerial experts, I know, offer to let loose a bomb that will lift London into the North Sea.

I am quite aware that the military writers all agree that the war after the next will be a corker, and that the next war but two will probably be about as bad a war as the world will see till the fourth war, in which the entire human race, if they have any luck at all, will be exterminated.

Personally, I take no stock in it at all. It's not going to happen. The mistake that people like General Fitz-Bung and Admiral O'Breezy make is that they are unaware of a whole lot of new influences that are coming into the world. Let me show what I mean by looking forward about twenty years, and then backward about nineteen, so as to show in retrospect just what happened, and why it was that the "next great war" never happened.

### *The Great War of 1935*

This war was to have been as between England and the United States. It was all set and staged to break out early in the summer of 1935.

The precipitating cause, that is, the cause that should have precipitated it, was one of those high-class diplomatic "incidents" which no self-respecting nation can tolerate. An American sailor was thrown out of a saloon in Singapore right on to the sidewalk on the mere pretext that he had been in the saloon long enough.

The newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic were immediately filled with the

“incident.” All America agreed that the affront was one that no high-chested nation ought to take with equanimity. The British retorted that the right to throw anyone out of a British saloon at any time was a fundamental part of the British constitution, which no determined, self-respecting, bull-necked people would ever allow to be curtailed.

But just at this stage there intervened the opening of the second annual international dog show in London, in which the first prize for Belgian police dogs was carried off by an American dog from Idaho. The enthusiasm and excitement over this, on both sides of the Atlantic, was such that the Singapore sailor was entirely forgotten. When the incident turned up again, America agreed that the sailor probably needed throwing out anyway, and British people urged that at least the sailor ought to be put back again in the saloon and stood up at the bar at the expense of the British Government.

But right after that came the international chess match in Vienna, and then the tour of the Welsh choir in the United States—two hundred voices at a pressure of fifty pounds per inch—and the whole episode was forgotten.

### *The Great War of 1940*

This looked a fine war. It was to have been between England and France with the United States purely neutral and sinking the ships of both. It should have been ready as of June the first, but just at that very moment Alphonse Jules de Marigny won the golf championship of England in the great three-day competition at Scarborough, and on the very same day, by an odd coincidence, Hoke Peters, of Pie Corners, Oklahoma, won the golf championship of all France at Deauville; Edward Beauclere de Montmorency (a direct cousin of the Earl of Hasbeen) won the American championship at Paterson, N.J.; and Angus Macpherson Macrae, of Dumfoolish, the great Scottish expert, issued a challenge to play off against all winners at ten cents a hole, cash down before hitting a ball.

This upset the whole war. As the President of France said over the radio that evening, “Is this a time for making a war?” and the United States minister to Great Britain, speaking over the telephone to Siam, assured the world that golf had replaced all other forms of argument.

### *The Great War of 1945*

The 1945 war was spoiled by the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. It ought to have been a real peach, and indeed all through February and March it looked as if world-wide destruction might be let loose at any moment.

The incident—it is not recorded just what it was—was admitted to be one of the nastiest, dirtiest incidents that had turned up in ten years. The American Secretary of State had written a dispatch in which he said that if the incident turned out in the way he was sure it was going to turn out, his Government would have to consider the matter as one of those matters they would have to consider. This brutal language almost carried war with it. And the situation was made even worse when the British Foreign Secretary replied that His Majesty's Government was not prepared to admit that anything had happened, but that the whole circumstances would be investigated, and if when they were investigated they turned out as he knew they would turn out, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves reluctantly compelled to take whatever steps they felt they ought to take.

This open and direct threat brought war to within forty-eight hours, and set up a feverish activity in all the paper factories, rubber factories, and gas companies of two continents.

Then that very afternoon came the astounding news that Oxford had at last beaten Cambridge in the annual boat race, and that the principal factor in the victory undoubtedly was that the Oxford boat contained five Americans, whereas Cambridge, very foolishly, had only four. The wild enthusiasm and the celebration of this event in London, Denver, Saskatoon (Saskatchewan), Phoenix (Arizona), and other great boating centres, dissipated all thought of war.

### *The Great Asiatic War of 1950*

The collapse of the British-American war of 1950 was followed by several years of despairing quiet. For a little while it looked as if there was a chance of getting Serbia to fight Czechoslovakia, or of working up something as between the Latts of Latvia and the Slatz of the Dantzig corridor; with good luck this might have started a conflagration that would have spread through all Europe, and sideways through Greenland to Canada and the United States.

Experts openly declared that only a spark was needed; unluckily during that very summer a main motor highway (London to Bagdad) was opened up via Latvia and Slatvia and an influx of American tourists poured into the country. The president of Latvia telegraphed at once: "This thing is too good to spoil, let us be friends," and all chance of war was gone.

A last blow was struck in 1952. This year was to have witnessed the great Europe-Asia conflict, which all military experts had for twenty years declared unavoidable. But at the moment when the war was about to burst, a famous American explorer returned from Central China with a dinosaur's egg—very old, but

as good as new—and a British geologist returned from Western Mongolia with a robin's nest in a perfect state of preservation, and a French scientist discovered in Cochin China, what was evidently one end (hard to say which) of a prehistoric megatherium, which must have been dead—which evidently *had* been dead—for over a million years.

The astounding discoveries led the International Ornithological Society to announce that it would hold its next annual convention at or near Lake Gob in the centre of Central Asia. The rush for tickets for this event, coupled with the announcement of the Palæontological Congress and the International Biochemical Society that they too would meet in Mongolia made it necessary to postpone the whole Asiatic conflict for five years. In fact, it was widely felt that the opportunity was practically gone.

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And so, if one may point a moral too obvious to need pointing, the world gradually began to realize that there was something else in it as well as high explosives.

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# A, B, AND C

AFTER TWENTY YEARS

Twenty years ago I wrote a book called *Literary Lapses* and I put into it a story called *A, B, and C*. It dealt with the three famous people whose names used to appear in all the arithmetic books used in the schools. Readers of ripe, or middle, age will recall A, B, and C as they used to be, and will remember the little anecdotes about them which ran after the following fashion:

A can do a certain piece of work in three days; B can do it in five days; and C in eight. How long will it take them to do it, if they all work together?

A was always the strong one, the quick one; B just ordinary; and poor C was just a nut. C worked slower, walked slower, swam worse, chopped less wood and laid fewer bricks than A and B. He lost every race, was beaten on every bet, and came out at the tail end of everything.

Now it happened that the other day I looked again at the story I wrote twenty years ago, and opened again the little text-books from which it had been derived, and I marvelled at the change of circumstance as between then and now.

The A, B, and C of my schooldays, with their "certain piece of work"—they never said what it was—look hopelessly antiquated now. They used to ride old high bicycles on which A, the hero, hit up a speed of eleven and a half miles an hour. They used to walk from X to Y—quite a walk, evidently, from the fact that they took "a certain number of hours" to do it: a thing that no one in these days of motor-cars would think of doing.

The biggest diversion that A, B, and C could think of was to "eat apples," one after the other straight ahead. That was their best notion of a really wicked time.

When it came to money, their transactions were pitifully small. A used to "loan to B a certain sum of money," which sounds most alluring and attractive, until it turns out that the "certain sum of money" was only thirty-five cents.

The highest wages that I could ever find credited even to A, the husky hero, which would work little C into consumption, was eleven cents an hour. When it came to speculation or gambling, the farthest any of them would go was that A would "offer to wager with B one dollar." Whether B took up the bet or not, was

not said. Beyond that the three poor pikers never got.

In other words, any up-to-date child studying arithmetic and reading such little anecdotes as that would despise them.

In the story as I wrote it twenty years ago I professed to have seen A, B, and C in the flesh and pictured their actual appearance: A, big, husky, and self-assertive; B, firm and moderate, but standing on his own feet; C, delicate and shaken with a consumptive cough and quite unfit even for a “certain piece of work.”

So let us imagine what their successors of to-day, the A, B, and C of 1932, would look like.

Here comes A, tall and swaggering and dressed in a plus-four golf suit. Here’s B in a Palm Beach effect, fairly sturdy-looking; hair mostly gone from drinking too much wood alcohol. Here, finally, is C, a weedy, mean-looking little type, with a cigarette hanging from his lip and a peaked hat over his eyes.

“Let’s take a look at the arithmetic problems set for to-day,” says A. (We imagine him looking at a school blackboard before school begins.) “What have they got us down for, anyway? Say, fellows, listen to this!” He begins to read:

“A, B, and C undertake to do a certain piece of work, beginning at six in the morning——”

All three break out into laughter.

“Isn’t that a peach?” says A. “Here, wait till I change it before the class come in.”

He writes:

“A hates work worse than sin, and B quit work after he made a clean-up in oil, and C hasn’t worked since he came out of Sing Sing. Guess how long it will take all three together to do a certain piece of work.”

They laugh, but B, the moderate one, says, “You shouldn’t pull that law stuff about Sing Sing. C doesn’t want that shouted out.”

“Aw, shucks!” protests A. “Anybody who reads the Arithmetic books can guess that C has served time in Sing Sing. You couldn’t explain him any other way. But have it as you like. I’ll rub that out on the blackboard and put in another. Listen to this old chestnut. Did you ever hear the beat of this?—‘A, B, and C are engaged to cut cordwood, working each day for ten hours and receiving 10 cents an hour——’ How do you like that, fellers?”

“Gosh!” says B. “Ten cents an hour! Listen, A, let’s rub that out and write it like this, to make it up to date:

“‘A, B, and C, not having done any work in six years, invest their savings in the oil exchange. A cleans up a quarter of a million dollars, B half a million, and C

gets stung for a hundred thousand and——”

“But look at this one,” interrupts A, still reading from the blackboard. “Just listen to this:

“A, B, and C set out to drive from X to Y in three separate conveyances. A, whose horse is the fastest, makes seven miles an hour——”

They all break into a shout.

“Gimme the chalk!” says C.

“You can’t write anything profane,” says B. “It’s a school.”

“Don’t I know it?” says C. “I ain’t writing nothing profane, see! I’m just putting it into up-to-date English, see? The way A done.”

C writes on the board:

“A, B, and C fly across the Atlantic——”

“Good!” interrupts A. “Stick in a bet! Make it for money.”

“——for a million-dollar pool. A goes at the rate of 180 miles an hour—which is faster than B or C by twenty miles an hour——”

“That’s the stuff!” says A. “Attaboy! And so I beat you both to it, do I, and get the pool?”

“You don’t,” says C. “The sum don’t end that way. You hit an iceberg, see, and you get in the drink——”

“And I win out!” laughs B. “I can go next quickest to him.”

“Yes,” says C, “but you don’t win out just the same. You stop to help A, see, because you’ve gotta sort of soft spot in your bean, and while you’re trying to help him, I beat the both of you to it, and win out!”

“Get out!” roars A. “You beat him and me! You miserable little undersized hound! Why——”

“Stop!” says B, warningly. “Quit your scrapping and vanish. Here comes the teacher and the pupils. Leave those sums on the board just as they were, C. I guess the old-fashioned stuff is better as it is than anything we could put over now.”

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# BREAKFAST AT THE SMITHS'

## a little study in the beauty of cheerfulness

Speaking at a scientific convention last month, one of the leading medical men on this continent made the statement that cheerfulness at meal-time was the best health tonic in the world. One good laugh at breakfast, declared the eminent doctor, is worth half a dozen bottles of medicine.

There is no doubt that when this advice was given to the world it was kindly meant. No doubt the medical man thought it true. But little could he suspect the revolution that it was bound to work in the families of those who took it seriously—as notably in the home of the Henry Edward Smiths of Shadyside Street.

Till this news came out in the Press, breakfast at the Smiths' had always been a silent meal. Mr. Smith sat down behind his newspaper with Mrs. Smith opposite him and with little Wilhelmina Smith, aged 10, on one side and John Algebra Smith, aged 13, on the other. After five minutes, Mr. Smith said: "Milk!" and they passed it to him. Then he went back to his newspaper, trying to estimate yesterday's loss on fifty shares of Hip Hoorah mining stock at three-eighths of a cent per share. A little later he said: "Toast." After that he murmured: "Marmalade." And just at the end: "Coffee." During this time Wilhelmina had said "Milk" three times, and muttered to herself parts of a French verb for her morning school. John Algebra had said: "Milk!—toast!—marmalade!—sugar," each three or four times. He, too, was busy thinking—estimating how long it took to buy a white rabbit at six cents a week.

Mrs. Smith herself never spoke except to the hired girl when she rang the bell. Even then she only said: "Coffee." But she too was thinking all the time, estimating how many yards of celanese it would take to make a circular-flounced afternoon dress.

The whole meal put no strain on the dictionary, and the Smiths had got so used to it that they didn't know that there was anything wrong with it.

Then came to them the fatal truth that they needed laughter at their meals, and their life changed with a complete revolution.

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"Well, children," said Mr. Smith as he sat down to breakfast with a roar of laughter, "here's a funny riddle for you. Why is Chicago like a hen?"

"Chicago like a hen?" laughed Mrs. Smith. "It sounds terribly odd."



“Because there’s a ‘b’ in both,” roared Mr. Smith, “or at least I should have said: Why is Boston like a bird? But it’s all the same.”

The laughter had hardly died away when Mrs. Smith, who was shaking so much with fun that she could hardly pour the coffee, recovered herself enough to say:

“I heard a terribly funny story the other day about a man who told a Pullman porter to put him off the car at Buffalo at three o’clock in the morning and the porter made a mistake and put off the wrong man!”

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” laughed the rest of the family—“he put off the wrong man! Ha! Ha!”

“Father,” said little Algebra Smith, “did you ever hear the story about the Scotchman?”

“About a Scotchman!” exclaimed Mr. Smith, beaming with anticipation. “No, I’m sure I never did. Do tell it.”

“Well, this Scotchman was a farmer and he had a cow that had two calves and so he decided that he’d give one to the minister, only he couldn’t make up his mind which one to give. The calves were both in the pasture together and there came a storm and one got struck by lightning, and when the Scotchman came down to the pasture and found it had been killed, he said: ‘My! My! the minister’s calf has been killed.’”

For a little time the uproarious laughter that followed the story almost precluded all attempt at eating until at length, when something like order was restored, little Wilhelmina spoke:

“I know a funny story about a lawyer,” she said, “only I don’t know if I can tell it right.”

“Go on! Go on!” cried all the rest of the family.

“Well, this lawyer,” said Wilhelmina, “had by accident swallowed a twenty-five-cent piece and it stuck in his windpipe, and so they rushed him to a doctor’s office and the doctor had him turned upside down to shake it out of him. But all they could shake out was eighteen cents.”

Renewed roars of laughter went around the breakfast table.

“There’s a story about an Irishman——” began Mr. Smith.

“Oh, do tell us that one,” said the rest.

“I was reminded of it,” Smith went on, “when you spoke of doctors. This was an Irish county gentleman whose wife was sick and so he wrote a note for a doctor and gave it to a manservant to ride on horseback and take the note to the doctor. But by the time this man was ready and the note was written, the Irishman’s wife was better. So he just scribbled in pencil at the bottom of the letter: ‘Since I wrote this my wife

has got better, so you won't need to come.'"

Convulsed with merriment, the Smith family struggled in vain to eat their toast.

"How would you like me to imitate Harry Lauder for you?" asked Smith presently.

"Oh, yes, do, do please," cried the exultant table, clapping their hands.

Whereupon Mr. Smith gave them the uproarious imitation of Harry Lauder that had made such a hit every time he did it at the Thistle Club, and at the Elks and after the Rotary meeting. After which Smith was just starting in to do Al Jolson for them when Mrs. Smith suddenly said:

"Good gracious, John, it's nearly a quarter to nine!"

And the family, still laughing and chuckling, made a rush from the table to get ready for school and the office.

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But that morning at eleven John Smith collapsed in his office and had to go home in a cab, Wilhelmina and Algebra were brought home from school with nervous exhaustion, and Mrs. Smith was found on the sitting-room sofa in a state verging on coma and didn't speak for two days.

And when medical service was called in, the doctor—such is the perversity of the profession—had the nerve to recommend complete quiet for all of them, and no mental excitement whatever.

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So, as a result, on their recovery the Smiths have gone back to breakfast as it used to be. Smith reads about the Hip Hoorah mine and murmurs: "Milk." The children work out French and algebra in their heads and Mrs. Smith's mind is on the eternal dress problem.

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In other words, human nature being what it is, you'd better leave it to its own way of doing things.

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# THE PERFECT OPTIMIST

## or day-dreams in a dental chair

Well, here we are again seated in the big red plush chair in for one of our jolly little mornings with our dentist. My! It certainly is cosy to settle back into this comfortable chair with a whole quiet morning in front of us—no work to do, no business to think of, just to lie in one of our comfortable day-dreams.

How pleasant it is in this chair, anyway, with the sunshine streaming in through the window upon us and illuminating every corner of the neat and immaculate little room in which we sit.

For immaculate neatness and cleanliness, I repeat, give me a little up-to-date dental room every time. Talk of your cosy libraries or your dens, they won't compare with this little nook. Here we are with everything we need around us, all within easy arm's-length reach. Here on this revolving tray are our pleasant little nippers, pincers and forceps, some so small and cute and others so big and strong that we feel a real confidence in them. They'd never let go of anything! Here is our dainty little electric buzzer with our revolving gimlets at the end; our little hammer on the left; our bradawl on the right—everything!

For the moment our dental friend is out of the room—telephoning, we imagine. The merry fellow is so popular with all his friends that they seem to ring him up every few minutes.

Little scraps of his conversation reach our ears as we lie half-buried in our white towel, in a sweet reverie of expectancy.

“Pretty bad in the night, was it, eh? Well, perhaps you'd better come along down and we'll make a boring through that bicuspid and see what's there!”

Full of ideas, he is, always like that—never discouraged, something new to suggest all the time. And then we hear him say: “Well, let me see. I'm busy now for about a couple of hours——” Hurrah! That means us! We were so afraid he was going to say, “I'll be through here in about five minutes.” But no, it's all right; we've got two long, dreamy hours in front of us.

He comes back into the room and his cheery presence, as he searches among his instruments and gives a preliminary buzz to the buzzer, seems to make the sunshine even brighter. How pleasant life seems—the dear old life; that is, the life we quitted ten minutes ago and to which, please Providence, we hope to return in two hours. We never felt till we sat here how full and pleasant life is. Think of it, the

simple joy of being alive. That's all we ask—of going to work each day (without a toothache) and coming home each night to eat our dinner. If only people realized it—just to live in our world without a toothache. . . .

So runs our pleasant reverie. But, meanwhile, our dental friend has taken up a little hammer and has tapped us, in his playful way, on the back teeth.

“Feel that?” he asks.

And he's right, the merry dog! We *do* feel it. He guessed it right away. We are hoping so much that he will hit us again.

Come on, let's have a little more fun like that. But no. He's laid aside his hammer and as nearly as we can see has rolled up his cuffs to the elbow and has started his good old electric buzzer into a roar.

Ah, ha! Now we are going to get something—this is going to be the big fun, the real thing. That's the greatest thing about our little dental mornings, there's always something new. Always as we sit we have a pleasant expectancy that our dental friend is planning a new one.

Now, then, let us sit back tight, while he drives at our jaw with the buzzer. Of all the exhilarating feelings of hand-to-hand conflict, of man against man, of mind matched against mind, and intelligence pitted against intelligence, I know of none more stimulating than when we brace ourselves for this conflict of man and machinery. He has on his side the power of electricity and the force of machinery.

But we are not without resource. We brace ourselves, laughingly, in our chair while he starts to bore. We need, in fact, our full strength; but, on the other hand, if he tries to keep up at this pace his hands will get tired. We realize, with a sense of amusement, that if his machine slips, he may get a nasty thump on the hand against our jawbone.

He slacks off for just a second—half withdraws his machine and says, “Were you at the football match yesterday?” and then starts his instrument again at full roar.

“Were we at the football match yesterday?” How strange it sounds! “Why, yes, of course we were!” In that far-away long-ago world where they play football and where there is no toothache—we were there only yesterday afternoon.

Yes, we remember, it was just towards the end of that game that we felt those twinges in one of the—what does he call it, the lower molars? Anyway, one of those twinges which started the exultant idea racing through our minds, “To-morrow we'll have to go to the dentist.”

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A female voice speaking into the room has called him to the telephone, and again we are alone. What if he never comes back!

The awful thought leaps to our minds, what if he comes in and says, "I'm sorry to say I have to take a train out of town at once." How terrible!

Perhaps he'll come in and say, "Excuse me, I have to leave instantly for Canada!" or, "I'll have to let your work go; they've sent for me to go to China!"

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But no, how lucky! Back he comes again. We've not lost him. And now what is he at? Stuffing cotton-wool up into our head, wool saturated with some kind of drugs, and pounding it in with a little hammer.

And then—all of a sudden, so it seems—he steps back and says, "There, that will do nicely till Monday!" And we rise half-dazed from our chair to realize in our disappointment that it is over already. Somehow we had thought that our pleasant drowsy morning of pounding and boring and dreaming in the sunlight, while our dental friend mixed up something new, would last for ever. And now, all of a sudden, it is over.

Never mind! After all, he said Monday! It won't seem so long till then! And meantime we can think about it all day and look forward to it and imagine how it is going to feel. Oh! It won't be long.

And so we step out into the street—full of cotton-wool and drugs and electricity and reverie—like a person returning to a forgotten world and dazed to find it there.

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# 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. . . .

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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-do-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.



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## “TUM AND PLAY DOLF”

### what will happen when miniature golf gets in its effect on the human mind

A couple of little boys stood looking in at the lighted and attractive entrance of the miniature golf course. Little boys—well, that is what I took them to be at first sight. Their little frilled dresses, their bare knees with little white socks and slippers, seemed to belong to any age from four up to ten. But at a second look I saw that their faces were those of grown-up men.

“Is ’oo goin’ in?” asked one of the other.

The other nodded. He had a piece of money held tight in one hand and a candy stick in the other.

“Tum on,” said the first.

Then, as the two little boys—or little boy-men—passed under the bright lights at the arched entrance, I recognized them as no “little boys” at all. One of them was the general manager of one of our banks and the other, the little fellow with the candy stick, one of his chief directors.

“Oo wait outside, nurse,” they called back, and then I noticed for the first time a neat-looking woman in a nurse’s uniform, standing beside a large double perambulator.

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Let me stop here to explain that I had been abroad for over a year and had just returned home. I knew nothing of the sudden and universal craze for Tom Thumb or Miniature golf which had invaded this entire country. Still less could I guess, or for the matter of that, still less could anybody guess, the extraordinary effect which it was producing upon the mentality of the present generation.

I stood looking with amazement at the varied concourse of people jostling eagerly about the entrance. Many of them were undoubtedly children, while others, though indubitably grown up in years and stature, seemed to have assumed the garb, or at any rate the expression, of little children. One saw a jumble of sailor suits, little frilled frocks and all the insignia of childhood.

I turned for a moment to the woman in the nurse’s uniform who still stood slightly aside from the entrance waiting beside the large double perambulator.

“I beg your pardon,” I said, “I think I know the two—the two young folks in your charge. Did you bring them up from down town?”

“Yes, sir,” she replied. “I always call at the bank just at closing time for Master Charles and Master Freddy. You see, sir, Master Charles is general manager and he always rides down to his work in his own car in the morning as he has for years; but after the bank closes, sir, nothing will do Master Charles but he must ride up in this perambulator with Master Freddy. They say they take all the pennies they can find out of the cashier’s drawer when he isn’t looking, so as to have money to get in. I think they look real cute to-day in their new frocks, don’t you, sir?”

I remained lost in amazement, without an answer.

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I was roused out of my reverie by a voice beside me.

“Queer sight, isn’t it?”

I turned to recognize the tall figure of my friend Dr. Chipton, the distinguished physician. His fine figure, his keen face and his neat and sober costume contrasted favourably with the motley juvenility around us.

“Queer sight, isn’t it?” he repeated, as he shook hands. “You’ve been away from town, haven’t you, so it must be all new to you. But it certainly is the most extraordinary phenomenon of the kind which I can recall. It is evidently a form of mob aberration, one of those phases of collective psychology which we are just beginning to investigate.”

The doctor’s eye rested on the entering crowd.

“Odd,” he kept murmuring, “very odd.”

Yet somehow as I watched him the doctor himself seemed to be feeling a special fascination in the motley liveliness, the blatant childishness of the spectacle.

He turned to me again.

“Would ’oo like,” he began, and then with a frown, correcting himself, “Would you like to come in and look around for a minute? I dot tum pennies—I mean, I have some money.”

We entered.

I need not dwell on the details of the spectacle that confronted us on entering into the covered and lighted premises of the miniature golf. It was like passing through the portals of a baby world. Little wee hillocks of grass were interspersed with tiny roads and little trees. All of a sudden it brought back to me the world as I knew it at three years old, far beyond the mists of present memory. There it all was, the little square of green, the little frames of field and trees, all vague in distance to the infant mind, with neither proportion nor direction; something seen before the age of calculated distance, and of a brightness and sweetness long since lost in the arid pathways of life. . . .

“Goo-goo . . .” I began, and then with an effort of will checked the queer gurgling infantile language that seemed to come to my lips. . . . What was it I wanted to say? “Booful?” Was that the word? I gathered my faculties together and looked about me.

The scene before me, I repeat, is at present so familiar to so many thousands of people that I need not describe it. But to me it was all new, and it came to me with an unwonted suddenness which perhaps added to the innocence of my vision. It was not only that the landscape was transformed, but the people—all the little people, if they *were* little—all the children, if they *were* children, who flocked up and down the queer obstructions and alley-ways, chasing little balls about with tiny clubs.

I could see my two friends who had arrived together in the perambulator, in eager rivalry over a tiny tunnel that seemed to them no doubt a vast cavern. “Me ahead of ’oo,” shouted Charlie, the bank president, while little Freddy turned angrily with his uplifted stick. “’Oo don’t play fair!” he cried, half sobbing. “’Oo hit ’oo ball out of turn.”

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Little scenes like this were being duplicated all over the course. The grown-up children seemed to be alternately laughing and crying, fighting and making friends with the happy carelessness of childhood. Little girls of fifty stood coyly round with admiring glances at funny little fat boys of sixty. “Would ’oo like a peppermint tandy?” I heard one little boy (a judge in the outside world) saying to a pudgy little girl in light blue, whose grandchildren to my knowledge were already entering the university.

Grown-up attendants in monkey uniforms, carrying little bags of clubs, moved about among the players, aiding their game and composing their little quarrels.

One of them approached us. “Like to play, sir?” he asked the doctor. “Like to take some clubs?” His manner was firm, almost compelling, his eye fixed and direct.

“No, no,” said the doctor hastily, almost rudely, it seemed to me. He spoke like a man thrusting away temptation.

I turned to him. “What do you make of it all?” I asked the doctor.

He seemed to hesitate a moment before he answered, and his mouth seemed to frame the word “me” and “oo” several times before he could get started into articulate speech.

“I don’t think it’s hard to explain,” he said at last. “The psychological basis of it has been familiar for a long time. We know all about the extraordinary power of visual suggestion and the still greater power of collective hallucination. Look at India where hundreds of people sit round and see a man—who isn’t there at all—climb up

into the air by a ladder which doesn't exist. So here, all this collective fun and childishness——” He broke suddenly off. “Would 'oo like to take a 'tick and 'tart a game? . . .” Then he murmured, “Damn it,” and seemed to retire into himself. But I noticed that his hands were beginning to move in a queer uncontrolled way.

“There's more to it than that,” continued the doctor after a pause, speaking now in a quiet and restrained voice. “Don't you see that in real truth the world of the child is a prettier and brighter world than yours and mine? Don't you see that it is a sort of lost paradise from which long ago we were ruthlessly expelled? The pretty world of infancy undisfigured by distance, by calculation, a world of unconscious freedom among the tossing flowers and the towering grass, a world without sorrow or death——this is what even the least imaginative is brought back to by the neat alleys and little crooked pathways of this place.

“Not but what,” the doctor continued, and he seemed as he spoke to have entirely recovered his mental poise, “there may be danger in it, mental danger. It may be a first sign. I've often wondered, you know, whether this machine age of ours isn't too great a strain upon the human brain——whether we aren't in danger of a sort of collective breakdown.”

“Have a set of clubs, sir,” said the attendant again. Something in his fixed gaze and steady voice seemed to suggest a sort of magic, something Eastern, a fascination hard to resist.

“No, no,” said the doctor quickly. “Not to-day, I tell you, not to-day. . . .” Then he resumed: “You can see the medical consequences of this thing also. You see that little boy there, yes, on the right, the one they are calling Eddie——well, not really a little boy, of course, he's a middle-aged man, but if your eyes are getting as disturbed as mine are he *looks* like a little boy, at any rate, in that queer little suit with his hat on sideways. Well, anyway, he is, or he was till yesterday, one of our biggest men, president of an important railway, though I admit he always had an extraordinary leaning toward sport. What do you think he proposed yesterday at the board meeting?”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the attendant, coming up again. “Were you reaching out for clubs?”

“No, no,” said the doctor, almost fiercely, “I was only gesticulating.”

The attendant moved aside, his eye still upon us.

The doctor sighed and continued: “Why, he actually proposed that instead of the present equipment they substitute a little wee railway with cars only two feet high and little wee tin stations with wooden poplar trees. They say the directors nearly voted it——a lot of them play this thing, and of course it has a damn queer sort of fascination,

hasn't it?"

"Clubs, sir," said the attendant.

"No," the doctor almost screamed—"and you see that other one playing near him, yes, the one he called Percy, well, that's a leading stockbroker whom perhaps you know. Would you believe it, he proposed to the exchange yesterday that they use in future a tiny little house made of cardboard, with money all made of little wee pieces of tin. . . . He got so worked up over it they thought of taking him to the hospital——"

The doctor broke off with a wild queer laugh, quite unlike his usual voice or intonation,

"—though, as to the hospital," he said, "it did strike me that it would be a damn funny idea—eh, what?—to do away with the huge fool building we have now, and have a tiny little wee hospital of beaverboard—you know—just big enough to crawl into—eh, what?—with cute little wee beds——"

"Clubs, sir?" said the attendant.

"Yes, yes," yelled the doctor, "by all means dim me a club. Mee doin' a play dolf. Me doin' a play——"

He began throwing off his coat and trying to roll up his sleeves, and then:

"Dimme a club too," I shouted. "Me play dolf wiz 'oo! Look at booful dolf ground!"

And with that I waved my hand in wild excitement at the prospect.

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Waved it and *hit it*. Hit it, I suppose, on the little railing or fence outside the entrance to the golf course. For that is where I found myself standing when the knocking of my hand against the wood brought me back to myself.

I looked around. There were people going in and out, suddenly grown prosaic and ordinary. There was a neat-looking woman waiting for two little boys—lights, people, the tall doctor standing beside me—and beyond that, nothing.

The gates of the lost world of childhood had closed again.

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# HO FOR HAPPINESS

## a plea for lighter and brighter literatur

“Why is it,” said some one in conversation the other day, “that all the really good short stories seem to contain so much sadness and suffering and to turn so much on crime and wickedness? Why can’t they be happy all the time?”

No one present was able to answer the question. But I thought it over afterwards, and I think I see why it is so. A happy story, after all, would make pretty dull reading. It may be all right in real life to have everything come along just right, with happiness and good luck all the time, but in fiction it would never do.

Stop, let me illustrate the idea. Let us make up a story which is happy all the time and contrast it as it goes along with the way things happen in the really good stories.

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Harold Herald never forgot the bright October morning when the mysterious letter, which was to alter his whole life, arrived at his downtown office.

His stenographer brought it in to him and laid it on his desk.

“A letter for you,” she said. Then she kissed him and went out again.

Harold sat for some time with the letter in front of him. Should he open it? After all, why not?

He opened the letter. Then the idea occurred to him to read it. “I might as well,” he thought.

“Dear Mr. Herald” (so ran the letter), “if you will have the kindness to call at this office, we shall be happy to tell you something to your great advantage.”

The letter was signed John Scribman. The paper on which it was written bore the heading “Scribman, Scribman & Company, Barristers, Solicitors, etc., No. 13 Yonge St.”

A few moments later saw Harold on his way to the lawyers’ office. Never had the streets looked brighter and more cheerful than in this perfect October sunshine. In fact, they never had been.

Nor did Harold’s heart misgive him and a sudden suspicion enter his mind as Mr. Scribman, the senior partner, rose from his chair to greet him. Not at all. Mr. Scribman was a pleasant, middle-aged man whose countenance behind his gold spectacles beamed with goodwill and good nature.

“Ah, Mr. Harold Herald,” he said, “or perhaps you will let me call you simply Harold. I didn’t like to give you too much news in one short letter. The fact is that

our firm has been entrusted to deliver to you a legacy, or rather a gift. . . . Stop, stop!” continued the lawyer, as Harold was about to interrupt with questions, “. . . our client’s one request was that his name would not be divulged. He thought it would be so much nicer for you just to have the money and not know who gave it to you.”

Harold murmured his assent.

Mr. Scribman pushed a bell.

“Mr. Harold Herald’s money, if you please,” he said.

A beautiful stenographer wearing an American Beauty rose at her waist entered the room carrying a silken bag.

“There is half a million dollars here in five-hundred-dollar bills,” said the lawyer. “At least, we didn’t count them, but that is what our client said. Did you take any?” he asked the stenographer.

“I took out a few last night to go to the theatre with,” admitted the girl with a pretty blush.

“Monkey!” said Mr. Scribman. “But that’s all right. Don’t bother with a receipt, Harold. Come along with me: my daughter is waiting for us down below in the car to take us to lunch.”

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Harold thought he had never seen a more beautiful girl than Alicia Scribman. In fact he hadn’t. The luxurious motor, the faultless chauffeur, the presence of the girl beside him and the bag of currency under the seat, the sunlit streets filled with happy people with the bright feeling of just going back to work, full of lunch—the sight of all this made Harold feel as if life were indeed a pleasant thing.

“After all,” he mused, “how little is needed for our happiness! Half a million dollars, a motor-car, a beautiful girl, youth, health—surely one can be content with that . . .”

It was after lunch at the beautiful country home of the Scribmans that Harold found himself alone for a few minutes with Miss Scribman.

He rose, walked over to her and took her hand, kneeling on one knee and pulling up his pants so as not to make a crease in them.

“Alicia!” he said. “Ever since I first saw you, I have loved you. I want to ask you if you will marry me?”

“Oh, Harold,” said Alicia, leaning forward and putting both her arms about his neck with one ear against the upper right-hand end of his cheekbone. “Oh, Harold!”

“I can, as you know,” continued Harold, “easily support you.”

“Oh, that’s all right,” said Alicia. “As a matter of fact, I have much more than

that of my own, to be paid over to me when I marry.”

“Then you will marry me?” said Harold rapturously.

“Yes, indeed,” said Alicia, “and it happens so fortunately just now, as papa himself is engaged to marry again and so I shall be glad to have a new home of my own. Papa is marrying a charming girl, but she is so much younger than he is that perhaps she would not want a grownup stepdaughter.”

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Harold made his way back to the city in a tumult of happiness. Only for a moment was his delirium of joy brought to a temporary standstill.

As he returned to his own apartment, he suddenly remembered that he was engaged to be married to his cousin Winnie. . . . The thing had been entirely washed out of his mind by the flood-tide of his joy.

He seized the telephone.

“Winnie,” he said, “I am so terribly sorry. I want to ask you to release me from our engagement. I want to marry someone else.”

“That’s all right, Hal!” came back Winnie’s voice cheerfully. “As a matter of fact, I want to do the same thing myself. I got engaged last week to the most charming man in the world, a little older, in fact quite a bit older than I am, but ever so nice. He is a wealthy lawyer and his name is Walter Scribman. . . .”

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The double wedding took place two weeks later, the church being smothered with chrysanthemums and the clergyman buried under Canadian currency. Harold and Alicia built a beautiful country home at the other side—the farthest-away side—of the city from the Scribmans’. A year or so after their marriage, they had a beautiful boy, and then another, then a couple of girls (twins), and then they lost count.

There. Pretty dull reading it makes. And yet, I don’t know. There’s something about it, too. In the real stories Mr. Scribman would have been a crook, and Harold would have either murdered Winnie or been accused of it, and the stenographer with the rose would have stolen the money instead of just taking it, and it wouldn’t have happened in bright, clear October weather but in dirty old November—oh, no, let us have romance and happiness, after all. It may not be true, but it’s better.



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# TENNIS AT THE SMITHS'

## a simple statement of the facts

It was agreed by all the Smith family when they took their Lake Shore bungalow for the summer that it was a great thing to have a tennis court. The fact that the ground was a little bit cramped, and that there wasn't much room between the end of the court and the cedar trees, didn't matter. After all, tennis is tennis. You don't need an absolutely first-class court just for ordinary summer play. You can have all the fun you want on just a plain bit of grass, leaving to the professionals the high-class clay courts and all that sort of thing.

In other words, there is no doubt of the enthusiasm of the Smith family over having a court. The fact that they never played on it during the summer is not to be put down to any lack of enthusiasm.

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The court as they found it in May was naturally in rather poor shape. It had a lot of coarse grass in it and there were a good many large stones, almost boulders, in the ground.

But as Mr. Smith—the head of the family—said when he came out for his first week-end, the only way to get rid of the boulders was to take your coat off and get to work at them. He said that in business a man learned the habit of going right at a thing: the more difficult it was, the better it was to get at it without delay.

Mr. Smith took his coat off and got to work with an iron bar to take the stones out. At the end of the afternoon he had scratched around four stones, partly lifted one, and partly dislocated his shoulder.

Next day he said he had no time to go on with it, and so Mrs. Smith said she would get a man to come and do it. As in most families, whenever it was found that Mr. Smith tried and failed to do anything, they sent and fetched a man, a real one, and he did it.

So Mrs. Smith got a man and he took out the stones, and got a man to mow the grass with a sickle and run a lawn-mower over it, and got a man to trim back the cedar trees a little at the end of the court.

By the end of the second week in May the man had the court all ready, except just marking it. But Mrs. Smith told the man that that didn't matter: her husband or her sons would mark the court.

It turned out that this was the fatal error.

Mr. Smith undertook first to mark the tennis court when he came up in May. Mr. Smith is a methodical man. When he does things, he does them right. He is fond of saying that when you take over a job, either do it well or don't do it at all. He claims he owes a great deal of his business success to this simple maxim.

Mr. Smith said that to do the court properly he must first cut a set of little pegs, so as to put in one at each intersection of the lines. By this means you knew where you were.

To cut the pegs, Mr. Smith needed to make use of a small hatchet, and he found the hatchet too dull to do the work properly. Get your tools into good shape, he used to say, and your job is half done.

So Mr. Smith undertook first of all to sharpen up the hatchet. That involved fixing up the grindstone so as to make it turn properly without wobbling. If your grindstone doesn't turn true, you'll never get a proper edge on your tool. . . . When the day closed Mr. Smith was looking for some turpentine to clean a file, to file a saw, to cut a board, to make a stand for the grindstone. The court was still not marked. Mr. Smith went back to town that Monday. Attack number one had failed.

The next attempt to mark the court was made by Wilfred Smith, eldest son of the family, just after his return from college where he had taken a brilliant course in mathematics.

Wilfred said that there was no difficulty about marking a tennis court if you just applied a little mathematics. There was no need to cut a whole lot of pegs: all you wanted was a couple of straight lines with a right angle between them and then to remember that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the two sides. This proposition, Wilfred says, dates back at least to Pythagoras, and was probably known to the ancient Egyptians. The help that it affords in marking a tennis court is quite obvious. If the court is 36 feet wide and 70 feet long, all you have to do is to take the square of 36 and add to it the square of 70 and then take the square root of what you get. This will be the cross distance and will exactly locate the bearings of the court.

It was 11 a.m. when Wilfred Smith began ciphering. At twelve he was still at work. At twelve-thirty he broke off to try and hunt up a book that showed how to take the square root of anything. He couldn't find it. There were very few books in the bungalow and not even a Life of Pythagoras. Wilfred worked on at the problem that afternoon. Finally he worked out the square root by algebra. He said that it was a complicated process, but that it could be done. When he got the result, it showed that the cross distance from corner to corner on a tennis court is a little over a quarter of a mile. This would have put the tennis court away out in the lake. Wilfred

quit. And, anyway, he had to go away next day to attend his college commencement and receive his honour degree in mathematics.

Attack number two had failed.

The next attempt to mark the tennis court was made just at the end of June by Renee and Gene, the two girls of the family. They just got an old broom and a big pot of whitening and water and had the whole thing done in half an hour. Unfortunately they put three courts on each side of the net instead of two. This meant that the court couldn't be played on, but Mrs. Smith said it didn't matter as they would only have to wait till the rain washed out the lines.

All July it didn't rain. It rained everywhere else, but not at the Smiths' bungalow. There was a cloudburst in Texas, and in British India they had the wettest season in fifty years.

But it didn't rain at the Smiths' bungalow.

At the beginning of August, when at last the whitening disappeared, the two little Smith boys marked out the court one evening after tea. Unluckily they used flour by mistake and dogs came in the night and ate the service line.

After that Mr. Smith learned that the simplest way to mark a tennis court is to buy tapes, all ready joined and numbered. You nail these to the ground and there you are. No one, it seems, uses whitening any more, once he has got on to the idea of the tapes. Mr. Smith got the tapes and spent all of one afternoon crawling around the court with a hammer and nails and tapes and a little paper of directions which said: Lay down the point A at a rectangular distance from B, and so on. When Mr. Smith got the first half of the court done, he realized that he had nailed it all down crosswise instead of lengthwise. So he said "Oh, hec," and pulled up all the tapes and threw them into the garage.

Finally about the end of August Mrs. Smith did what she ought to have done at the start. She got a man to come and mark the court—not her husband, nor her sons, but a man.

The man was a painter—house and sign—not portraits. He came over from the village with some stuff mixed up in a little pot no bigger than a silk hat, one little brush, and a piece of board.

He had the court all marked in an hour and a half. He charged one dollar and twenty cents.

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But, as a matter of fact, it had grown so late in the season that the Smiths didn't use the court. The boys were on the lake all day, and Mr. Smith needed all his time for golf, and the girls wanted the afternoons for bridge.

But the court is there, all ready to play on.

In fact, Mrs. Smith is thinking of getting a man to come and play on it.

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# 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 passage-ways and heavy oaken doors, suggested almost the dignity and solemnity of a crypt.

“How old are these cellars, Meadows?” I inquired.

“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 nearby 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 Quays, 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. . . .

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# THE FLYING CARPET

but where could it fly to now ?

Suddenly there appeared to me the other day, in the midst of my daily life—as a dream, or a moment's reverie, or, if you will, as a reality—the Magic Arabian, the Flying Carpet.

Swarthy and dark he was, with a red fez and dangling jewellery and a beard as of Haroun al Raschid, once Caliph of Bagdad.

On the ground before me he spread his Magic Carpet, bright with interwoven red and gold and tasselled at the corners, with all the tints of the golden sands of Samarkand.

“Buy it,” he said.

“What is it for?” I asked.

“Sit but on it and utter a wish and it shall transport you to the ends of the earth: it shall take you into the uttermost corners of the globe; there you shall see the strange people of the world, the dwellers of the unknown frozen regions of the North where life itself expires; the pygmy men of the jungles of Equatorial Africa, the grand Llama of Tibet——”

“You speak with imagination,” I said. “Who are you?”

“I am the shade of Hasheesh, the Arabian poet.”

“Dead long?”

“Since the year of the Great Plague, the Arabian year 700.”

“What do I have to pay for the carpet?” I asked.

“One hundred shekels of beaten silver.”

“Can I have a ride first and try it out and see if it is worth it?”

“Come,” said Hasheesh, and we sat down on the carpet. “What will you see first?”

“I would like to go first,” I answered, “first of all to the Frozen North where the lonely Eskimos live in their igloos of snow——”

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Even as I spoke the carpet rushed up into the air and we were borne away with incredible speed.

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A moment later, as it seemed, we descended in the Arctic regions. But it was not so very snowy, mostly piles of rock. Nor did we see any igloos of snow, but what

seemed to be, here and there, low houses of stone.

An Eskimo came walking towards us. He was not dressed in furs, but in an ordinary golf suit with a forage cap on his head and a bag of clubs in his hand. He was smoking a cigarette.

I went out to meet him.

"I saw your plane coming," he said. "You've parked it behind that rock, haven't you? The black fellow's your pilot, isn't he? You seemed to be making very good time."

"Yes," I said, "we came fast."

"As a matter of fact," continued the Eskimo, "I was rather afraid you might come a nasty cropper, landing where you did. Most of the planes that come land farther over that way beyond the Golf Club."

"Do you have a Golf Club?" I inquired.

"Why, of course," he said.

"What? Up here in the Frozen North?"

"My dear fellow," laughed the Eskimo. "Do drop that 'frozen north' stuff. It's entirely played out. But I'm afraid I'm forgetting my duty to a stranger. You must be tired. Perhaps you'd like some tea, or if you care to come over to the Kayak Club I can give you some really good whisky. My bootlegger is absolutely reliable."

"No, thank you," I said, "I'm not thirsty."

"Well, what about a game of golf? Come across to the club and I'll get a couple of chaps to make a foursome."

We walked over to the great igloo of stone that constituted the clubhouse of the Kayak Club.

A number of Eskimos were seated about, smoking cigarettes and drinking dry ginger ale.

One of them was talking earnestly—

"I don't claim," he was saying, "that the gold standard was perfect. But the way I see it is, that now we are off the gold standard here in Sloopernaavik, we'd better stay off. It was a shock, and for a while we were on thin ice. But things are cooling off and the gold standard, at two grains troy to the kyak——"

"Just wait a minute," I said to my companion. "I want to go back and speak to my pilot."

I went back to where Hasheesh was sitting on the carpet behind some big rocks.

I sat down beside him. "Hasheesh," I said, "this place is no good for me. There is no uttermost corner of the earth about this."

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With a rush the carpet was up in the air. I was conscious of passing with incredible speed over the ocean thousands of feet below, of rushing across the green plains of Europe, of passing over the vast ranges of the Himalayas, and then all in a moment we dropped down in Tibet.

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The Grand Llama was seated on the piazza of the Llama House. (Rooms from twelve shillings up.)

He was in a rocking chair and had his feet upon another. He wore a flowing robe, but it was really a linen duster—the kind they wear up in the Welsh mountains.

He was talking to a couple of other Llamas.

“I tell you, gentlemen,” he was saying, “the best thing that ever happened to us, was when the Americans bumped us off the gold standard. I don’t say that it didn’t work fairly well for a time. But I always felt that one of these centuries it would break down. If we do bring it back, it certainly won’t be at the old rate of two pennyweights to the goal. You see, the gold standard——”

At this moment the Grand Llama noticed my approach and turned towards me with a polite bow.

“We were speaking of the gold standard,” he said. “Perhaps, sir, if you have just planed over from Europe, you can tell us the latest news of its operation. Is the Mint price of the English sovereign as compared with New York discount on sterling ——?”

“It is,” I said, “and I’ll tell you all about it. But just sit quiet in your rocking chair for a minute while I speak to my chauffeur.”

I went across the hotel court-yard (dogs only admitted when on a leash) to where Hasheesh sat beside a flower-bed of American Beauty roses and a hedge of English ivy.

“Hasheesh,” I said, “get out the carpet and beat it. This uttermost end of the earth is no better than the other. Let us hit it out for the real thing this time. Make tracks for the very heart of Equatorial Africa where the pygmies live.”

And at the word the Magic Carpet rose again into the air. It rushed across the great snows of the Himalayas and the sandy deserts of Baluchistan. The Red Sea passed as a streak of blue and then the deserts and the Nile, and after that the great Equatorial forests in endless billows of green.

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Where we landed there was an open space in the forest covered with grass and sand, and built in it a huge kraal of dried grass, a vast structure like an enormous beehive.

From within the great kraal there came the babel of hundreds of voices and the measured beat of the tom-toms.

“Ha! Ha!” I exclaimed. “This is the real thing at last!”

Towards us there came from the kraal across the grass, two pygmies.

They were diminutive little men dressed in gingerbread suits with Derby hats.

“Howdy?” they said, both together with a friendly grin.

“How-do-you-do?” I answered. “And will you please tell me what is going on? Are you practising the sacred rites of Voodoo in the big kraal over there?”

“No, no,” said the senior pygmy with another grin. “It’s the Kiwanis Club. We generally have our meetings on Mondays, but this is the first Monday in the month and so it’s Ladies’ Day. They’re at lunch now, but the speeches haven’t yet begun.”

“Luncheon!” I said. “Speeches! Ladies’ Day! And is this Africa?”

“It’s Africa all right,” laughed the pygmy. “But do come inside. The Chairman sent us out to invite you in. You’ll just be in time to see them take the straw vote.”

“The straw vote?” I asked.

“Yes, they’re beating the tom-toms for silence now, and then they’ll take the vote.”

“What is it about?” I inquired.

“They are voting to see whether, here in Pygmalia, we’ll abandon the gold standard for the coco-nut standard. Some of them think that the gold standard——”

“Hasheesh!” I murmured, “the carpet—quick, the carpet. Let me get back to where I came from.”

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And with that I was back again in the department store where I was buying rugs for my new house. Before me on the floor was the rug of red and gold with tasselled edges from Samarkand, which had occasioned my reverie.

Beside it knelt the Arabian attendant with the beard of Haroun al Raschid—or was he Arabian or just sunburned from his summer vacation?

“This,” he was saying, “is a very valuable rug.”

“It is indeed,” I answered.

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# COME AND SEE OUR TOWN

## how the visitor feels when shown around

It often falls to my lot, as no doubt to that of other people, to be “shown around the town.” Most people whose business or pleasure takes them into our smaller towns will know just what I mean. You land at the railway station, step out of the train, and there he is waiting for you—your host or your friend, your customer or your patron, or whatever he happens to be—waiting to take you for a ride around the town.

You had hoped, though you knew it was no use hoping, that he would not be there, that you might get a chance to go quietly to the hotel by yourself, that he might miss the train, or that by good luck he might be ill—dangerously ill. But no, he was there. He was always there.

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“Glad to see you,” he called, as he backed his car to the edge of the platform at the railway station. “Get right in and we’ll take a little run around the town before I drop you at the hotel. Wait a minute, I’m afraid that door don’t quite catch—There!

“Little wet, isn’t it? It’s a pity you didn’t come yesterday. Everything was looking much better. On a damp morning like this, things don’t look so good.”

[“They certainly don’t,” I said, only I said it to myself. “In fact, if you ask me my private opinion of your town, I should say it looks about the dingiest, meanest place I was ever in.” This, I say, I merely thought to myself, in these monologues with the local patriot you never get a chance to speak out; at best, you can only murmur. He does all the broadcasting.]

“Around the station here, of course,” he continued, “it always looks burnt-up and dusty so far on in the summer as this. You really ought to have been here in May, when the peonies were out. They sometimes call this place, ‘Peony Town.’ They say it’s the greatest place for peonies east of the Mississippi. Pity you couldn’t have come sooner and seen them.”

[“Pity!” I murmured. “It’s a heart-break. If I’d been here in May, I’d have been clean back safe home right now.”]

“Now here we cross the river—I’ll have to drive a bit slow because this bridge is not as sound as it ought to be. They call this the Grand River. Of course, it’s run

down pretty small now and so late in the season it's full of mud, but it's a great sight here in April when the water's high. I wish you had been here in April to see it——”

[“I wish I had,” I thought, “then I needn't have come in May.”]

“—farther up the river—it's quite a few miles—are the Forks; they say it's about the most beautiful spot in North America. I've heard people say who have been across to Europe that there isn't a more lovely spot anywhere in Europe than right up here at the Forks. I wish you could stay over a day and I could drive you up there and you'd be astonished.”

[“Astonished!” I said. “I'd fall dead. Only, thank heaven, there is no power in the physical universe that will keep me off the 5 p.m. train this afternoon.”]

“Now, this, what we're coming into, is the business section——”

[“Let me understand myself,” I murmured. “Do you mean that this little collection of two-story houses, with the hardware store on one side and the drug store on the other, is actually called a business section? This!”]

“The town is pretty quiet to-day. But I wish you could stay over till Saturday night and see this place when all the farmers come in.”

[“What a treat!”]

“Here is our new Y.M.C.A. building. They say that it is about the most handsome building of the sort south of the Great Lakes. And that next to it is the public library. They say it's one of the best-designed libraries north of the Equator. It's got 10,000 books, or is it 100,000? I forget. It's closed to-day, or I'd take you in and have a look around. You'd be interested in meeting Mr. Smith, the librarian. I'm sorry you couldn't have stayed over till to-morrow.”

[“Too bad,” I murmured.]

“Now, that's our new hospital up that street. If you put your head out of the window and twist it a little sideways, you can see the front door of it. I can't take you up, because it's a one-way street and they've got the traffic stopped, and, anyway, the pavement's torn up. But if you get your head a little farther out (shove your shoulders through the window) you could see the main entrance. I wish I could have taken you up there. I'd have introduced you to Dr. Smith, the resident doctor. You'd have been interested in seeing him.”

[I realized that another big opportunity had slipped past.]

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“That's our new United church along up that side, just past the trees. I can't drive you right to it, because they've got the pavement up, and, anyway, the pastor, the Reverend Mr. Smith, is away on his vacation. If you could have come next month, he'd have been back. You'd have been interested in seeing him.”

[Another chance lost.]

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On such an occasion this semi-monologue is carried on for about half an hour. At the end of this time you have learned that the population of the town is 13,400, but that undoubtedly it is really larger than that, as the census work was crooked; that if people only knew about it, it would be the greatest tourist centre east of the Rockies; that, even now, it is the third largest paper-bag making centre west of Paterson, N.J.; that the pavement is torn up in front of the United church, the hospital, the County Historical Museum, and the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, so you can't see them; that most of the interesting people, including the Head of the Asylum, the Warden of the Jail, the Chief of the Fire Brigade, and the Manager of the First National Bank, are out of town on their vacations; that you should have seen the town when the river was higher or lower; when the chestnut trees were out or else when they were dead; that you should have come in April—or in May—or in October—but not now; that you should have waited till the new rink was completed; that by coming to-day you have missed your whole chance of being at the chicken supper of the Rotary Club; that you've struck the one day when the band doesn't play in the park—the one day when no farmers come to town—the one day, the worst day, the meanest day of all the year to visit what ought to be, if it had its deserts, the most admired spot in America.

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And yet, please remember, there are two sides to this thing. Do you realize that the gentleman who has so kindly driven around his town for nothing goes back to his house and slings down his hat on the hall table with a sigh of weariness?

“My goodness,” he says to his wife, “I drove a man all around the town (they'd asked me to) and showed him everything, and he just sat there and didn't say a word; just seemed a regular nut.”

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Such are we all to one another.



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# INFLATION AND DEFLATION OR FLATION IN AND DE

A little while ago—just after the War ended, wasn't it?—everybody was absorbed in the idea of making things "bigger and brighter." There was a movement for a "bigger and brighter London," "bigger and brighter schools," "bigger and brighter gaols." These mass ideas always take effect. Things really began to get bigger and bigger, and brighter and brighter. Houses grew higher; apartments got larger; the streets got wider; the hotels went up, servants went up, food went up. Trains went faster; buses went still faster; motor-cars went faster still. Babies ran at two: children bicycled at six: old people flew at sixty.

Everything inflated and expanded. Narrow people got broad. Heavy people got light. Small-minded people got wider ideas. The whole race improved. There were beauty contests in every village, marathons for old men, efficiency tests for imbeciles and imbecility tests for the efficient.

The sheer lightness and brightness of things set everybody on the move. All the people in town rushed to the seaside. All the people who lived by the sea flocked to the town. Tourists filled all the hotels and the hotel men went on all the tours. The continent was full of Americans and Americans were full of the continent.

It began to get so big and so bright there really wasn't any night. Night was extinguished in a glare of light and a babel of sound. All round the bright world Jazz called to Jazz and radio squawked to radio. People in London listened at midnight to an anthem sung by priests in Tibet to-morrow morning: New York watched the pictures of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, hours before it happened.

And everywhere was money—money, money, lots of it. "Take it, my dear fellow, I don't need it. How much did you say?—ten pounds? Better have twenty, you might need it." Jones lent to Smith, Smith lent to Brown and Brown lent to Jones. Tokio floated a loan in New York and New York floated it back to South America. Money floated like scum all over the ocean.

Also investment. People without a penny invested thousands. Shopkeepers bought up mines and mines bought chain stores: bankers bought farms and farmers bought banks.

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Things certainly moved! Of course, the gaols were full, but a new cry had gone

out for “sunlight in every cell,” and so the gaols were big and bright with jazz music pouring out of every window, and with burglars telling the warden when to buy copper and when to drop nickel.

Buy! Soon you didn’t need to *buy*! You just *picked things up*! One man—I knew him—picked up a quarter of a mine in Northern British Columbia for a song—and he couldn’t sing, either. Another picked up twenty shares in a pearl fishery in Switzerland; another man got for practically nothing, or less, forty thirty-fifths of an ice plant in Greenland. There was something coming to everybody, and everybody got what was coming to him.

All this made a great intellectual brightening. Talk became so interesting! Everybody else’s mind seemed so bright—what with nickel and copper and Kansas hogs on the hoof, and Rhodesian cotton by the bale—and all going up! Every dinner party was a rattle of brilliant repartee made up of equal parts of arithmetic, geography, hogoaraphy and market biography; or of softer undertones, in whispered asides, such as “Hogs are up in Kansas, darling, by a cent and a half!” “Oh, Fred, isn’t that lovely?” “Yes, sweetheart, and Selected High Quarters are up higher still. They touched 25 cents.” “Oh, Fred, what a lot it will mean to mother!”

Of course, what was really happening was simply “inflation.” We were all just being “inflated” and we didn’t know it. The merry banker who shoved a hundred sovereigns across the counter, in that pleasant way he had, why, he was just inflated; that was all. The kindly broker who gave us—practically *gave* us—the shares in the Andalusian Asbestos Abattoir—he was just inflated. The merry waiter who squirted the champagne all over our shirt-front and wouldn’t charge for it—inflated. The jolly clergyman who ran the Mothers’ and Children’s lottery on the Abyssinia Sweepstake and cleaned up—you remember, cleaned up enough to send all the Home for Incurables to the seaside, and they never came back, drowned or something, but it didn’t matter——Well, of course, the whole thing was just inflation.

The Government, too. There was that terribly funny speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—nineteen-twenty-something, wasn’t it?—in which he said that he was afraid there was going to be a surplus, and the house roared!

All the world in those big and bright days seemed infected with something. Scientists tell us that there is a gas that could do it, a thing called by the technical name of protoxide of nitrogen, but also known as “laughing gas.” It was just as if we had each had a whiff of protoxide every hour or so and were inflated with it. It is just possible, so the geologists say, that this gas lurks in the depths and crevices of the earth under our feet and at times filters through and infects us. So that was what was wrong. We were all full of gas. When the Prime Minister—I forget which one—

made that splendid, buoyant, hopeful speech, ending with the words, “England! England!” and then fell over backwards while the house rocked and cheered—well—he was just full of gas. The merry fellows on the golf-links losing three-shilling balls on every other drive—the hilarious meetings of the shareholders, the gaiety of the Federated-Charities Tag-Day—all of it, just gas, merely inflation.

Too bad.

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That was it. All the brightness: all the laughter and the merriment of the present: the fond hopes for the future, the fortunes that seemed assured, the old age so comfortably provided for—so that was all it was, just inflation! The bright new world iridescent with the sunlit colours of the soap bubble! To think that it had to go!—

Of course, it *had* to go. It couldn’t last. Sooner or later there was bound to come a wave of depression. That is always the fate of our humanity. It no sooner gets set in any one direction than a wave of something knocks it into another. It is like a tired swimmer staggering ashore in front of a rising tide.

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So depression came, first here and then there and in little bits. Somebody staggered home from a lobster lunch and lay down flat and murmured, “I’m depressed.” People on tiptoe moved about him. “He’s depressed,” they whispered. Then more people and more; and so it spread. Depressed people won’t travel: so it was soon found that a wave of depression had hit the tourist business. Then another wave of it smothered the hotel business. So it kept spreading: the papers reported that copper was depressed, that rubber was sinking, that Kansas hogs on the hoof were feeling terrible. It reached economic social life: it appeared in little signs and notices: “Owing to the depression the miners will only mine just a little now and then,” or, “Owing to the depression the anniversary of Christopher Columbus will not be observed.”

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For all of which there is of course only one remedy, Deflation. We have got to deflate. In fact that is what we are doing now; we are being deflated. People look about them in this saddening world and wonder what is happening. What is this queer strange feeling that is reaching all of us?—this vague sense of discomfort and apprehension that never leaves us? Why has our bright world grown so dull,—all the things that were bigger and brighter and that are growing smaller and dingier?

How changed the people are! Where is that merry banker who shovelled me over the sovereigns—not this disobliging, discourteous dummy who tells me that my cheque is no good merely because there is no money in my account. Where is that

merry fellow who used to drive the three-shilling golf ball into the water hazard and laugh at it? Where? There he is, on all fours, upside down in the rushes beside the pond looking for the sixpenny ball that some one lost there last week.

All the world is getting like that; Michaelmas Jones who rode in his thousand-guinea car and weighed 250 pounds without his cuff-links is now walking and weighs only 150 pounds. He's deflating. But of course what he weighs now is troy weight—the fellow is a real Trojan.

Trojans all, but how dull they are. All they can talk of at dinner now is of the fall in copper, and the crash in rubber and the smash in wheat. Bright eyes grow dim with tears about the whispered rumour that bullock hides have fallen again. Old people sit with clasped hands, silent all evening because they know now that Siamese pig-iron is unsaleable. They are sitting silent, deflating. Their married daughter who was going to take a trip to the continent is not going: she will stay at home and deflate in Devonshire. The American tourists who were going to make a tour in Devonshire will stay at home and deflate in Kansas City. . . .

How changed, this bigger and brighter world!

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But listen! If this process of deflation has got to go on, let's get at it and deflate in earnest and with good-will. I'll confess, if you will, that I wasn't brought up to ride in a taxi: I'll confess, if you will, that till three years ago I never owned a single gold-mine: I'll admit that it is not so long ago that I used to be afraid of a waiter, and could eat without a finger-bowl: that I used to do such ridiculous things as turn off an electric bulb when I went out just to save light: that I only ate three meals a day and thought that Pâté de Foie Gras was the name of a French general.

We must all deflate. And the young people most of all. How ridiculous—in the inflated days—to call for a girl in a hired car to take her to a dance only three or four miles away! Let her walk. How insane to bring her a great bunch of hothouse roses! Let her twine a wild rose in her hair, the way our grandmother did: or go out with her to the meadows or the pasture and find an early cowslip. We must have deflated courtship, and deflated weddings, with a mournful best man, gloomy little deflated bridesmaids, and a clergyman with all the gas gone out of him.

We must get down to it.

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After all, it won't last for ever. Things never do. Not for nothing did nature frame this universe in spinning circular orbits. Things come around again. Something is bound to happen. Perhaps some one will get up a war, a really destructive war, the only thing humanity seems to understand, one big enough to restore prosperity. Not

right here, of course. But perhaps we could get Brazil—it's an ambitious country—to invade Mongolia. Then the sharp rise in coffee will start an upward movement in leather and a boom in copper and a gold-rush to Patagonia and there we are—spinning again and with the gas turned on full.

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But, till then, let us take our deflation like men,—shrinking, contracting, subtracting, condensing, getting smaller and denser and duller—but at least—men.

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# L'ENVOI: WHAT NEXT?

## a glimpse into our ultimate future

There are certain people, of whom I am one, who have the peculiar gift of looking into the future. I believe it is often called "peering" into the future. But I don't need to "peer." I just look; and the farther I look the better I see.

This peculiar gift, which is technically called "prophetic vision," is one of the most unchallenged assets that anyone can possess. Provided it is kept well ahead of the present, say a hundred years in advance, it involves nothing of what we call, on my side of the Atlantic, a "come back."

I propose to exercise this gift now on behalf of the readers of this book and to show to them the kind of world in which will be living, a few centuries on, the future readers of my works, then swollen, of course, to an immeasurable multitude.

The judgments involved and the arguments pursued are so simple and so inevitable that no one can dissent from them.

To begin. We now live in a world in which talk and speech, pictures and sounds, flow easily to every corner of the globe. The Prince of Wales makes a broadcast address from London to Montreal; the Chinese sit and blink at the pictures of the Belgian coronation; and the pygmies of Equatorial Africa follow eagerly the fortunes of the American World Baseball Series. In other words, we are now all talking to one another. For the first time in history there is a world inhabited by a human race.

In such circumstances all the world gets the same general idea at the same time. All the world thinks intensely about the same thing in the same way. The pygmies are just as worried over the collapse of the Stock Exchange as we are: they lost a year's corn-cobs in it.

Now just at present all the world is worried and preoccupied over two questions—the same two everywhere. These are the peace-and-war question and the unemployment question. As to war, all the world has, quite suddenly, come to realize that there is "nothing to it." A wave of anti-war feeling, in thought, in literature, plays, books and pictures, is submerging the whole world. War has got to go. The pygmies feel that as long as they stood up pygmy to pygmy, with a big club, it was real stuff. But now when a canful of gas lays out a whole row of pygmies, toes up, in the long grass under the cactus, without a chance even to know who threw it, the whole business is bankrupt.

When the world, all the world, tackles a problem in that spirit it is bound to solve

it. It is not that war is any “muddier and bloodier” than it used to be. It was always that. The first crusaders were cannibals and the soldiers of the Religious Wars regarded “atrocities” much as we regard football. But machinery has killed war. It has made war as complex and tiresome as the packing industry in the Middle Western States. Any man working at it feels the need for a vacation, and longs for a round of golf. War is dead. Machinery killed it.

Not so homicide. That is different. Homicide corresponds to general instinct in our nature and is bound to stay. The desire to kill people is quite natural. If I see a fiend in green goggles roar past me on a motor-cycle at a speed of fifty miles an hour, tearing my ears with noise, I want to kill him. Rightly so. It may be inexpedient to do it, but it would be the thing to do. I may want to kill an umpire, or a comedian or an after-dinner speaker—but to want to kill a whole nation, to poison and drown and destroy by machinery thousands of innocent beings, to pretend that little children are “enemies,” and to want to starve them to death—ah! no, I won’t do it. Don’t ask me. War, in other words, has got on the wrong side of our parental feelings, and it’s got to go.

It won’t take long. Come on, pygmies, let’s get rid of it! We don’t need any covenant, any agreement. That’s been the queer mistake up till now—the idea that you end war by a document. You end it by stopping it, and it’s over *now*. Ask the first pygmy you see—in a tram, on the street, anywhere. He’ll tell you. He’s done with it.

So that’s one problem done. Now as to the other—this unemployment and depression business. So long as unemployment was local and poverty personal, nobody—that is, no other person—worried over it. But now the cause of unemployment (whatever it is, nobody has ever found out) has become so universal that it affects all the world at the same time. It now becomes possible to find out what the cause is, by a process of elimination like an equation in algebra. It can’t be drink, because there is unemployment in the United States where nobody drinks. It can’t be the gold standard, because it exists in China, where they have no gold. It can’t be extravagance, because it exists in Scotland. And so on, all down the line. Which, of course, means that the solution of this economic riddle of the Sphinx is at least in sight.

The more so as there now exists a real motive for solving it. Hitherto unemployment only affected the poor. Now the accursed thing affects the rich. An unforeseen consequence of corporate organization is that the rich may at any time lose their money, without effort or fault of their own. This, in the old days of landed proprietorship, was not possible. Fortunes could not be lost without fault or folly: it

needed at least a pack of cards. Hence by a queer twist of human destiny the very rich and the very poor are in the same boat. Such a situation is intolerable. This means economic salvation, or at least salvage, for both.

The exact solution of the problem doesn't matter here. It may take another fifty years to reach it; but it's bound to come. All in all, as compared with the great human triumphs of the past—the invention of the alphabet, the use of Arabic notation, the discovery of distilling spirits—the thing is nothing. Another half-century, then, one lifetime as it were, will have seen the clouds of war and the fogs of poverty move away from the sunlit landscape of our little world. And all the scene will change and begin to look quite different from what is now before our eyes.

The changes as a matter of fact are happening even now. The surface beneath our feet is altering. But in our present bewildered outlook we do not see the ground beneath us. Presently, however, as war dies, and poverty vanishes, humanity will begin to be aware that a queer sort of uniformity, something like a great stillness, is coming over the world.

This is beginning now. The great "sameness" which is to envelop and stifle mankind has already begun. Universal communication rapidly begets universal similarity. The word "standardization" has already come uppermost in the industrial world. Standardized machines turn out products of incomparable uniformity. Divergencies and differences drop out. They cost too much. Hence, as the age of the great sameness draws on, all men will more and more be found to be more and more alike, and they will wear the same clothes buttoned in the same way, fashioned probably in a rather infantile style. It is clear already, from the amazing spread of Miniature Golf, Tom Thumb Tennis, and Dicky Bird Football, that grown-up people revert easily to the costume of the child.

But the greatest changes and the greatest sameness will be those in the things of intellect and education. Already all our schools are being framed on the same model, with the same text-books, the same "readers," the same recitations, the same standardized literature and adjustable patriotism. There is already no way to tell one teacher from another except by their finger-prints. Even those will soon look alike. This uniformity of the schools and school-teaching will spread all over the world. It is America's revenge on the people who discovered it. The infinite variety of the Old World will be replaced by the prosaic uniformity of the New.

With the school, of course, goes the college. Students and studies are already being ironed out as flat as rolled steel in a Pittsburg mill. In the time to come, all the colleges will be utterly and absolutely alike. The rich variations of senility and imbecility which marked the professoriate of old days will all be gone. Each



professor will be as neat as a tailor's dummy. At the first sign of aberration he will be pensioned off to where he can do no harm.

Outside the schools and colleges will be the great mass of what was once the reading and thinking public—rapidly sifting into something like the accumulated grain in a ten-million-bushel elevator. They will still read the newspaper, the *one* newspaper—the best, so why have any others?—the *World Gazette* published from Patagonia to Peking via New York and London. It will contain the personal news of the important people in the world—there will be, say, about six of them; great world sporting events like the Tom Thumb Golf in the Sahara between the Bolsheviks of Moscow and the Y.M.C.A. of Iowa; great world disasters, such as the upsetting of a train in Patagonia (still not completely organized) with the breaking of the conductor's leg; all of this together with one daily poem—the best in the world, so why print the others?—and one daily joke by the greatest humorist in the world, beside which the others are not worth laughing at.

The same public will have that day looked at the world moving picture, and in the evening will all read *the* novel, the same novel, and all fall asleep at the same point in it.

Meantime human life, its cares gone, its digestion rotating as smoothly as a sleeping gyroscope, lapsed in ease and with preventive medicine at its elbow, will grow longer and longer. From the fifty years it has now reached in its recent sudden advance it will move to seventy, to eighty, to ninety, and still onward. Little old clean-shaven men will sit down to bridge for the fifty-thousandth time, with partners they knew a hundred years ago.

The lengthened and assured span of life will bring with it a new dreariness. There will be no death, except by an accident—odd, exceptional, awful, a thing to be shuddered at—or by the extreme weariness of old age, a slow and imperceptible sleep, the parting from a world already long forgotten and unregretted. Human life will have been lengthened, but not the soul and the freshness of it that belongs only to life's morning. After that, life will stretch in front of each, in a long vista, visible to an infinite distance of dreariness, like a trail across a desert.

Thus will the human race sink, generation after generation, into a slow stagnation that will lead it unconsciously to oblivion. The restless survival instinct, that fought its wars, and chafed at its poverty, and cared for its young and its own, this will fade out, and with it the power to live.

Then in some far future there will come the great mortality—not a pestilence, not a plague—just a great mortality—and the human race, like lone islanders upon a rock, will perish to the last man.

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# TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

The formatting in this book was somewhat erratic. It has been mostly reproduced, but some was cleaned up.

[The end of *The Dry Pickwick and Other Incongruities* by Stephen Leacock]