

AFTERNOONS IN UTOPIA



BY STEPHEN LEACOCK

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**AFTERNOONS
* IN UTOPIA *
STEPHEN LEACOCK**



Tales of the New Time



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Part I
Utopia Old and New

Chapter I
Dear Old Utopia

Suppose that there were written down the chronicle of one day's doings of any ordinary family of today, how strange it would appear—could they have foreseen and read it—to the people of three or four hundred years ago! Not their day to us, but ours to them; not one of their days as seen by us in retrospect, but one of our days as seen by them, if it were possible, in prospect. The little acts and incidents and surroundings which we take for granted as part of our daily life, how marvellous, how inexplicable to them!

Their day to us would not seem strange or mysterious, but only limited, cramped and objectionable. People in dirty houses with garbage floating down the street outside; people without motor-cars and newspapers and telephones; ignorant people in an ignorant world, full of silly beliefs and superstitions, and cruel in their silliness; people to whom moving pictures would have been the work of the devil, Charlie Chaplin a ghost, and an aeroplane an angel—the lives of such people would have no charm or wonder for us. Even the vast mystery of the unknown and unlimited world in which they lived is spoiled by their stupid certainty about the little stars set up in the sky to light them.

But our day to them, could they but see it! For them we live in a world of humming wires and rushing winds, of ghosts walking in white light on paper walls, the voices of the spirits calling from the unknown at our command. Magic wands control the forces of the earth and air in a new world in which they would find everything changed, nothing left that was—nothing but man himself.

Nothing but man. Yet man himself goes next. The biggest change of all is yet to come—as will amply appear in the pages of this book.

Now ever since people learned to write and set down their imaginings in books, many wise and interesting writers have given to the people of their day pictures of what they thought the world was going to be like later on. Plato began it. The fathers of the Church, the monks and the Arabs went on with it. In Henry the Eighth's time Sir Thomas More before (not after) he was beheaded wrote his *Utopia*. After him came Bacon and Milton and Bunyan, and Lord Lytton and Mr. Bellamy, and others writing still.

So many of these Utopias have been written that they have all run to a pattern that grows drowsy in its very sameness. In all of them the narrator falls asleep for two hundred years and awakes (which is a pity) to find himself in an altered world.

He is confronted with a “venerable being” who is cut to a pattern in a “flowing robe,” with the further credential of a “majestic beard.” This *being*, then, who speaks beautiful but antiquated English—

But stop—let us reproduce the familiar scene of the long sleep and the arrival of the awakened sleeper in dear old Utopia. We will introduce, however, the slight, but novel, innovation of supposing that the narrator in this case arrives with—and not as usually depicted—without—his—brains.

My Voyage to Utopia

Having decided to make one of those voyages to Utopia which have been the source of great literary profit from the days of Sir Thomas More until now, I realized that I must find means to fall asleep for a hundred years.

I did so.

On awakening I found myself as it were awake, and looked about me in order to ascertain, if possible, where I was. I found myself reclining on a couch in what appeared to me to be a large Gothic chamber—I might almost call it a hall—I will call it a hall—of which the lofty ceiling extended into a half darkness while the hall itself was lighted by a soft and suffused light coming from I knew not where. But as I had not expected to know where the light came from, this did not in any way upset me.

I was well aware that in all Utopias the light is soft and suffused and comes from you don't know where. As a matter of fact I had seen, even in the poor old vanished world from which I came, little tricks like this light stuff, or nearly as good.

I had therefore no means of telling whether it was day or night—another fact which gave me no concern, as I was indifferent as to whether it was day or night. I looked at my watch. It had stopped. I had an idea that it must have stopped because it had run down. This fact I presently verified by winding it up.

Rising to a half-recumbent posture—which is as far as I care to go in one rise—I looked about me. The chamber as I said was vast yet contained little furniture other than a few oaken tables and chairs of an exquisite workmanship and design which I never recalled to have seen before. This, however, was not surprising as I have never worked in a furniture store. A few rugs of elaborate craftsmanship lay on the floor; but whether of skins or of woven fabric I was unable to say. I always am.

Being well acquainted with Utopias I knew that I had only to wait patiently and they would start something. I was certain that they wouldn't be long, nor indeed had

I long to wait. A door at the side of the room opened and a “slipped attendant” appeared. I knew, of course, that the first thing to come would be a slipped attendant. If he hadn’t I’d have slipped him myself.

I saw at once that he was an attendant from the fact that he wore one of those “loose smocks” which by common consent are recognized as the costume of all attendants, two hundred years hence. It was a sort of two-piece pajama suit made of some plain woven material, but of what I could not say which.

The slipped attendant approached the couch where I was now only one-quarter recumbent and made a low obeisance.

“Come,” he said, “Oom will see you.” “All right,” I said and I readjusted my collar and necktie and followed him.

We crossed to the further end of the great hall and my attendant knocked at a small oaken door. To my surprise, the door opened of itself without the aid of human hands. Often though I have seen this—doors in restaurants and other places that open this way—I am always surprised at it. I don’t see how it is arranged unless there is some kind of catch or spring or trick about it. Anyway, it opened.

As yet, however, I could not see into the room beyond, which was half darkened.

The attendant bowed low in the doorway.

“One is without,” he said.

He didn’t say what I was without (perhaps, without a drink) but I guessed from my previous reading that he merely meant “outside.”

A deep resonant voice answered back, “Let the stranger enter.”

I found myself, on entering, in the presence of a venerable being whose flowing robe and majestic beard lent to him an air of dignity almost amounting to senility.

“Stranger,” he said. “Thou art awake, welcome.”

Just why he should adopt a form of speech lost for four centuries except in Yorkshire, I was at a loss to know. But I remembered that that is the way they always speak in the Utopia books.

“What wouldst?” continued Oom.

“First,” I said, “if you don’t mind I would like something to eat and drink.”

“Your pardon,” said Oom, “I had forgotten. With us it matters so little.”

He clapped his hands.

Two slipped attendants at once appeared as if by magic—in fact by magic.

“Bring viands and drink,” commanded Oom.

“Don’t you yourself eat, Dr. Oom?” I asked.

“I am indifferent to it,” replied the venerable man. “Our constitutions and the life

we lead—so different from yours of the Earth-as-it-was—render food scarcely necessary. I break my fast in the morning with perhaps an egg, or bacon or eggs, or perhaps a beefsteak, or lamb kidneys and bacon with waffles—but it is a matter of indifference. At noon I take nothing, unless perhaps a cold meat pie or a lobster. Beyond this I eat nothing till at eventide and then possibly a hot goose or a boiled jack-rabbit with a veal cutlet—it is of no consequence. The abstemious life brings its own reward; the mind, O Stranger, becomes clearer, more liquid—”

“I know,” I said, “less full of mud. Indeed this abstemious life had got well started in what you call the Earth-as-it-was. I have often heard people speak as you do.”

“Here’s the food,” said Oom.

The attendants then set before us a tray of dainty and refreshing viands—including what appeared to be *pâté de foie gras*, only better, and *canapé aux anchois*, only not so smashed up.

For drink the attendant poured a liquor of exquisite appearance into tall glasses of incredible thinness and delicacy. The soft light of the room seemed reflected into iridescent opal colours both from the liquid and the glass.

“What is it?” I asked of Dr. Oom as I held the marvellous beverage up to the light.

“Your tongue,” he said, “hath no speech for it. With us it is called Slooch.”

“Is it intoxicating?” I asked.

“Not in the least,” replied Dr. Oom. “Indeed,” he continued, “I can see from your questions how far our world has travelled from the Earth-as-it-was. Were it not for my knowledge of history, I should be at a loss to answer your question. But sit, stranger, eat and drink and I, too, will partake with you of a friendly bite as it approaches even now the equidistant point between my last meal and my next.”

As we ate, Dr. Oom proceeded to explain to me how the questions of what we used to call prohibition had long since been entirely solved. All that was needed, he said, was to discover a beverage which, like Slooch, was stimulating and exhilarating but not intoxicating. Slooch, he explained, could easily bring one to laughter or tears, or might even provoke a desire to sing, or set up a noble anger, or at times induce a profound sleep—but it was not intoxicating. He explained the matter further but I was unable to follow entirely the explanations which he gave. It seemed to turn on the idea that what is “intoxicating” is a matter of legal definition, so that by arduous improvement of the law all danger of intoxication was cut out.

When we had at last finished Dr. Oom said, “Well, I suppose we had better begin. You wish to ask me, I am sure, all kinds of questions about the new world in

which you find yourself”

I took out my pencil and notebook and nodded.

“What shall I start with,” said Dr. Oom, “or rather how likes it you that I lay on? How about currency and coinage, would you like me to begin with that?”

“No,” I said, “never mind currency and coinage. I never had much grip on that.”

“The Gold Standard,” began Dr. Oom.

“I know,” I said. “It was already doomed. Try something else.”

“Would you like,” said Dr. Oom, “to ask me about wages and labour and what is now the relation of the capitalistic classes, as you used to call them, to the workers? Let me talk about that, eh?”

“No, please don’t,” I replied. “I had got so fed up with that before I fell asleep that I really don’t care about it one way or the other.”

“The problem,” said Dr. Oom reflectingly, stroking his majestic beard as he spoke, and disregarding my interruption, “proved in the end amazingly simple. But the manner and method in which it was solved involves a rather detailed intricate narration, partly in Old English, of what has happened in the industrial world in two hundred years. However, I will try—”

“No,” I said, “please don’t, Dr. Oom—I presume you are Doctor. Please don’t. Let’s get on to something with a little more go to it.”

Oom began again.

“Among the many things which will surprise you most in the world you are about to visit is the prolongation of human life. In the days when you lived I believe that the average duration of human life was about fifty-eight years decimal four. It is now—but you will see for yourself when you meet our old men. I am sure you will be delighted and surprised to see what a snappy lot of bright old men we have among us.”

“That’s all right,” I said. “But I can get all that in figures later on, can’t I? Give me something that sounds a little more like a news item or a feature story.”

“How about peace and war?” said Dr. Oom.

“I think I can guess all that,” I answered. “The nations came together and agreed to abolish war.”

“Yes,” said Dr. Oom, “by a vote of thirty-one to thirty. It was a close thing but it got through.”

A silence fell upon us during which Dr. Oom refilled his glass from the flagon and drank its contents with a reflecting air.

“I made a mistake,” he said.

“Why, of course!” said I.

The same idea had evidently struck us both at the same moment. "Of course," I repeated, "you should have first shown me this new world and what it looks like. This chamber, as a matter of fact, has a passageway leading out upon the 'leads' and balconies of the vast building in which it is constructed—"

"How did you know that?"

"Oh, it *always* does," I said. "Come, lead me out upon the roof and let me see the changed world that lies about me."

Oom rose and without a word led me through a side door and along a short passage, and then out upon a flat balustraded roof from which, in an instant vision, appeared a vast panorama illumined with brilliant sunshine and reaching to the horizon.

Great Heavens! Was this the city I had known! Whither had gone the tall skyscrapers reaching to the clouds? Where was the long reach of the wide Hudson, the vast suspension bridge hung like an aerial web from shore to shore? Where was it all gone? or how had it changed to this? I turned to Dr. Oom, who stood beside me, quietly smiling at my evident and utter astonishment.

"Can this," I said, pointing to the vision around me, "can this be New York?"

"New York?" said Oom. "No, of course not. This is London."

The exhilaration which had kindled in his face died out of it. In fact he looked rather crestfallen. "Yes," he said, "this is London. What made you think it New York?"

"Why, I fell asleep in New York," I said.

"I believe that's right," said Dr. Oom, reflecting. "You did, very likely. There was a sort of patriotic exchange of hundred year sleepers between England and America and you must have come over in that lot. In fact, now I think of it, you did."

"But sit down, sit down," he said, recovering his animation and indicating a stone bench overlooking the balustrade. "Sit down and let me tell you of this vast city, every detail of which will surprise you. You notice that it is all covered in with glass, do you not?—I mean, dost not thou? That must give you, a being of a previous world, quite a jolt, doesn't it?"

"Well, in a sense," I said, pausing to light a cigarette which I had found with a lighter in my pocket, "and yet in a sense it doesn't. We had started that."

"You will be surprised at least to learn," said Dr. Oom, "that in all this vast city there is not a single moving vehicle—"

"I hardly expected there would be," I replied; "no doubt the sidewalks themselves . . ."

"Exactly," said Dr. Oom.

A silence ensued which began, in a way, to be almost painful or at least boring. I realized that the scene between us had been worn so thin in preceding generations that it was difficult to keep it up at the proper point of intensity.

I began to feel it my duty to discover some subject at least upon which the revelations of Dr. Oom would come up to the standard of feature-article interest.

“Dr. Oom,” I said, “there is one thing that always and forever, in each successive world and generation, is of undying interest. What about the position and status of women in this new world?”

“Ah!” said Dr. Oom, “most interesting; let me explain first . . .”

But he had hardly spoken when the little door through which we had stepped out onto the roof was swung open and a glad, girlish voice called: “Why, father, where ever have you been?”

A ravishing girlish figure rushed across to the leads and threw its arms in affectionate impulsiveness about the neck of Dr. Oom. . . .

How ever can I forget the moment—my first sight of Rooshna—my first glimpse of she for whom or rather but for whom all that I was, or rather whatever else I am—but enough. Words fail me to convey the picture of the exquisite being who thus burst upon my sight.

She was clad in a long and quietly flowing garment which appeared made of a single fabric, that is, I couldn’t see a hole or a join in it, in which, or rather from which and through which the colours of the sunshine seemed to glisten in opalescent irradiation.

“Rooshna,” said Dr. Oom in a voice of gentle remonstrance at the impulsiveness of the exquisite being who clung to his neck. “Look, my child. One is with us.”

Rooshna unclasped her arms as she became aware of my presence. Then moving towards me, her hands clasped in agitation, she raised her eyes to mine.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “at last you are awake! How wonderful! Sometimes I used to think that you would never wake; some years you seemed almost to do so and other years you seemed to sleep harder than ever.”

Marvellous it seemed to me to think that this exquisite being—if I may call her that again—had watched over my slumbers.

Dr. Oom turned towards us.

“My daughter, Rooshna,” he said with a smile, “has long been your constant attendant while you slept. She was always hoping that the day might come when she herself might show you all the wonders of this strange new world.”

“But I should like nothing better,” I said. “I shall be charmed indeed if Miss Oom will be so kind as to act as my guide.”

“Excellent,” said Dr. Oom; “for myself I pray that you will excuse me as I have to attend this afternoon a meeting of the Witanagemot.”

“Come along then,” said Rooshna gaily; “let me lead the way.”

“You must tell me,” she said as we made our way through the passages and halls of the beautiful building from which we had emerged, “what you want to know about first. There must be so much to explain to you; how would you like to hear first about our currency and coinage?”

“Currency and coinage!” I repeated with delight. “I can imagine nothing more fascinating. Do tell me about it.”

“I will,” said Rooshna, “and then, after that, what about a little talk on transportation facilities.”

“Glorious!” I said.

“And then I know you want to hear about labour and capital and social insurance.”

“Delicious! I can’t hear enough of it.”

“Then I shall have lots to tell you. Of course father could have explained it all much better.”

“Miss Oom,” I said boldly, “I don’t regret your father’s absence.”

Rooshna looked at me with an air of perplexity.

“Why do you say that?” she questioned. “I can’t understand why you say that. Really I can’t. But anyway”—her expression cleared as she spoke—“father couldn’t come as he had to be at the Witanagemot—if you know what that is?”

“Oh, yes,” I said, “the meeting of the Wise Old Men. And pray, tell me, what does your father do, Miss Oom?” I asked.

“Do?” she said. “How do you mean?”

“I mean what is his work.”

“Oh! I understand,” said Rooshna, breaking into a pleasant laugh, “work! You see there’s practically no work at all now. It’s all done by the machines and especially by the new life-force which science has invented and which is called Wheee! You’ve heard of that?”

“Not exactly,” I answered, “but of course in all the Utopia books there was generally a marvellous force of that sort.”

“Quite so,” said Rooshna. “So you see since the discovery of Wheee, there is really terribly little to do. Employment has grown extremely rare and is confined to the young. So that the men like father have to find other things to occupy them.”

“And how does he occupy himself?”

“He works on the sky a good deal, astronomical work, you know, like taking

the mean altitude of the sun and finding the diameter of the moon. He does both of those every day, and then he generally copies out the multiplication table every morning.”

“But hasn’t all that been done before?”

“Of course,” answered Rooshna with just a shade of irritation in her tone, “but what else can father do? Since the invention of Wheee there’s no work and of course there are no professions because we don’t have soldiers any more, and there is no law, and since the invention of Healall there is no illness and no doctors. You know about Healall?”

“I think so,” I said; “already it was foreseen in some of our newspaper advertisements. It cures everything.”

“Exactly. So what can father do? But come along—don’t let’s sit here. Let’s go out in the street. There!” she said, “is the outer door swung open. How do you like the look of it?”

“Marvellous,” I said. “Why, the street is all roofed over with glass! How wonderful! And the sidewalk actually moves along like a moving platform! Who could have believed it?”

“Jump onto it then,” cried Rooshna, “and away we go!”

Marvellous indeed was the afternoon which ensued during which Rooshna conducted me, on the moving platform and on foot, among the pleasant squares and gardens where we rested and talked of the wonderful world about us. At little tables set under sycamore trees, slippered attendants served us with Slooch in golden glasses and with synthetic fruits and canned sardines. Rooshna meanwhile explained to me the currency, the coinage, the labour legislation and the rules of procedure of the Witanagemot. I was delighted with all I saw, and especially pleased to remark the excessive number of old men moving about, and how bright the old fellows seemed!

The prolongation of life, as my fair conductress explained, had naturally led to the existence of a high percentage of bright, snappy old people. The young were few, and, I presume, for the most part busy elsewhere, at school or work. But their absence was more than compensated by the great number of old men, every one of whom seemed in full possession of all the faculties he had ever had or needed.

Never have I had such a delightful afternoon. So much so that I returned from it with the most glorious feeling of satisfaction, a feeling as if I had, so to speak, plenty of it.

That evening I banqueted with Dr. Oom and his friends in the great hall. The

meal was served to us, not seated in our stiff fashion of today, but in the true Utopian pose of reclining languidly on couches, while slippers attendants served us with exquisite viands as we reclined. Our discourse was accompanied by soft music proceeding from I know not where. During the meal, which was a prolonged one, Dr. Oom and his friends conversed enthusiastically of the altitude of the sun, of the binomial theorem, and of the multiplication table. Their talk, I perceived, was animated but never contentious. Just once for a moment something like controversy arose as to what was nine times eight but it was only for a moment. For the most part, I realized, there was nothing to argue over, everything being long since settled; and in a world where nothing happened, there were of course no events or happenings to talk about. As a consequence conversation was able to move on the higher ground of eternal verities such as multiplication and long division.

I need not describe in detail the marvellous days which succeeded my first awakening in Utopia. Each day brought its delightful round. Rooshna would join me after breakfast and would talk of currency, bimetalism and the elimination of the unearned increment. Then I would spend half an hour beside the venerable Dr. Oom, holding his astronomical instruments for him, while he measured the apparent diameter of the moon, and listening to his pleasant talk on the zodiac and the equinoxes. After, would come a ride on the moving platforms with Rooshna, while we discussed the relation of profits to interest, or the relation of interest to profits, or the possibility of a regulated currency based on the reciprocal variation of the index of general prices. The evening brought with it the customary prolonged and delightful banquet on synthetic eggs, fried figs and goulash under glass. The food, I discovered, had all been prepared years and years before. . . .

How long this delicious existence might have lasted I cannot say. I was aware, however, that my feelings towards Rooshna were rapidly passing from the mere sense of interest and companionship to something more intense, deeper, and, if I may so call it, broader and indeed higher. In fact I was already conscious in my own heart that I loved her. Again and again as I sat under the spell of her talk on sociological science I could scarcely resist the impulse to take her to my heart and tell her of my love.

But at the same time another and entirely different impulse kept drawing me in an opposite direction. More and more each day I began to feel an overwhelming desire to go to sleep. My sleep at night was not enough. I wanted more. As I sat with Dr.

Oom watching his grave face as he tested out the multiplication table with marks on a bit of paper, I wanted to sleep. If I sat out in one of the little squares where the fountains splashed beneath the sycamores, my head would sink forward with a drowsy desire for sleep. Even at the banquets in the evening something in the soft unvarying light, the gentle music and the murmur of the scientific discourse on the properties of a right-angled triangle—even this failed to keep me roused. Sleep—I must sleep.

Yet behind this feeling there seemed to me some strange, deep, subtle meaning which I couldn't fathom. Why this unending ever-present desire for sleep? Had it some bearing on the mystery of life itself? Could it mean that beyond all the arts and contrivances of man—this prolongation of life and removal of accident, danger and disease—there was something, some undeniable decree. What was this world into which I had penetrated by some occult process unknown to myself? Could it be?—I put the thought from me—could it be, could *that* be—the meaning of unending quiet, this unending harmony, this living among the unchanging truths of existence—this life without life—I wouldn't name the word—was *that* where I was?

It was on the tenth day.

Overwhelmingly the thought came to me. I sprang up from the bench on which I sat.

I stood erect and grasped Rooshna's hand as she sat. "Rooshna," I said, "I love you!"

"I know that," she said quietly, not speaking like a Utopian but like a woman of the Earth-as-it-was. "I know that," she said. "I knew it from the first."

"Rooshna," I said, "I love you. But I must go . . . out, out of this . . . I don't know how, or where, but out and back into life again. . . ."

"I know," she said, "I'm going too."

"But you can't," I said, "your place is here. Your father . . ."

Rooshna shook her head.

"He is not my father. I call him that, but I too belong as you do outside. I don't know—I can't remember now—it is all so perplexed. It seems as if I had been here ever so long—waiting for you."

I seated myself again beside Rooshna.

We sat silent for a little time, our hands clasped.

Then she spoke.

"Listen," she said, "will you trust me?"

"Oh, of course," I answered.

“But I mean trust me a great deal. Do you remember that in the life you came from long ago there were stories called fairy stories—and often in these fairy stories, there was a princess, and the princess would say to her lover, ‘Will you trust me and do what I say, and no matter how hard it is you will do it and everything will be all right?’”

“Well?” I said.

“Well, I want you to do that now. You want to sleep—to sleep as if to sleep forever. There, lie upon the bench—your head upon my arm—so; and now say to me good-bye. I understand, dear. You cannot stay. Sleep.”

“You’ve been asleep so long. I didn’t like to wake you.”

It was my wife’s voice. She was standing beside the bed, with a cup of tea in her hand—my wife’s voice, but where had I heard it before?

“I didn’t want to wake you,” she repeated, “but I do so want to show you this. I found it in turning out some old things this morning. Do you remember it?”

As she spoke she handed me, half blushing, a little picture of the queer old kind once called a “tintype.”

“Why, of course!” I said, still half dreaming, “it’s you and me.”

“When the tintype man took us on the little seat under the sycamore.”

“The day I said, when I—”

“Yes,” she answered, “that day.”

Chapter II

Ten Seconds for Refreshments

After reading about the Dear Old Utopia of the preceding chapter, the reader ought in fairness to sit down and take a breath and think about it. He might even eat something. He will see on a little reflection that the trouble with this dear old Orthodox Utopia is that it is altogether too *comprehensible*. You can understand it. It may be marvellous, no doubt it is, but after all it is terribly like the world in which we live. The real Utopia, if we could get a look at it, would be quite incomprehensible; we simply wouldn't understand what the people were talking about. Neither could they explain it all, as the Dr. Ooms do in the sham Utopias, because they wouldn't understand what it was that we didn't understand. Anyone who has ever tried to explain to an intelligent Eskimo the operation of the New York Stock Exchange will know just what I mean. Few people perhaps have had that experience. But anybody who has undertaken to describe the nature of the photo-electric cell to an Equatorial African pygmy will understand the case exactly.

Well, then—let's get back and see the rest; let us take a look at the Real Utopia.

In other words, let us suppose that we could really look ahead and see, not this venerable being with whiskers, but the real world of tomorrow. Let us suppose that we fall asleep for a hundred years and then wake up and sit up and see. Or no—don't let's even fall asleep. Let us simply take a look right now at a family group in Utopia. There they are, apparently a mother and two children, seated at breakfast. Breakfast, yes—it looks like breakfast. Some of the things at the little table look a little queer (we've never seen a coffee-gun, of course, or a synthetic egg)—still, it must be breakfast. There, they're beginning to talk—listen.

Chapter III
The Real Utopia

“Good news, children!”

It is the woman, the mother, who is speaking as she sits at the breakfast table. She speaks gaily, as if full of happiness.

“Good news, children. Father is coming out of jail!”

“Good,” said the little boy. “I always like it when father comes out of jail.”

“*This* father,” corrects the little girl solemnly, looking up from the porridge.

“I meant that, Clara, of course,” said the boy. “You know I didn’t mean Mr. Angleneck. When does father come out, mum?”

“This morning, I think—in fact quite early, almost now. Wait a minute.”

She moved with her fingers a little dial that lay on the table. (By the way, how Utopia-like that would have seemed only a little while ago. But we are doing it already.)

“It’s Mrs. Ex-Angleneck-Afterthought speaking,” she said, “is that the Elysian Fields Jail?”

A voice seemed to speak from the wall, from nowhere, just *in the room* (an inconceivable wonderful thing, but we’re doing it now). “Yes.”

“Is that the office?”

“No, it’s the ballroom. Last night’s dance isn’t over yet—it was graduates’ night, you see, but I can get you the office—or perhaps—I can tell you what you want.”

“I wanted to find out if my husband has left the jail yet; he was to come out this morning.”

There was silence, a long pause, and then the voice spoke again.

“I’m so sorry. The governor of the jail won’t let him go.”

“Won’t let him go?”

“He says he simply can’t spare him and that he must stay over for the polo match. He says not to expect him till tonight.”

Mrs. Afterthought put down the dial with a sigh, yet with a slight flush of pleasure on her face. “He’s such a favourite out there,” she said. “Every time he goes to jail it’s the same thing. They simply will keep him there.”

Little Clara looked up from her plate.

“But I thought that only wicked people were put into prison.”

“Clara!” said her mother severely, “what have you been reading now? If you and Edward will keep dragging old books off the library shelves—”

“I didn’t get it out of an old book, mother, and you know I didn’t, because I

can't read the funny old letters in them.”

“Well, wherever you got the idea it was very wrong of you to say it. Surely you know that some of the best and noblest people in the world go to jail. Your father tells me that every time he goes he meets the most distinguished people—really brilliant men—financiers, bankers, senators—”

“Crooks,” muttered little Edward.

“Edward!” exclaimed his mother. Mrs. Afterthought looked at her two children in silence. They often puzzled her. They seemed so old-fashioned.

“Then why did father have to go to jail?” asked little Clara.

“He didn't *have* to, Clara,” said her mother.

“Well, they took him in a van,” said Edward, “with wire over it.”

“Certainly, Edward, because otherwise his subconscious self might have made him leap out.”

“Then what did he go *for*?” asked Edward.

“Atavism,” said Mrs. Afterthought.

“What?”

“An attack of atavism. The judge himself said so. Father's had it again and again.”

“Atavism,” said little Edward. “What does that mean?”

“It means when you go back and copy things done by your great-grandfather, or your great-great-grandfather, or any number of greats.”

“But how could papa imitate his great-great-grandfather when he never saw him?”

“But he did. He brought home from the club, dear, a fur coat that didn't belong to him.”

“Did great-great-grandfather do that?” asked little Clara.

“He must have, dear, because your father did it.”

“But wouldn't father go to jail for doing that?”

“No, but on the same day he atavistically carried away some money (lying on the desk of a bank, I think) and a gold watch which he had, by pure atavism, taken from a gentleman's coat pocket while the coat was hung up.”

“So what happened?” asked Edward.

“Well, Judge Gloop—you've seen him here, dears, very often at lunch with papa, suggested six months in jail. Your father said no, in fact he was against it from the start. He thought a sea voyage, or a trip to Monte Carlo might be better. However, they insisted—in the court I mean—and in the end your father had to give way. It happened, however, that two other gentlemen that your father knew very

well were going too, so they agreed to go together and share expenses.”

“What did *they* steal, the other two?” asked Edward.

“My dear Edward!” exclaimed his mother in gentle protest. “How can you drag up those terrible words out of old books and belonging to the mediæval days? They didn’t *steal* anything. They had amnesia.”

“Amnesia?”

“Yes, amnesia. They forgot their own names and in attempting to write their own wrote down other people’s. The judge said that it seemed to him that jail was the only place for them. They said no, and suggested a long rest—they thought of South America. Indeed I believe that one of them had taken a ticket for South America to go and begin to rest when he received, just as he was getting on the ship, this other suggestion about going to jail instead.”

“And did he turn back?”

“Yes, on condition that they’d put in a new billiard table. I believe they did it. The judge said it seemed eminently fair.”

“But I don’t see—” began little Edward. He was about to continue but at that moment a soft light appeared on the wall and a voice said: “I beg your pardon, I think I was to call you up this morning, was I not? It is the secretary of the High School speaking—about your little boy’s geometry, you remember. Have you decided to have it done?”

“I really don’t know. It’s so hard to decide. Would he be in bed long?”

“Oh, dear, no,” said the voice with a pleasant suggestion of a laugh, “only one afternoon, perhaps not that. At his age, you know, it’s really a mere nothing. I think it could be done at home if you like, only it’s not so easy to give the anæsthetic.”

“I see. And it’s really quite simple, is it?”

“Oh, a mere nothing as far as that goes.”

“And I suppose it’s not very expensive, is it?”

“Oh, not at all; not for plane geometry. It’s only ten dollars (a thousand pounds). Of course if you wanted spherical geometry, it’s much more and still more for Einstein; it’s hard to get the plasm for those. And in any case those can be acquired, you know, afterwards by vocal teaching.”

“What do you think yourself, Eddie?” asked his mother, turning to the little boy.

“I don’t care, mum,” said Eddie, “I didn’t mind algebra a bit. They don’t hurt you and once it’s in it feels just like arithmetic or anything else, you know. Do you know, mother, I heard our headmaster say that long ago in his great-great-grandfather’s time or something they used to beat it into them with sticks. How do they do that? It sounds so cruel and unnatural?”

“It was, dear, but I can’t talk about it now.”

Mrs. Afterthought spoke to the wall again. “I think if you don’t mind I’ll talk it over with my husband again before I decide. He’s rather old-fashioned about that sort of thing. He has a feeling, he says, as if it weren’t quite honest. He’s so strict, you know. He’s in jail just now, and I hate to disturb him.”

“Oh, well, by all means let it wait. There’s no hurry. Good-bye.”

“Mother,” said Edward, “while you’re talking you might as well have asked about the war.”

“I didn’t need to,” said Mrs. Afterthought, “there isn’t any today. It was announced last night that the war would stop for today.”

“Oh!” said both the children, “why?”

“It was put off for the Dog Race in the Sahara. The Harvard Dog is racing the Oxford Dog, and so there wouldn’t be enough power for the war as well. And by the way, children, please remember if grandfather comes in this afternoon, don’t say anything about the war.”

“Oh, mother, why not—isn’t grandfather commanding a ship? I thought he was commanding one of the big battleships.”

“Yes, dear, and that’s why. Grandfather lost his ship—lost with all hands, it seems—nothing left afloat except a little wreckage.”

“Mother! How dreadful!”

“And grandfather’s terribly put out about it. I don’t think they can say it’s exactly his fault, but he feels it terribly. He says the loss is very serious, especially some of the officers; not the captain—he was worn out, but the chief navigating officer (I think he said) was absolutely new and equipped with every latest device that grandfather could put in him. In fact grandfather had spent months working on him. But wait, children, it’s time to ring for Jane and get the things cleared away. I’ll tell you all about it presently.”

Mrs. Afterthought pressed a button as she spoke and sat watching with her children as the servant came in through the door from the kitchen. Jane moved around the table in her characteristically rigid and mechanical way that would have seemed laughable to the children but that they were so familiar with it. She seemed to move in straight lines and exact circles, picking up the plates with a round sweep of her arm. Here and there, if a plate or dish was out of Jane’s reach the mother or the children passed it into her hand, but no one spoke to her. “Jane’s slow,” said little Clara as the servant finished and went out.

“I don’t think you wound her up properly on Monday, mum,” said Edward.

“I don’t think it’s that, dear. I’m afraid that she’s getting all out of repair. The

electrician looked at her yesterday and said that she needed a new sheet of tin on her back side. But it costs such a lot.”

“Well, mother,” said Clara, “I saw the loveliest butler in a shop yesterday, an imported English butler, marked at only thirty thousand pounds—three hundred dollars, isn’t it?”

“I know, darling, but we couldn’t afford it. Papa says it takes more power to make an English butler move than for four ordinary servants. But, good gracious—”

Mrs. Afterthought broke off suddenly at the sound of a noise, a queer bumping noise that seemed to come from under their feet.

“What is it, mum?”

“Why, don’t you hear it? I’m afraid that it means there’s a ghost in the cellar again.”

“Hooray!” shouted Edward. “A ghost! Come on, Clara, get your Badminton racquet. Come and chase it out.”

The two children sprang—

BUT THERE—Any reflective reader can see that a place like the Real Utopia couldn’t possibly be understood in that fashion. It is far too different from the World-as-it-is. Not the place—but the people. The apparatus, the machinery, the setting, is all there already. But the effect is still to come.

So we must begin all over again and learn Utopia, bit by bit.

Part II
Grandfather Goes to War

Chapter I

War Stuff

War memoirs and war reminiscences cannot be understood without a knowledge of the nature and circumstances of the war of which they treat. War itself has greatly altered in its character from age to age. Take only the modern age of the last century or two and we can see how great has been the alteration not only in war itself, but in the attitude of mankind towards it. To the generations of the eighteenth century war was an intermittent part of national life, not very terrible, and ending always in peace. Sometimes one side won and sometimes the other, but generally both. In those days war held the place now occupied by the World's Baseball Series, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, and the Nobel Prize. It was the only way the nations had of getting together.

To the people of the late Victorian Age, war had passed into a scourge inflicted by Providence upon yellow, black and brown people as part of their elevation towards civilization. From England it had gone forever.

For the Americans of the United States there had only been one war, the Civil War, a matchless epic of devotion. It could never come again, because in the united country after the war there was henceforth no North and no South—so many people having moved West.

But in our day, at this little moment of infinite time called the year 1932, the case is different. We are sitting waiting for the next crash. The nations are now so intimately connected that the quarrels of each are the quarrels of all. With a central agency in the League of Nations and with the universal transmission of irritation by radio, a dispute can spread over the whole world in five minutes.

In older days the world was protected by its blanket of ignorance. Europe took no part in the Great Mongolian Conquest of China (Second Dynasty, Subdivision Five) because it never heard of it. In our own time, in all common sense, the fact that Poland wants a Corridor ought to matter to you and to me in North America about as much, and as little, as that Pussy wants a Corner.

But we are given to understand that this desire of Poland to keep a Corridor along with the immutable resolution of the Czechs rather to die in an enclave than to live in an anschluss, are among the reasons why we are all presently to be overwhelmed in the disaster. The mixed collection of peoples who used to seem to us a picturesque set of organ-grinders, now appear to hold the destinies of the world in the hollow of their organs.

In other words, we of the outside world, barely recovering from the staggering

shock of the Great War, are sitting waiting for the next blow. All the best authorities are in agreement about it. And the war hounds, the real hot dogs who talk of nothing else—assure us that the next great war is going to be something awful. And it appears that the people who get it in the neck are not these war hounds themselves, but us—you and I—the ordinary plain people who never saw a gun fired in anger outside of a bar-room.

It seems, so they say, that the whole attention of the armies will be devoted to destroying civilians—women and children a specialty. Bombs will be dropped on us from the air; we will be blown up on our own golf links; killed with gas while at the movies. Churches will be no place for people who fear death and sick people had better keep away from hospitals.

These war hounds keep cheering us up with news of bigger and brighter bombs, higher and higher explosives, yellower and yellower gas. They have an explosive now that will blow us five hundred feet in the air; last year we were only up to four. And there's a new gas that you can't see as it approaches; it has no smell, so you can't smell it; it gives no feeling, so you don't feel it. Without having the least idea of it you are dead.

But anyone who is familiar with the history of war in past ages will take but little stock in this awful picture. In reality war is coming to an end. In fact it is almost there now.

It may be, or it may not be, that there will be one more war. If so, this one more war that will follow as an aftermath of the Great War, will be the War of Desolation and that will be the end. The reason is that war has lost what you might call its charm, the peculiar drowsy fascination that it had up till about fifty years ago. In those good old days war was the greatest of open-air sports. The life was free and open, the food good, lots of fun, and the danger practically nothing, or nothing more than being at home.

Think of the wonderful attraction for a young officer setting off to war. He embarked upon a troop ship—a huge floating castle under sail; music, sunshine, tears, farewells, brandy and soda! Glorious. Any danger of a bomb from the air? Good heavens, no! never dreamed of. Any fear of being blown up at night by a submarine? Good Lord, no! Any danger of anything? Not till we get to the scene of the war. When do we get there? Oh, in about six months.

Thus used to sail the French and the English to the West Indies; brandy and soda on deck all day and cards played under an awning for ten rupees a punto; that's the life!

Thus sailed a United States naval expedition somewhere about a hundred years

ago for the island of Sumatra. Why? To punish a native chief. Now if anybody can think of better fun than what “punishing a native chief” used to be, I want to hear of it. Time of this expedition, four months out and four back. Warfare involved—bombardment of Quettah Boola, or some such place, for half an hour, then a native banquet with hams, yams, clams, and a native drink called “hooroo”! And at all these banquets, of course, there were girls, lots of them, yellow, tan, brown, anything. They always collected *them* in any of the dear old expeditions. After which they collected the ransom and sailed home.

Danger in the old wars never came till you were ready for it, all keyed up for it, wanting it. And it was over in no time—it was like a thunderstorm, fearsome and full of light and then gone! In any good old campaign the armies always laid off for winter, and always took time off for saints’ days, holidays, and generals’ birthdays on both sides. They stopped for wet weather, muddy weather, or when there was too much static in the air. A campaign lasted as a rule all summer with a battle once a month, lasting anywhere from twenty minutes to all day. Waterloo began after early lunch, and all concerned were finished for late dinner. Wolfe’s battle at Quebec lasted twenty minutes. It had taken from the first week in January till the middle of September to get it ready.

As to the danger of death, the open air life was so superior to sedentary work at home that it was on the whole safer to be at war. England lost, in twenty-two years of war with France, only one hundred thousand soldiers—about five thousand a year. About half of these died of fever in the West Indies without any battles at all. Apart from fever, the mortality at home was far greater.

Can we wonder that war flourished. For the officers it was, literally, a picnic; as for the common people, they didn’t matter in those days. But they probably liked it fairly well—better than home anyway.

Gradually the thing began to get spoiled. New weapons were invented which were really dangerous to handle. Napoleon’s wars were fought with an old flint-lock gun, which, if handled carefully, was not very dangerous. If fired too fast, it might kick or burst and do damage.

The American Civil War, was, as we can see it now, the real turning point. The Americans, as usual, took hold of a good thing, improved it, and spoiled it. They got busy inventing iron-clad warships, submarines, trench mortars, and heaven knows what. General McClellan had the right idea; he proposed four years’ drill before beginning war. Grant butted in and spoiled it.

The Civil War was—in all reverence—the last of the heroic age of war. In place of it has come the War of the Machine Age, the war of gases, bombs, depth charges

—where personal valour is of no avail—where right does not conquer—where the weak go down—where the Mass Production of Death reaps its wholesale harvest.

No, it won't do. All people are sick of it. War is finished. It's too dangerous. The League of Nations can try as they like to keep it alive. Their votes and debates and disputes in the old days would have started a war every six months. But not now. Any two nations who start fighting are now looking over their shoulder for someone to intercede and stop them.

War, therefore, will die out. But when it is gone the world will begin to feel a dull place without it. So much so that— But stop—let us see it as a series of pictures as the world saw it in the adventurous past, in the appalling present, and will see it in the Utopian future.

Chapter II
He Goes in A.D. 1810

Every time that Admiral Halftop's two little grandchildren were taken to see him, they always set themselves to make their grandfather tell them stories about the war.

The little old admiral, in his faded blue suit, cheery and ruddy and hearty at seventy-five, was a great favourite with children, and most of all with little Clara and Edward, his grandchildren.

"Story?" the admiral would say, "story about the war? Tut, tut, I've told you all about it long ago. Fiddlesticks!"

"Oh, please do tell us a story!" said little Clara.

All three of them knew that he was going to in any case.

So the admiral would take his stick and his spy-glass and walk out with the children from his cottage along the cliffs beside the sea. His "cottage" the admiral always called it; and he spoke of it as a "snug little crib." But the eyes of others saw a green and white mansion set in handsome lawns and gardens and glass houses, in a sheltered hollow, behind the cliffs, within sight and sound of the sea.

The stick the admiral needed from a slight stiffness of the left knee acquired in boarding the *Sanctissima Trinidad* on October 21, 1805. The spy-glass might at any moment be needed to examine a ship far out at sea and to explain to the children why the ship, from the extra length of her mainyard, was a "Frenchman."

It always seemed so strange and fascinating to the children to think that grandpapa had been in the great war, had actually seen "Boney" on the deck of the *Bellerophon*, and had even talked with "the Duke"—ever so many times, in fact more and more often as he told about it.

So sometimes they walked along the cliffs and grandpapa told stories of the war; and sometimes if it was windy they came and sat on a bench under the great trees on the spacious lawns of the sheltered "cottage." Cottage or not, it was an estate of great beauty and would have commanded a lot of money in the market. For like all his generation, the admiral had done well out of the war. What with prize money accumulated for years, and the lucky purchase of lands in Portugal and the pension of a grateful sovereign, the admiral was a wealthy man. But that, of course, was always the reward of war and the admiral took it all modestly and with due humility.

So that afternoon Admiral Halftop sat with the children in the autumn light among the falling and fallen leaves.

"Did you ever fight on land, grandpapa?" asked little Edward.

“On land! Aye, to be sure, my boy. When the war moved to Spain, you know, we hadn’t much to do at sea then, so they shoved a lot of us youngsters with the naval brigade. We marched in from Santander—or was it Corunna—no, wait a bit, it was Santander—aye, that’s right, Santander, of course, yes, Santander.”

The admiral kept murmuring “Santander” so long that little Edward said, “And what did you do, grandpapa?”

“Do? Oh, we were supposed to go and help the Spanish gorillas.”

“Spanish what?” asked Clara.

“Gorillas,” said the admiral.

“Animals?” exclaimed both children.

“No, no, my dears, gorillas is the word we used for irregular Spaniards.”

“Is it spelt like the word in the picture book?” asked Clara.

“Couldn’t say?” said the admiral. “I’m afraid I’ve forgotten most of my Spanish years ago. We never had another war against them—or with them, I should say; they were, as I remember, on our side. At sea they’d been against us.”

“How was that?” asked Edward.

“Don’t know,” said the admiral; “anyway, that was the arrangement. But they were a poor lot. I remember when our column joined the Duke—he’d come through, you know, from the Tagus—wait a bit, the Douro—not, the Tagus, yes, yes, the Tagus—we had about half a company of them with us—marching anyhow—some on donkeys. The Duke reined in his horse. I was right beside him as he stopped. ‘What the devil are those fellows?’ he said, turning towards me. ‘Spanish gorillas, sir,’ I answered. ‘Damme,’ said the Duke, ‘they look like it.’ Then he looked at my uniform, ‘And what are you?’ ‘Naval brigade, sir.’ ‘Damme,’ said the Duke, ‘I see you are.’ Then he turned to an aide-de-camp. ‘Ride and tell Sir John to dress those damn Spaniards better.’ Then we heard him murmur, ‘How the deuce do they expect me to meet Marmont with a lot of sailors and Spaniards!’ And off he rode.”

“What a disagreeable man!” exclaimed little Clara.

“Disagreeable! Not a bit!” said the admiral. “Deuced fine fellow, the Duke. I remember well the next time he saw me he said, ‘So you’re the young puppy that came in by Santander, eh? Damme, I hope you like it.’ Always knew everybody, the Duke did, always had a word to say like that. Next time I saw him outside Burgos. ‘Eh, what the devil,’ he said, ‘not shot yet?’ Oh, we all liked him, the Duke; damn fine soldier, no nonsense about him. But he couldn’t stand for the Spaniards. Neither could the French officers for the matter of that. In fact they often told us so.”

“The French?” said Edward, puzzled, “but weren’t you fighting against the French?”

“Certainly, the French were the enemy. Splendid lot they were too.”

“Then why were you fighting them?”

“Ah, well! that didn’t concern us—nor them either, for that matter. I mean to say, the French were the enemy and that’s as far as it mattered to us. Excellent fellows, we got to like them better and better.”

“But how would you *know* them if you were fighting them?”

“My dear Edward,” said Admiral Halftop. “Surely you don’t think that a soldier’s life is made up of fighting. I’m afraid you’d get damn few chaps to care for that. Plenty of time for fighting in its proper place, but when we were in bivouac they’d walk over to our lines, or we to theirs. And they’d send us over things—under a flag, you know. At first their commissariat was far better than ours—especially the wine. The ridiculous thing was that we couldn’t take anything from the Spaniards and of course they could. So they’d send over wine and game and things.”

“But was that *allowed*?” asked Edward.

“Allowed? Well—they’d hardly expect us to fight them on an empty stomach, would they?”

“You mean you actually knew the French and talked to them?”

“Why, of course,” said the admiral. “Saw a great deal of them, you know—truces, prisoners of war, parleys, all that sort of thing. As a matter of fact when the fighting wasn’t going on we often met them in the inns—against all rules, you know—but none of the generals ever cared. Why, Marshal Soult and the Duke, you know, became great friends.”

“But then, what was the war about if you didn’t hate the French?”

“Ah, now,” said Admiral Halftop, “that’s another question, isn’t it? Everyone said that the war was because Bonaparte was determined to conquer Spain—quite right of course—and we were determined to stop him—equally right, so there you are—”

“Then he was a very wicked man,” said little Clara.

“Wicked!” protested the admiral. “God bless me no! Fine fellow, Boney. I saw him myself, Edward, spoke to him—or at least he spoke to me. I went on board the *Bellerophon*—not to sail with them, hadn’t the luck to do that—but sent with despatches. I had to wait on deck while the captain took the papers below to answer. Boney was there asking questions with a lot of our fellows round him and he was asking questions about the running gear. It seemed to surprise him that we knew the names of it all. ‘Et vous,’ says he turning to me, ‘quelle est cette corde-ci?’ Well, as a matter of fact all it was was simply the lower top-gallant-down-haul and I told

him so. ‘Tiens!’ he said, ‘c’est curieux.’ That’s French, my dears, and it means ‘Well, that’s a rum go.’ And then he was silent. I had an idea he was thinking that if he’d had *sailors like us . . .*”

“Children, children!” cried their mother’s voice. “Here’s the pony carriage. Come along. Papa, if you don’t go in and dress you’ll be late for dinner. You’ve got Commander Cormorant coming, you know.”

“Ah, to be sure, to be sure! Bustle along, my dears, good-bye. Come again soon.”

As they drove home in the pony carriage little Clara said, “If I were a boy I think I’d like to be a sailor—or else a soldier—”

“What else is there to be?” said Edward.

Chapter III
He Goes in 1950

“You’ll have to go out on the lawn for a little while, children, and look after your grandfather.”

“Oh, bother,” said Edward. “Can’t he look after himself for once, mother?”

“You know he can’t,” said the woman gently, “and I can’t stay with him any longer. It’s Tilda’s afternoon out, and I have the work to do.”

“I know, mother,” said Edward, “I shouldn’t have said that. I don’t really mind, mother. Come on, Clara.”

“Put your jacket on, dear,” said the woman to the little girl. “It’s too cold now to be out without a jacket. It’s nearly winter already.”

Little Clara said nothing. But her wistful face and half frightened eyes showed how she felt. The truth was the little girl was frightened to be with grandfather. With her brother Edward there, she didn’t mind so much, but if she had to be alone with him at all—if Edward went into the house to fetch anything—the presence of the old man frightened her. There was something in the unmoving attitude of the tall straight figure, sitting upright in a rustic chair, hardly ever speaking; something in the droop of the half withered left arm, the fingers always clutched; and most of all something in the sightless face that seemed to chill within the little girl the very springs of life and gladness.

For both the little children, to have to “sit with grandfather” was the standing trial of their existence. School was not so bad; the limitations of their shabby home they scarcely knew. The fact that they were not well off, because all the money of their family had been lost ever so long ago in the war—these things did not affect them in any conscious way.

But their trial was that for part of the time each day, or at any rate two or three times each week, they had to look after their grandfather. Somebody had to be near him, they knew that. For most of the time each day there was a village boy who was paid to be with the old man; and part of the time the clergyman’s daughter from the next house came and read to him. In the evenings, indoors, their mother was there, and Tilda, the maid, ironing in the kitchen. Grandfather sat in his room then, and it was all right.

But when they had to be alone with their grandfather and to know that he was under their charge, the children felt a strange uncanny feeling—an apprehension that something was going to happen. They were afraid.

Partly this was because they knew that their grandfather had been in the War of

Desolation. This alone seemed to strike a chill into his presence. They knew that he was one of the very few surviving people about them who could remember the terror of that time. But he never spoke of it. And the children never asked him about it. They had always been told that they must never talk to grandfather about the War of Desolation.

They knew of course from their history books the general idea of what had happened. There had come into the world first of all a war of four years' duration which the history books still called the World War. The children never could remember what nations were on which side though they had had to learn it at school. But it was hard to remember. And they had learned how after this war, not very long after, there had come another war, much more terrible, called the War of Desolation.

They knew too that this "final war," this War of Desolation, had come to a sudden and strange end. The history books, it is true, glossed it over with generalities about "universal agreement" and nearly all the people who had been in it were dead. But everybody knew that the war had just ended, broken up, collapsed. All of a sudden, by a sort of mass impulse, the soldiers had left the trenches, hundreds and thousands of them together, in a mad desire to get back home to save their wives and children from the horror of the "falling death."

It had long since been known that the war would be fought from the air and that its chief weapons would be great blankets of heavy poison gas sent down on the crowded cities. The trenches, everyone knew, would only be a frontier, a line of deadlock. But few had foreseen what this would mean. No army of men could be made to sit in the safety and shelter of a dug-out line while hundreds of miles behind them their wives and children perished. The soldiers broke. Officers were shot down, or broke with the men, in the wild rush for "home" to save their people or to die with them. It was not against the "enemy" that the anger of the soldiers turned. It was against governments, parliaments, statesmen and patriots. The history books gave but little account of the vengeance taken, often as blind and ruthless as war itself. But war, as an institution, died with the War of Desolation—self-destroyed.

Since then a generation had gone by—nearly two generations. There were nations still, and even a league of nations, and in a limited and declining way, armaments and armed forces.

But even children knew that war was gone.

So the children went out that afternoon to sit beside their grandfather.

"If you call me, I can hear," said their mother, "I'll be in the kitchen."

“That’s all right, mother,” said Edward.

“And, Edward—” she called the boy back a minute and whispered—“come and fetch me at once if—you know.”

“I know, mother, if there’s an aeroplane. But there won’t be. They never come here.”

“Sometimes they do. And, Edward, when grandfather asks for his medicine, come and take it out to him. I won’t get it ready till he asks.”

Out on the lawn in the presence of their grandfather both the children felt a little bit afraid, as they always did. Partly it was because the old man sat so still, so silent. For a long time he never spoke. Then at some rumbling noise in the village street, he started a little in his chair and asked, “Was that a cart?”

“Only a cart, grandfather.”

Then he fell silent again. The hedges around the little lawn and the tall trees that grew beside it shut out, for the most part, all light and sound. Above the trees the blue autumn sky was empty and silent.

“Was grandfather always like this?” asked little Edward as he stood in the kitchen watching his mother prepare the tonic for the old man. “I mean, was he like this ever since the war?”

“Oh, no, dear,” said his mother. “It only came on much later, the effect of the terrible poison was very slow in his case. After the war your grandfather worked for years—he was an engineer, dear, and a very clever one. He had to work because all the money was lost in the ruin of the war.”

“Was grandfather’s family rich before?”

“Oh, very rich, dear. There was a famous old admiral—your great-great—I don’t know how many greats—at any rate your ancestor who was an admiral and had lands in Spain that turned into a fortune, but it was all lost in the War of Desolation.”

“When you were a little girl, did grandfather ever talk to you about the war?”

“Never about himself, dear, but of course we knew.”

“Why didn’t the gas kill him?”

“I don’t know, dear. He was the only one they found alive in streets and streetsful of the dead. He had his little brother held against him, dead. Father, your grandfather I mean, had come back from the trenches when the men broke from the command. He knew they were going to bomb the city and he wanted to save his brother. There were only those two left alive in the family. The others were gone.”

“And he couldn’t save him?”

“No, dear.”

“And he got ill after?”

“Only gradually, dear. When your aunt and I were little girls, I can remember him so straight and strong. Then his sight began to go—little by little. And then it began to reach his brain. The doctors say . . .” She paused. Perhaps it would be just as well not to tell the little boy what the doctors said; time enough when it happened.

Then suddenly—

“Good heavens, what is it?”

“Oh, oh, mother! mother! come quick!”

It was little Clara’s voice as she burst into the room in a panic of fright. “Mother, come! There’s something the matter with grandfather.”

Mother and children rushed out on the lawn. The old man had risen from his chair to his full gaunt height. His sightless eyes were turned towards the sky. His clenched hands waved and threatened in the air. From his mouth came a storm of fierce imprecation.

Loud over the trees beyond came the roaring of an approaching plane. The old man seemed to hear their steps on the grass as they drew near. He turned towards them. He was clutching one arm against his breast as if to hold something—nothing—sheltered against it.

“They’re coming,” he shouted, “keep close to me. Follow me. Put your head there, close under my coat, your mouth covered. Don’t be afraid, little brother, I can save you. Stop firing,” he shouted. “It’s useless now. To the cellars, all of you!”

The old man stood erect, motioning with one hand to the unseen people whose hurrying feet and pallid faces had passed from the earth fifty years ago. With his other hand he clasped his little brother close against his breast to shield him from the onrush of the gas. On his sightless face was the inspiration of exalted courage, and over his head screamed the approaching plane.

His daughter rushed to him and seized his arm.

“Father! Father!” she pleaded. “It’s nothing; only an aeroplane. Father, come in, come with me— It is nothing.”

The old man yielded as she dragged him towards the house, his voice sinking to a murmur as the great plane swept overhead and passed.

“Run, Edward,” whispered his mother, “and fetch the doctor. Tell him that grandfather is bad again. Come, father, dear, come and lie down.”

Quite late that evening, the two children were taken to their grandfather’s room.

They were told it was to say “good-bye.” But the room was nearly dark and they could hardly see him. His hand was cold and what he said was only a whisper beyond all power of hearing. But the children knew and were frightened.

Afterwards, when they stood outside the door on the landing: “Do you think, Eddie,” said Clara, “there’ll ever be another war?”

“How could there be?” said Edward.

Chapter IV
With the League of Nations, A.D. 2000 Or So

If the pictures of the past and of the immediate future as presented in the preceding chapters are correct, then let us grant that war, as we know it, has got to go. The common sense of humanity revolts at slaughter by machinery.

But as it goes, and when it goes, what happens to nations and governments and diplomacy and above all, what happens to the League of Nations? Will it cease to exist? Not at all. Institutions long survive the original impetus and circumstance from which they rose. They linger as survivals when their original significance is lost; and as they pass from activity to obsolescence they acquire a quaint and picturesque element as of a fragment of a lost world. Thus do the forms of the Middle Ages survive among us today, and thus will the League of Nations assume as it sinks into oblivion a mediæval aspect all its own.

In illustration of which, there may be appended here the document which follows:

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY A LADY
TOURIST IN SWITZERLAND
A.D. 2000, *at least*:

And now do let me tell you of the most surprising and interesting of all our experiences here in Geneva. You'd never guess. A visit to the League of Nations. Just think of it. I know that you will say at once that the League of Nations doesn't exist and hasn't existed for generations. But it *does*. Really it seems too picturesque for words, to think of the League as still actually in existence here, with its own premises and staff.

Of course it no longer occupies the palatial quarters that you see in the historical illustrations. The present "palace" of the League as a matter of fact is rather a pathetic place, in fact only a very dilapidated old house on a side street. Indeed when we first asked about it at the hotel, none of them seemed to know where it was, though of course everybody here knows that it still exists. That happens, you know, even at home. People ask you the whereabouts of old cemeteries or old monuments and you know perfectly well that they are somewhere in the city but you couldn't for the life of you say where. How many people, do you suppose, know that the Tower of London is still there behind the Frozen Meat Dock-Houses?

But we found an old cabman who drove us to it, and it really gave us quite a thrill to drive along the quaint old street, all grown with ancient trees, and to see the

dilapidated house standing behind tumbledown palings. You can still read the letters on a plate on the door, "*Society of Nations*," and underneath it, "*Leave Groceries at the Back Door*."

We rang and rang and at last we could hear shuffling steps and the door was unchained and there was the oddest and most ancient old man you ever saw. But he was ever so polite and showed us in with quite a grand air and asked if he might have the privilege of showing us the "palace." When he said "palace" the two children nearly laughed, because really it was just a dingy old dwelling-house with a narrow hall all dust and cobwebs.

The old man was quite garrulous and we hardly needed to talk at all because he went right on with explanations without waiting for questions. He told us that he was the Brazilian Ambassador, at least that he had been long ago, but that they had forgotten him and left him there, and that the League had kept him as Caretaker. He called it, I think, "Custodian," and "Conservateur"—in fact he had a lot of names of mixed-up languages like that. But when we said, "Do you mean Caretaker?" he bowed in his grand way and said, "Yes, Caretaker!" quite proudly.

Then he opened the door at the side and showed us the "Hall of Assembly" which was really just the front room of the house, only it had a desk in it and twenty or thirty chairs in little rows. The room was dusty and dim like the hall passage, but the Brazilian Ambassador turned on a light to show it to us. Just fancy, an electric bulb sticking out of a bracket! The children had never seen one before! He said that it was a pity we hadn't been coming tomorrow, instead, because the Grand Hall was going to be cleaned out for a "general assembly in plenum." (That is what he called it.) A woman was to come in that evening and get it ready. We asked him who were coming to the general assembly and he waved his hand and said, "The various nations."

Then he showed us in to the room behind, which he called the "secretariat" and he said that that was where the president did all the work of the League. This room was better, with a very fine old table—too big for the room—and some wonderful old chairs.

There was a typewriter machine on the table, the kind that used to be worked with people's fingers. I never saw one before.

We asked the Ambassador if he could show us how the machine worked, but he said no; he said that he had always meant to learn how but that he never had. He had been too busy. He said that the president's secretary could work it but that he was out.

We asked him if the president of the League was there and he said yes, that he

lived there! Only it seems that he was asleep. Some of the ministers he said had lived there for years and years.

We asked him, what about the British Ambassador and whether there was one; and he said yes, of course, only that just now he was out as he had gone down the street with the French Envoy to get the groceries. The tradesmen, it seemed, had been very disagreeable about leaving them unless the money was given them in advance. The funds of the League, the Ambassador explained, were just now in a certain confusion; he said that some of the payments due to the League, including the annual interest on what he called the “Reparations” from Germany, were over a hundred years in arrears. He gave a lot of explanations which I couldn’t understand but which seemed to mean that the League was really very rich, or at least when all its claims are collected. But he said that the extension of the “Moratorium” (I think “Moratorium”) for a further hundred years would leave them still somewhat embarrassed for the next century. Meantime, however, the Bank of International Settlement (it is on the top floor of the house) is endeavouring to float a loan of five hundred dollars for immediate current outlay. The old man spoke very proudly of this Bank of International Settlement which is upstairs. He says it has its own staff, entirely distinct from the League—except for meal times.

The Ambassador seemed to lay such stress on the words “money” and “funds” that I fell in quite a quandary. I felt I ought to give him something and yet I hesitated to, as he seemed so dignified. But at last I plucked up my courage and gave him two dollars and it turned out quite all right. He became more polite than ever, and said that he regretted so much that he could not take us upstairs where the “technical staff” were at work. I didn’t press him to, because I thought that perhaps the technical staff might be as by-gone and as pathetic as all the rest of it. He said, too, that he feared he must not show us the “kitchens” (he didn’t say how many) as the Portuguese Ambassador was cooking, it being always his turn on Wednesday.

Just as we were going little Edward, you know how bold children are, asked him, “What is the League supposed to do, anyway?”

I was afraid that he would have got terribly angry. But not at all, the question seemed to delight him.

“An excellent question! Most intelligent. It’s a question so often directed to me—what is the League for?”

“And what is it?” said Edward.

“The object of the League,” said the Ambassador, “is the maintenance of Peace and War.”

“But there isn’t any more war now!” said Clara.

“No,” said the Ambassador, “not just at present. But we think it likely that one will be arranged for next winter. We are working on it now. If we succeed in getting it started we shall then at once offer our services to stop it. In fact,” he said, rubbing his hands, “it will be quite like old times again.”

And with that he excused himself a minute and went upstairs and fetched what he called some of the latest “war correspondence” and said we might take it with us.

After we got back to the hotel I talked about it with Professor Dustie at the table d’hôte and he was able to make it all a little clearer. The League, he said, had long since ceased to have an official existence. But it seems that it still goes on—though I couldn’t quite understand how. He said that the ambassadors are no longer accredited, but as the League continues to recognize them, there is no one to deny their status.

Postscript. I forgot to say that after we got home I read over the “war correspondence.” It had evidently been written out on the funny machine, the typewriter, that we saw, and it is hard to read because it is all done in the old lost spelling. But I enclose one or two samples of it as I thought you would find it curious.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS,

APRIL 1ST, 2000 A.D.

SAMPLE NO. 1

From the League of Nations

To the Business Manager of the United States,

DEAR SIR:

I regret to inform you that the present condition of your armament is decidedly below the standard required by this league for qualification. Your battle cruiser is, in the opinion of all who have seen it, quite obsolete and appears to have only two cylinders instead of five, while the feed box is inadequate for the engine. We have already protested against the disgraceful condition of your submarine and cannot accept your plea that it is not meant to go under water.

SAMPLE NO. 2

From the President of the League of Nations

To the Chief Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland,
REVEREND SIR:

I write on behalf of the League to enquire whether you would feel interested in getting up a war this season between the Scotch and the Welsh. As you are doubtless aware, the Welsh have been saying a lot of dirty things about Scotland lately. There was one man here yesterday in our office who said that he would lick any three men north of the Tweed. We feel it our duty to bring this to your notice and ask whether you are prepared to stand for that sort of stuff. If not, then our League offers its services at very favourable rates for any publicity that you may need. Our department for the International Dissemination of Insults will be pleased to look up for you the ancestry of the Welsh, and to cast animadversions on it at a reasonable rate per hundred. At the same time our Agricultural and Floral Division will be pleased to take your order for mustard gas, deadly nightshade, mushrooms, or any other form of vegetable poison.

Appended to this document was the telegraphic reply of the Chief Moderator.

REGRET SAY WAR WELSH PRACTICALLY OUT QUESTION IMMEDIATE
INTEREST INTERNATIONAL BAGPIPE COMPETITION INVERNESS KEEPS OUR
PEOPLE BREATHLESS CONDITION STOP ALSO APPREHEND WAR FINANCIALLY
INJURIOUS BUSINESS INTERESTS SCOTCH TERRIER BREEDERS, FINNAN
HADDIE EXPORTERS, GOLF CLUB PROFESSIONALS AND PRESBYTERIAN
MISSIONS STOP SUGGEST APPLY JAPANESE BUREAU ORIENTAL LOVE.

Chapter V

War in Utopia, Later Still

It should not have been difficult to see the ultimate destiny of war. Here on the one hand was the growing magnitude of the desolation and suffering involved by actual physical warfare. With each decade there increased the possibility of inter-human slaughter on a vast scale, without reference to justice, bravery, or human welfare. But here on the other hand was the natural pugnaciousness of mankind, the tendency to dispute. More than that, there remained the glory of the panoply of war, the brilliant uniforms, the flashing steel, the waving flags and the long roll of the drum. These awake in the human heart impulses not to be denied, and heroisms not to be decried.

How then to reconcile the two? The solution ultimately was easy enough. Let machinery have its will, but let mankind in the personal sense slip out from under. Let the machines fight.

The beginning of this had already been found in the earlier 'thirties of the twentieth century. The invention of the mechanical man, the half-comic "Robot" who could walk erect, wash dishes and shake hands, already pointed the way. Let the Robot *fight*.

To this was added, during the same period, the control by wireless of aeroplanes and seacraft without the presence of human beings on board. An "iron quartermaster" could steer a ship, and a beam of electricity could tell him where to go. In a naval battle, the one unnecessary thing was a human being.

Such new ideas once started were bound to move fast. War, reduced to a mechanical form, could retain its panoply and its glory, its flags and its drums, and could get back again that glorious atmosphere of open-air sport which it had had in the eighteenth century and had lost in the twentieth.

War on its new footing inevitably became again the leading human pastime. A man who wouldn't fight for his country was a poor lot. The ordinary patriotic citizen would subscribe to every war loan, buy front seats every Saturday in the War Stadium and a box in the evenings at the War Arena. The League of Nations, as shown above, would keep up an ineffectual protest. But mankind would heed it not. As witness of all which, let us set down from the public newspapers of the year 2050 A.D. some typical war dispatches.

Chapter VI
War Extracts from the Press of A.D. 2050

London, October, 2050 A.D..—A thrill of pride swept over England when the press cables from Russia brought the first full authentic accounts of the Charge of the Light Brigade of last Tuesday. Among the many notable episodes of the present world war none have attracted a wider attention or called forth more widespread comment. Oddly enough, the episode recalls a once famous charge—itsself known as the Charge of the Light Brigade, which occurred during a war with Russia about two centuries ago. Students of literature will recall that this charge was made the subject of a famous war poem by Albert Tennyson, the great Scotch dramatist of the day.

The historic Charge of the Light Brigade of the nineteenth century was, however, entirely eclipsed by that of Tuesday. To begin with, the Light Brigade was in this case far lighter. The weight of each man—including internal wiring—was only forty pounds while that of each horse, including its gasoline tank, was only a hundred. All those who were lucky enough to be “looking-in” at the charge over the television apparatus agree that condition and bearing of the troops were perfect to the last degree. The criticism was indeed made that they looked too straight in front of them and hence received no ophthalmic photostatic warning of the dangers at the side. To which criticism, however, the chief constructor of the Bureau of Military Design has answered that he had first made the Brigade with revolving heads to turn in all directions on their necks, but that the War Office had condemned this type of soldier as contrary to British traditions.

That the charge was misdirected seems beyond a doubt. But whether the fault lies with the apparatus of transmission or with the directional use made of it will never be known. Military experts are already questioning also whether the type of horse used in the charge has its gasoline tank in the right place. The same criticism implies in a minor degree to the type of officer; it is questioned whether we should continue the prevailing practice of filling up the officer’s tank just before the action.

RICHMOND, Va.—The amazing mechanical rider appropriately nicknamed “General Sheridan” performed yesterday a feat of automatic heroism and endurance which may prove a vital factor in the war now being conducted in Virginia. A certain credit is no doubt due to the horse ridden by the General, which is an entirely new departure, having eight legs in place of the usual six. The problem of synchronizing the movement of eight legs has hitherto baffled every war department in the world. Its solution by the United States offers us the permanent advantage of eight-legged cavalry which ought to mean a decided superiority, at least under existing rules of war.

We are unable to inform our readers of the precise object of “General Sheridan’s” ride. The directional operators have refused, as a military secret, to state its purpose, and it is probable that in the future, countless thousands will read of “General Sheridan’s” ride with no idea whatsoever of what he was riding for. This, however, in no way detracts from the merit of the performance. Presumably the General had been filled with dispatches of the greatest importance and of such a nature as to require their transmission in physical shape from one directional centre to the other. This is, of course, mere conjecture. He must, however, have been full of something.

But we repeat that the main thing after all is the ride itself. It was with a thrill of mingled national pride and intense excitement that the whole country heard at three o’clock yesterday afternoon that “Sheridan” was only ten miles away. Away from what, we do not know. But we insist that the glory of the ride is quite independent of this. An hour later came the news that “Sheridan” was only five miles away; and when the announcement was made one hour after that “Sheridan” was only two and a half miles away, an exultant feeling swept over all the listeners-in as they realized that at that pace “Sheridan” was bound to get to his destination—wherever it was. Naturally there ensued a slight disappointment when it was found that an hour later “Sheridan” was still a mile and a half away. Indeed it was only too plain that some mechanical accident had happened to the General whereby his pace was slackening though his gain was continuous. Latest advices seem to show that “Sheridan” is now gaining half the remaining distance in each succeeding hour. A radio bulletin from

the Smithsonian Institution states that in all probability “General Sheridan’s” gear had slipped so that the revolutions of his horse’s legs are now in an eccentric with a continuous but diminishing advance. If so, they claim he will ride forever without getting to where it is that he is away from. But it is admitted that if he rides long enough he will get there. This paradoxical ending, it seems to us, only crowns the ride with a new immortality. It demonstrates, as well, the superiority of the new mechanical age over the now forgotten world of the past.

VALUABLE BUOY LOST
APPARENTLY LEFT STANDING ON THE BURNING DECK

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt—An unfortunate incident of yesterday’s big sea fight was the loss of a valuable buoy of which since the explosion that destroyed the enemy’s flagship, no trace can be found. It was one of the new patent French buoys, filled with inflammable gas. It is not exactly certain what happened, but all are agreed that while the ship was burning, the buoy stood on the burning deck.

Part III
The Doctor and the Contraption

Chapter I

Medicine As It Was

I suppose that when an up-to-date doctor of today looks at you or me, or at any one of us, he sees something very different from what we see. In place of a human personality—a soul looking out from the infinite depth of the human eye—he sees a collection of tubes, feed-pipes, conduits, joints, levers, and food and water tanks. He sees thirty-five feet of internal elastic piping, a hundred and ten feet of wiring, together with a pound and a half of brain, arrayed behind a couple of optical lenses set in gimbals. In other words, what he sees is not a man at all but a complicated machine contraption, probably running very badly, wheezing in the pipes and clogged in the carburetor. Naturally he wants to get at it, just as a garage man longs to tear a motor to pieces. He would like to take a monkey-wrench and tighten up its joints; turn a hose into it and flush out its piping; or better still, put a new boiler into it and throw the old one away.

This is what is called the Medical Instinct. There is something fierce, as it were, to the verge of comicality in what a doctor would like to do to a patient short of driving shingle nails into him with a tack hammer. Even that might come in handy.

But contrast the change there has been in the common practice of medicine within a couple of generations. Compare the medicine of fifty years ago with the medicine of today and we can easily foresee the further progress of the science.

Thus, first:

MEDICINE YEAR, 1880 THE SAVIOUR OF MEN

In the old-fashioned days when a man got sick he went to a family doctor and said he was sick. The doctor gave him a bottle of medicine. He took it home and drank it and got well.

On the bottle was written, “Three times a day, in water.” The man drank it three times a day the first day, twice the second day, and once the third day. On the fourth day he forgot it. But that didn’t matter. He was well by that time.

The place where he visited the doctor was the doctor’s own house, in the room called the “surgery” which was the same room as the one where they played euchre in the evening. There was no apparatus in it, except fishing rods and shotguns.

The doctor mixed the medicine himself at the tap over the sink. He put in anything that he had—it didn’t matter much what. As a matter of fact the man began to feel better as soon as he saw the medicine being mixed.

The doctor didn’t take an X-ray of the patient. He couldn’t. There weren’t any.

He didn't test his blood pressure or examine his arteries; people had none then.

Very often after the patient had gone away the doctor, if he was a thoughtful man, would sit and smoke a pipe and wonder what was wrong with the man anyway. But he never, never expressed any such wonder or doubt to the man himself. His profession had learned this maxim from Hippocrates and it had come down as an unbroken tradition. The medical profession never talked medicine to the patient.

Sometimes the doctor suspected that the man was really ill. But he never said so. Only after the patient was quite well again, did the doctor tell him how ill he had been. Hence every illness appeared in retrospect as a close shave in which a timely dose of medicine had saved a human life. This raised the whole tone of the business. The doctor appeared as a saviour of men. As he got older his beard—all doctors wore beards—became tinged with grey; his person acquired an easy dignity; his expression, something of nobility. He cured the patient by his presence. Beyond that, all he needed was a bottle of medicine and a cork. In an extreme case, he sat beside the patient's bed in a long vigil that might last all night. But the patient was well in the morning.

For convalescence the doctor prescribed a "light diet." This meant beefsteak and porter.

Such medicine, of course, was hopelessly unscientific, hopelessly limited. Death could beat it round every corner. But it was human, gracious, kindly. Today it is replaced by "machine medicine" with the mechanical test, the scientific diagnosis, the hospital, the X-ray. All this is marvellous. But no one has yet combined it with the Art of Healing.

As witness:

Chapter II
Medicine Year, 1932

THE DOCTOR AND THE CONTRAPTION

The Contraption sits huddled up in its serge suit in a consultation office chair. Its locomotive apparatus is doubled up beneath it, folded at the joints. The thing is anxious, but the doctor doesn't know that. The poor Contraption is consumed with something like panic that is gripping it by the feed-pipe. But it makes as brave a show as it can.

"It's a little hard to say," says the doctor, "just what the trouble is."

He has been making a few preliminary investigations by punching and listening in.

"I don't know that I quite like that heart," he adds, and then relapses into a reflective silence.

"Yes," he continues, as he comes out of his reverie, "there are symptoms there that I don't like—don't like at all."

Neither does the Contraption, but he keeps quiet.

"There may be," says the doctor, "an ankylosis there."

What an ankylosis is and what it does, the Contraption doesn't know. But the sound of it is quite enough.

"It's just possible," says the doctor as another bright idea occurs to him, "that there's an infiltration into the proscenium."

These may not be the exact medical terms that the doctor uses. But that is what they sound like to the Contraption.

"Is that so?" he says.

"However, we'll keep that under observation till we see what we find. You say you never had hydrophobia?"

"Not so far as I remember."

"That's interesting. The symptoms seem to suggest hydrophobia, or just possibly hendiadys."

The doctor reflects a little more, then he begins to write on little bits of paper.

"Well," he says in a cheerful tone, "we'll try it out anyway."

He writes out little orders for X-rays, blood tests, heart tests.

"Now," he says in conclusion. "Don't be alarmed. You may blow up on the street. But I don't think so. I'm not much afraid of that. It's possible that your brain will burst open at the sides. But I'm not alarmed if it does. If your eyes fall out on the street, let me know."

These are not his exact words. But they give exactly the impression that his

words convey.

“I will,” says the Contraption.

“And now,” says the doctor, who by this time has warmed up to the case and is filled with artistic interest, “about diet—I think you’d better not eat anything—or not for a month or so; and don’t drink; and you may as well cut out tobacco, and you’d better not sleep.

“And above all,” concludes the doctor with a sudden burst of geniality that he had forgotten to use sooner, “don’t worry. You may blow up at any time, but don’t let that worry you. You may fall dead in a taxi, but I’m not alarmed if you do. Come back in a week and I’ll show you the X-ray plates. Good-bye.”

The Contraption goes away for a week. That means seven days, or 168 hours, or 10,080 minutes, or 604,800 seconds. And he knows every one of them. He feels them go by.

When he comes back in a week he finds the doctor beaming with interest.

“Look at them,” he says, holding up to the light some photographic plates.

“What are those?” asks the Contraption.

“The brain,” says the doctor. “You see that misty-looking spot—there, just between the encephalon and the encyclopædia—?”

“What is it?” asks the Contraption.

“I don’t know yet,” the doctor says. “It’s a little early to say. But we’ll watch it. If you don’t mind, I think we’ll probably open your head and take a look. They are doing some wonderful things now in the removal of the brain. It’s rather a nice operation, but I think I may take the risk. I’ll let you know. Meantime you’re following out our instructions, I hope, not eating anything.”

“Oh, no.”

“And nothing to drink or smoke.”

“Oh, no.”

“That’s right. Well, now, in a day or two we’ll know more. I’ll have your blood by that time and the sections of your heart and then I think we’ll begin to see where we are. Good-bye.”

A week or so later the doctor says to his lady secretary, “That Contraption in the serge suit, wasn’t he to have come in this morning?”

The lady looked over a memorandum book. “Yes, I think he was.”

“Well, call him up on the ’phone. He doesn’t need to come. I’ve had all his hospital reports and they can’t find anything wrong at all. Tell him they want him to come back in six months and they may find something then. But there’s absolutely

nothing wrong with him now, unless it's his imagination. And, oh, by the way, tell him this—it will amuse him. That cloud on the X-ray plate that looked like a clot on the brain turns out to be a flaw in the glass. He'll have a good laugh at that.”

The secretary vanishes into the telephone room and it is some little time before she comes back.

“Well?” says the doctor, “did you get that gentleman on the 'phone?” He calls him a gentleman now because medical interest in him is over.

“I got his house,” she answers, “but they say the gentleman is dead. He died last night.”

“Dear me!” says the doctor gravely. “So we were wrong after all; we should have tested for something else. Did they say anything about how he died?”

“Yes. They say that as far as they know he died from gas. He seems to have turned on gas in the bedroom on purpose.”

“Tut, tut,” says the doctor, “suicidal mania! I forgot to test him for it!”

Chapter III
The Walrus and the Carpenter

But, still, humanity gets used to anything and thrives on it. Already this new method of medicine, this tinkering, testing, inoculating, is a recognized part of our common life. Already we can see developing in it the healing art of the future; or rather, not the healing art which is a thing lost in the past and surviving only by the wayside. What is replacing it, is better called the art of reconstruction. Its aim is not to heal the patient; he's not worth it; reconstruct him; make him over. If his engine doesn't work, put a new one in him. Everyone today knows in a general sort of way something of what is being done in reconstructive surgery. Bones are taken out and new ones put in. Patches of skin from Mr. Jones are grafted on to Mr. Smith. No one cares to think out too completely the gruesome details or to ask where they are leading. But the goal is plain enough. And no doubt when it is reached all idea of gruesomeness will have vanished from it. Ideas of that sort are only secondary and relative, things with no basis in absolute reality. An octopus looks terrible; a cooked lobster looks delicious. If no one had ever seen a cooked lobster, a whole supper party would rise, shrieking with terror at the sight of one.

Thus it would seem probable that with the triumphant progress of reconstructive surgery, all sense of terror or gruesomeness will pass away. We are quite used to people with false teeth; we are getting used to people with lifted faces; and presently we shall not shrink in alarm from a friend who has just bought a brand new stomach:

In witness of which:

MEDICINE YEAR, 2000
THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

“Now, I'd like to have him pretty well made over from the start,” said the self-assertive lady to the doctor.

As she said it she indicated a miserable-looking creature, evidently her husband, sitting flopped in a chair, gazing feebly at his wife and at the doctor.

The woman was of that voluble, obtrusive, assertive type that has made the two sexes what they are.

The man was of the familiar pattern of the henpecked husband, with a face as meek in expression as the countenance of a walrus, and with the ragged drooping moustache that belongs with it.

“Oh, I don't know about that,” he murmured.

But neither the lady nor the doctor paid much attention to what he murmured.

“He needs nearly everything new,” said the woman, “and I've been telling him

I'm going to give it to him as a present for our wedding anniversary next month. It will be twenty-five years we've been married."

"Twenty-five years!" said the doctor.

"Of course," gurgled the lady. "I was just a mere girl when we got married. They used to call me the little Rose Bud!"

"Yes, yes," murmured the doctor. He was looking at the lady in an absent-minded way, not really seeing her. Perhaps he was thinking that no lapse of time, no passage of generations can alter this type of woman or vary this line of conversation. On the other hand, perhaps he wasn't. He may have been merely thinking of the case. It was not every day that Dr. Carpenter was called upon to do what was called in his profession "a complete job." To put in a new bone or two or insert part of a brain or to replace an old stomach was an everyday matter. But to make a subject over from head to toe was still unusual and perhaps a trifle experimental.

"As a matter of fact," the husband began again, "I'm not so sure that I really need so very much done; in fact so far as I am concerned—"

"Now, John," interposed his wife, "don't let me hear any more of that. This is my business and not yours. I'm going to pay for it all out of my own money, and you're not to say another word."

The doctor was looking meditatively at the patient. He seemed to be measuring him with his eye. "There's a lot of him that I can use," he said.

"How do you mean?" asked the lady.

"Well, for instance, his head. That's all right. I can use his head as it is."

"Not his face!" said the lady.

"Yes, even his face, in a way. You'd be surprised what can be done without any radical replacement of tissue. What his face needs is not any change, but more animation, more expression, more alertness. You wait till I've put about twenty thousand volts of electricity through it, and see how it looks then."

"I say," murmured the man, "I'm not so sure that I feel so very keen about that."

"You won't know it," said the doctor tersely, and then continuing, "and I don't see why I couldn't use his frame-work. The arms and legs are all right."

The woman shook her head.

"He's not tall enough," she said.

"Personally," began the man, but his wife paid no attention to him and went on.

"He needs *presence*. He makes such a poor appearance when we go out evenings. I'd like him quite a lot taller."

"Very good," said Dr. Carpenter. "It's easily done. I can put in another six inches in the thigh bone simply enough. He'll look a little short when he sits at table but that

won't matter so much. But of course to get the right proportion you'll need to alter the arms as well. By the way," he added as a new idea seemed to occur to him, "do you play golf?"

"Do I play?" said the patient, showing for the first time an obvious animation. "Do I do anything else? I play every day, and yet would you believe it, I'm about the worst player in the club. Take yesterday, for instance, I'd come down the long hole, four hundred and eighty yards in three—right on to the green, and there I stuck—seven more to get into the hole. Seven! Can you beat it?"

"I'll tell you," said the doctor. "If you feel that way about it, I might do something about your golf while I am altering your arm."

"Say, if you could, I'd pay a thousand dollars for that," said the man. "Do you think you can?"

"Wait a bit," said the doctor. He stepped into the adjacent telephone cupboard. What he said and what was said to him was not audible to either Mr. Walrus or to his wife. The detailed operations of the medical profession are not either now or in Utopia as noble to contemplate as its final achievements. But if there had been an ear to listen when the dial was turned, this is what it would have heard.

"It's Dr. Carpenter. What about that Scotch professional golfer that you got yesterday? Is he all gone?"

"Wait a minute, doctor, I'll ask. . . . No, they say nothing much gone yet. Do you want his brain?"

The doctor laughed. "No, thanks. I want his right forearm. I've a client who'll pay anything that's fair up to a thousand. Right. Thank you."

"That'll be all right," said the doctor. "I can put a golf adjuster in you; and so now I think we can go right ahead, eh?"

"There's just one thing," said the wife, "that I'd like changed more than anything else. John is always so retiring and shy. He don't make the most of himself."

"Oh, come, come, June!" protested the man bluntly, "there's nothing in me to make much of."

"Well, I think," the woman went on, "that John's got what they call an 'inferiority complex.' Isn't that the word? Now couldn't you do something to his brain to get that out of it?"

Dr. Carpenter smiled.

"That's not in his brain, Mrs. Walrus; that's a matter of his glands and there's nothing easier than to alter that. The adjustment is a little difficult, the only danger is that he may get a little the other way."

"That's all right," said the woman, "that won't hurt him. He needs it."

It would be grossly out of place to linger on the details of the weeks of "treatment" which followed for Mr. Walrus. Such things belong only in a book of technical medicine. Even nowadays we prefer to leave all that in a half light, and in future generations, convention will dictate a still greater reticence in regard to the processes of reconstructive surgery. In any case the use of *sustained* anæsthetics in place of the intermittent anæsthetics of today put a different complexion on the whole affair. Convalescence itself being under anæsthetics, the patient—or rather client, to use the more ordinary term—knows nothing from his entrance into the Refactorium (formerly called hospital) until his final exit. The declaration of such a client that he "felt a new man" had a more literal meaning than now.

Suffice it to say that within a week or so Mrs. Walrus received a telephone communication from the hospital which said, "His legs are done." A little after that came an inquiry, "How about his whiskers? Would you like to preserve them or will you have a permanent clean shave?"

Under such circumstances, Dr. Carpenter was not at all surprised when in about six weeks from the original interview the renovated John Walrus walked into his office. He was all the less surprised because of the fact that Mr. Walrus was practically unrecognizable as his former self. What the doctor saw now was a tall man whose erect bearing was almost a perpendicular line and whose clean-shaven face, hard square jaw (evidently brand new) proclaimed a man of character and determination.

"Mr. Walrus!" exclaimed Dr. Carpenter when at last he realized who it was.

"I am," said the man, shaking hands with a cordial but firm clasp, "though it's a measly sort of name and I don't like it."

"And how do you feel?" asked the doctor.

"Fine," said Walrus. "I've just been out on the links. I went right up there first thing as soon as I came out. Do you know, I went round under forty; and that long hole I did in four—can you believe it?—one under the par. Certainly the rest and the treatment have done wonders for my arm."

"Certainly," repeated the doctor.

"Though as a matter of fact," Walrus continued, "I think I've a natural aptitude for the game. After all, you know, brain counts in golf as well as brawn. But, however, that's not what I came to talk about but just to thank you and to ask you to be good enough to have your account sent to me—to me personally, you understand."

“But I thought,” said Dr. Carpenter, “that Mrs. Walrus wanted to pay it herself?”

“Nothing doing,” laughed the client. “I’m not such a fool as that. If she paid it, it would create a sort of lien, don’t you see, legally?”

“Oh, I know that,” said the doctor. “The case often occurs. Still, in your instance I should have thought—”

“There’s more to it than that,” said Walrus, pausing to light a cigarette. “I went up to the house and saw her. My heavens, Carpenter, what a tongue that woman has! Absolutely never stops! The fact is, I don’t think I care to go back to her. She’d talk me to death.”

“As far as that goes,” said the doctor, “if it was only a matter of her tongue, I could shorten it for you.”

“You could, eh?” For a moment Mr. Walrus paused as if in some slight doubt. Then he went on speaking in the firm decisive way that was now, since twenty-four hours, habitual with him.

“No, no, it’s too late now. And anyway, I don’t want to. The fact is, Carpenter, that I have arranged to take a new wife. I’ve decided, in short, to take one of the nurses from up at the hospital. You may have noticed her when you were up there, the dark, very tall one. In fact, if anything, she’s a little too tall.”

“I could shorten her,” murmured Carpenter.

“By how much?” asked Walrus—“Or no, I’ll keep her as she is.”

“And when do you get married?” asked the doctor.

“I haven’t quite decided,” replied Walrus. “Very soon, I think.”

“No doubt,” said the doctor, “the young lady is equally keen on it?”

“I haven’t asked her yet,” said Walrus. “I shall probably mention it to her today. But I want to go and have another eighteen holes first. Well, good-bye, doctor, don’t forget the account, and by the way, when you make it out to me kindly alter the name. After this I’m changing my name from John Walrus to Hercules Bullrush.”

After the client had gone out, Dr. Carpenter, who was a thoughtful man, sat down at his desk and continued his work upon his forthcoming treatise, “On the Probable Limitations of Restorative Surgery.”

Part IV

Rah! Rah! College or Tom Buncom at Shucksford

A PICTURE OF THE COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE

Chapter I

Introduction—Anno Domini 1880

There can be little doubt that the work of the colleges has been progressing and broadening with every decade for three generations past. This is true all over the world but nowhere more so than in North America. When we think of the college of the old-fashioned days we stand appalled at its limitations. There it stood, the poor old place, among its elm trees with its campus in front of it. The whole population was perhaps three hundred people. It was all housed in a single building with a “residence” or “dormitory” among the trees at the side. There were few signs of life about it. In the daytime, its students were in the class rooms, listening to lectures. At night the only sign of them were the little lights in the rooms where they studied. The absurd notion of that time was that by listening to lectures, the students might hear something, and by sitting studying they might learn something. Under these hopeless misconceptions, the students devoted all their time to study.

The old-fashioned college had no women, except charwomen. It had no administration, there being nothing to administer and no building to do it in. It had no stadium, no engineering factory, no publicity department, no cavalry barracks, no all-night cafeteria, no billiard parlours, no club-houses, no roulette tables—in short, it was not a university at all.

Its programme of studies was absurdly limited. It taught Latin and Greek—together with Greek and Latin—mathematics, astronomy, ancient history, and philosophy and spelling. Everybody learned everything. There was no choice. The college did not teach any such subjects as Department, Morality, Salesmanship, Infidelity, Hotel Keeping, Horsemanship, Embezzlement—in fact it taught next to nothing.

There was no college life except lectures and study and playing games on the campus with no charge for spectators and no spectators anyway. There were no student societies, no Banjo Club, no Badminton Club, no Alpine Society, no Anglers Association, no Jockey Club, no Polo Club—in short just nothing.

Once a month there was a Debating Society that met in the dark and debated, “Resolved that Archæology has done more to brighten human life than Palæontology.”

Once every two months the students all went into the town and went into a saloon and drank four glasses of beer each, and then went out and upset a horse-car and went home. That lasted them till the next term.

Gradually this old order changed. The first improvement was the introduction of

more varied studies. The students began to study English—a language which they had hitherto not known. Then came modern languages, political economy, ethics, physics and similar lighter and brighter studies.

At this critical moment—somewhere in the 'eighties and the 'nineties—arrived the women, “the co-eds.” This altered and improved everything. The buildings were brightened up, new windows put in, curtains, carpets and cut flowers. All the studies were made brighter and lighter still—with languages like Italian, a mere laugh-it-off as compared with Greek, and Social Science, otherwise Table Talk.

After the women, the business world broke into the life of the colleges and practically remade them. By great good fortune a connection had been found between the colleges and electricity, water-power, mines, and various ways of making money. This led to the opening up of new sections of the college, such as the faculty (or factory) of science, the factory of engineering, etc.

Very naturally, under these circumstances, the old-fashioned programme of studies in liberal arts was more and more altered from its old-time narrowness and rigidity. The ridiculous custom of dictating to a student what he should study became more and more obsolete. The idea of free choice by a free intelligence, unprejudiced by previous knowledge, was embodied in the system of “options.” At the same time the giving of “lectures” began to pass out of date. Why should a student be compelled to listen to a professor when he was quite capable of talking himself? Indeed in all the field of learning, formal instruction was more and more replaced by intellectual freedom. The student’s mind, thus liberated and held, as it were, in a neutral vacuum, was free to absorb anything which it cared to absorb, while rejecting all material heterogeneous to our processes.

The effect was to exchange poverty for wealth. With the business men came money, floods of it. Endowments rose, receipts rose, fees rose, salaries rose, everything rose. The colleges were swept into the roaring flood of commercial life. Stadiums were built—by people who didn’t know they were stadia; college football was capitalized. College hockey replaced prize fighting. College athletics superseded college study. A newer larger life replaced the dull routine of the old days.

Naturally this new life pushed aside the old. “Scholars” disappeared in favour of “hustlers.” The last “college student” died years ago, unnoticed.

Any shortcomings that may exist in the bigger and brighter academic life, and any regrets for the bygone days expressed by sentimentalists, are only the back-eddies in the rising and triumphant tide of “college life,” rising higher with every decade. Soon this rising tide will reach—indeed, it is now rapidly reaching—its flood, and with that will come the inevitable overflow.

Both these things, the fullness of the flood tide and the inevitable overflow and its social consequences, are things already early for the prophetic eye to discern.

But if we should wish to compare the old-fashioned college as it was with the new-fashioned college as it is going to be, perhaps we can best do it by means of a detailed picture of college life.

All the world has read, or at any rate has heard of, that charming old story of college life called "*Tom Brown at Oxford*." Let us see beside it a new and up-to-date college story under the title of "*Tom Buncom at Shucksford*."

Chapter II

A First Day at College

It was with a thrill of pride and enthusiasm that young Tom Buncom found himself at Shucksford College to enter on his first day as an undergraduate. There is indeed something about the opening of a college term on a bright autumn day calculated to rouse the spirits and excite the animation of anyone fortunate enough to be entering on the charmed life of a college undergraduate.

Here is the campus, its great trees nodding in the autumn sunshine, their leaves still unfaded, the grass still green beneath them. Here and everywhere are the moving crowds of young people, restless as a swarm of ants and in appearance as devoid of purpose.

The bright dresses of the co-eds lend a touch of varied colour to the scene. From every side comes the laughter of merry greetings, of renewed acquaintance, the college chatter about the approaching term. And here facing the campus is the beautiful old main building of Shucksford, the Hall of Liberal Arts, with the scroll cut in stone over the doorway, NON FAR NIENTE. Above the building, for this is a gala day of ceremony, floats the college flag. Now and again in the light autumn breeze one can read on it the words of the college motto, "*Atque Nihil Quidquid*"—"Even Nothing is Something."

"Come along, Tom," said Tom's chum Ned Fairfakes, "let's get on inside and try and get a chance to register."

Inside the main hall of the building the crowd seems even greater, the movement even more varied than outside. From the groups of students and co-eds arose a babel of talk that never seemed to slacken.

Ned Fairfakes, who had already put in a year at Shucksford, was greeted right and left by old acquaintances, especially by the co-eds, with whom he seemed a special favourite. "Hullo, Ned," said a bright-looking, fair-haired girl. "Nice to get back to the old place, isn't it? Where in hell were you all summer? Say, it's hell trying to register, isn't it? I don't see a hell of a chance of getting in there this morning. Oh, your friend! How do you do, Mr. Buncom. Going into the first year? Good! So am I. I was in it last year but I got a hell of a flop back into it again. Say, what are you going to take? Don't know? Well, take religion, won't you, for one thing? I wish to God I'd taken it last year. It's a hell of a cinch. Well, good-bye, boys, I'm going to try to barge in now."

"Who's that?" asked Tom, greatly attracted as the bright-looking girl jostled her

way along. "Nita Zigzag," said Ned. "Nice, isn't she? Her father's the Bishop. You've seen his name in the papers. He keeps dogs. But wait, here's Dorothy that I told you about. Dorothy, one second, this is Tom Buncom." "Oh, how do you do," said a demure-looking girl, quieter than Nita and yet with a sort of seriousness that seemed to suggest character. Dorothy smiled as she shook Tom's hand. "How do you do, Mr. Buncom," she said, "it seems so nice to meet you after hearing such a hell of a lot about you. Generally when you hear a hell of a lot about anybody they don't turn out to be such hot stuff after all. But you," she added gently, "I am sure are all right."

Greetings and badinage like this made the minutes pass easily. Tom noted with surprise how greatly the co-eds outnumbered the men, but Ned told him that as a matter of fact the number of men this year was greater than it had been for a long time. He had heard it said that the men this year were as much as one in five. He said that the faculty had started a new intelligence test which kept a lot of the girls out, excluded in fact all the bookworms. It was indeed a tradition of Shucksford, often boasted by the president, that learning is not to be found in books. In fact they didn't look for it there.

"The Dean will see Mr. Thomas Buncom," called a voice, and a moment later Tom Buncom, somewhat hesitant and nervous, found himself in the Dean's sanctum.

Tom's previous idea of a dean had been that of a stern and forbidding person and he entered the sanctum of Dean Dump with a certain trepidation. But he was greatly relieved at the cordial way in which he was received. Dean Dump rose and shook hands and did not take her seat again till Tom was seated beside her, alongside of her desk.

"I know your name very well, Mr. Buncom," she said. "I think your father was at Shucksford, was he not? I don't, of course, remember him," she added, quickly, "but I've seen his name as an old Shuck."

"Yes," said Tom, "both father and grandfather were old Shucks."

"Well, then, we seem good friends already," said Dean Dump, smiling at him through her gold spectacles. And as she said it she reached out and took Tom's hand and gave it a slight squeeze.

Tom remembered now that Ned Fairfakes had said, "You want to watch the old girl."

"Now," said Dean Dump, "what about your studies though I shouldn't call them that—what about your *field*? You must elect three subjects, you know."

“Well,” said Tom, “I thought of taking Religion for one.”

“Quite right,” said Dean Dump, marking it down on a card. “I always recommend Religion. You’ll find you get quicker credit with that than with another. But of course we don’t allow you to carry Religion into your second year.”

“I know that,” said Tom.

“Well, next, what about the other subjects, Tom?” asked Dean Dump. “What else do you think you will take, Tom, eh, Tom?”

Tom paused; in fact it took him a few seconds to regain his composure on being addressed as “Tom.” “There’s a good deal of choice, isn’t there?” he asked.

“All the choice you like,” said Dean Dump. “The rule at Shucksford is that the student selects the course; you take anything you like; but of course I can advise you. Have you got a good head for figures? If so you might take something in Mathematics, or in Economics, such as Embezzlement or Bankruptcy.”

“We had a little of that at high school,” said Tom. “I didn’t like it. I was wondering could I take Trout Fishing—I’m fond of that.”

“Excellent,” said Dean Dump, “especially as it’s new in Shucksford. Trout Fishing, first class, and with that?”

“Could I do something in Dogs?” said Tom. “Do they offer any Dog stuff?”

“Oh, yes,” said the Dean, “you can take Dogs. You mean, do you, the veterinary side, illness and dissection of dogs and that sort of thing?”

“Oh, no,” exclaimed Tom. “I don’t mean that sort of thing at all. I just mean, don’t you know, keeping a dog and taking it out for walks.”

“Oh, now I understand,” said Dean Dump, writing on her paper. “Field work in Dogs, of course.”

After which Dean Dump briefly explained to Tom how his work would be carried on. There were, she said, no *formal lectures* at Shucksford, a relic of barbarism entirely abolished. But he would be supposed to *put himself into contact* with his work; in fact, to *think about it*. Every time he thought about it he would get a credit. Then these would add up into units till he had the requisite number of credit units for the semester, after which he could either stop thinking or think of something else. This system, she explained, was known at Shucksford as the Intensive System, and was becoming rapidly universal in the colleges.

Under it, Dean Dump explained, Tom would be called upon to take his dog out for a walk, which would give him one unit-credit, or better still go fishing and take his dog with him and think about Religion while he fished, which would give him three unit-credits at once.

“And what exams do I have to pass?” Tom enquired.

Dean Dump smiled.

“No exams, Tom,” she said, as she put her arm for a moment about his shoulder in that spirit of comradeship which marked all work at Shucksford. “No exams, in the old sense; you will have to pass an intelligence test at the end of the term, you and your dog. But as that will be under my direction”—she smiled and for a moment took hold of Tom’s ear in that free and unrestrained way that comes with real comradeship—“you don’t need to worry about it.”

Ned and Nita and a “bunch” were standing outside as Tom emerged.

“What did the old vamp do to you, Tommy?” asked Nita. “You want to be careful or she’ll get an awful crush on you.”

“Shut up, Nita,” said Ned. “She’s all right, old Dolly Dump, she’s a good head. What are you taking?”

And with that the talk fell into the usual students’ chatter about options and courses and units and credits. All the boys and girls were taking Religion, but beyond that there was great divergence. Several new courses had just been initiated at Shucksford under the general division newly introduced and called Mental Range. Among these a course on *Thought* was proving immensely popular, together with a course on *Purpose*. Many of the students were combining these, and were taking under the free choice system of Shucksford, half a Thought with half a Purpose, or a quarter of a Thought and a quarter of a Purpose together with a minimum of Religion.

The merry chattering discussion, the migration about the campus, the greeting of old friends and the meeting of new went on endlessly throughout the happy autumn day. Tom Buncom felt that he had never been in anything so close to Utopia as the undergraduate life of Shucksford.

The college day, being the first day of the term, ended with a general assembly in the big hall to hear the president’s talk to the students. There was such a crowd in the hall that Ned and Tom could only manage to squeeze in at the back, where they remained standing. Between the shoulders of those in front of them, they could get a vision of a sea of heads in the seats, and on the platform in the distance the alert figure of Dr. Snide, the president. Beside him was the venerable form of Reverend Oliver Mumble, chaplain of Shucksford, and with them the deans of the various faculties. Behind them was arrayed the Shucksford College Orchestra.

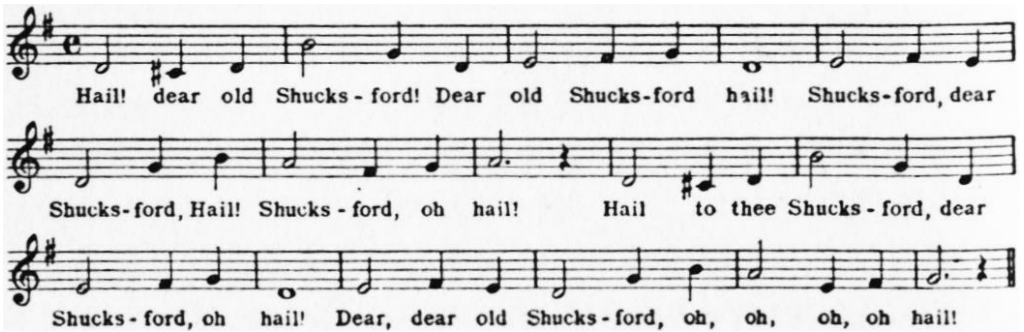
Tom realized for the first time, with something of a thrill, the panoply and dignity of a college. The president was speaking, but Tom could not hear what he said

owing to the perpetual shouts of:

Rah! Rah! Shucksford!
Shucksford! Shucksford! Rah!

Ned explained to Tom that this was the Shucksford yell which had been made up a few years before by a very brilliant student in English of the fourth year. The student, Ned explained, had had a great future before him but had gone insane just after finishing his work on the yell on which he'd been engaged at high tension for months.

When the speech finished all the audience stood up in their seats while the orchestra played the Shucksford college song in which the students joined. It was the first time that young Tom's ears heard the anthem of his Alma Mater, destined to be so familiar and so beloved as the days went by. The sound of the anthem, set to slow majestic music, seemed to echo to the very roof.



Hail! dear old Shucks - ford! Dear old Shucks-ford hail! Shucks-ford, dear
Shucks-ford, Hail! Shucks - ford, oh hail! Hail to thee Shucks - ford, dear
Shucks - ford, oh hail! Dear, dear old Shucks - ford, oh, oh, oh, oh hail!

At the close of the anthem the audience all resumed their seats and the president, Dr. Snide, addressed the students in his annual speech of welcome to the incoming class. Tom could hear but little of what he said, owing to the great distance from the back of the hall to the platform, but between the shoulders of those standing in front of him, he could get a glimpse of the president's upright figure and could from time to time catch the sound of Dr. Snide's firm and resonant voice. He was speaking, Tom realized, with great earnestness. From time to time such phrases reached Tom's ears as, "those things on which, even in this age of uncertainty, we may best rely" . . . "a trust that will not readily pass away" . . . "a security upon which we may with confidence place our full reliance." Tom caught the reverent accents of the speech and half bowed his head in recognition of it. "Is it an obituary address?" he whispered to Ned Fairfakes. "No, no," said Ned, "he's talking about the college investments."

A little later the president's tone seemed changed; it had turned to a note of optimism, of resolute purpose . . . "the improvement of our forward line," he was saying . . . "more mutual co-operation" . . . "above all, the determination not to be beaten." "What's all this?" whispered Tom. "Football," Ned whispered back.

The president's closing words Tom seemed to catch more distinctly; they were an earnest adjuration towards a Christian life with an explanation that by the term "Christian life" the president did not refer to any particular form of Christianity.

So ended the college day. It was autumn twilight as Tom and his new chum, Ned, walked across the rear campus of Shucksford to their dormitory that stood back among the trees. A slight detour as they went took them past the college Book and Novelty Store ("Jimmy Groggan's," the boys called it); they dropped into the back of the store and got a can of beer—a tin pail with a lid on—those without lids being against college rules. With this they sauntered homewards.

"I couldn't half get the president's speech," said Tom.

"It doesn't matter," said Ned. "They always print it in full in the morning papers; and anyway, it's the same as last year."

At this moment the venerable figure of Dean Mumble, the chaplain, crossed their path in the half darkness. "Ah, Mr. Fairfakes," said the Dean; his memory for the boys, especially the richer boys, was proverbial—"Mr. Buncom? Oh, but I think I knew your grandfather, one of the Buncoms of Bunktown! Of course! And what have we here, Mr. Fairfakes?"

The Dean shook his head reprovingly. "Not beer! Mr. Fairfakes, not beer, I hope." "I'm afraid it is, sir," said Ned half shyly. "Won't you take a little, sir?" Ned knew that he was fairly caught but was determined to make the best of it. "Let me see the can," said the venerable Dean. "I never touch anything as you know; but just to see if it is beer . . ." The chaplain lifted the can to his lips. When he handed it back it was quite light. "It *was* beer," he said. "Good night, gentlemen." And he was off. "Only thing to do," said Ned, "or he might have reported us. Come on back to Jimmy's for another."

Chapter III

The Rah Rah Life

“Hold on now,” said Ned, “till I see if I can find the president’s speech.”

As he spoke he turned over the voluminous pages of the *Daily Shuck*, the morning after the events related in the preceding chapter.

“Wait a bit, it’s somewhere around here; I saw the heading a minute ago—stock exchange news, curb market notes—no, that’s not it—dog show, dog notes, dogs for sale—no, that’s not it. It must be on another page—movie actress talks to students—no—ex-convict lectures on moral evolution, no—ah, here it is—president appeals for bigger college spirit and more money, that’s it.”

Ned folded back the paper as he spoke so as to get it right page out. “Good old prexie— He’s a great man, Tom, this new president.”

The two boys were seated in their dressing gowns over their breakfast, in their sitting-room in the dormitory where they lived.

It was the quiet hour of the college day, the time between breakfast and the serious work of the morning, a pleasant little interval of repose which the college man learns to value above the noisy and strenuous activity of the hours that follow. In the next room to that of Ned and Tom two of their classmates were quietly playing on the ukulele, while in a room opposite a few of the seniors were having a quiet boxing match, while some of the younger men were quietly playing baseball in the corridor.

“A great man,” Ned repeated. “He’s done more for old Shucks in the five years he’s been here than most men would do in a lifetime.”

“Is that so?” said Tom. “I thought he looked a pretty alert sort of man.”

“Yes, he is. Till he came here we had no college band—think of it, Tom, no band! He got that. Then he hustled around town and got us the swimming pool and the pool-room. He simply put Shucksford on the map, that’s what he did. He collected the money to send the Shucksford minstrel troupe south to Alabama and the Shucksford Snowshoe Club north to Fort Providence. It’s that kind of thing, you know, Tom, that *makes* a university.”

“I know,” said Tom; “it certainly does.”

“But now, listen to this,” said Ned, folding back the page of the newspaper. “Here’s the annual report that he was reading yesterday. You’ll see that Prexie is not only a money-getter—that’s the first thing needed—but he’s a hell of a good administrator. ‘The trustees of the College,’ this is what Prexie says, ‘acting on my

advice, have given serious consideration to the further raising of the entrance standard and the further restriction of numbers. For some years past we have viewed with apprehension the great number of students who flock to the college, making this a serious drain on its resources, and by the sheer deadweight of class work and study threatening to limit and hinder its true activities. Our football field is habitually overcrowded, our swimming tank is full to the brim, and it is difficult for any but the most powerful of the students to get near a pool table. Drastic measures will therefore be taken to cut down the number of students who can get in, and to throw out as many as possible who *do* get in. The entrance examinations will be tightened up with a literacy test, excluding all who are unable to read or write, and there will be imposed also a colour test admitting only Nordic stock. Already we are glad to report the application of similar methods have thrown most of the students out of the medical course, and it is thought that the few who remain in Applied Science can be got rid of within a few years. We are encouraged to hope this by the fact that the number of students expelled for grave misconduct has risen from one to ten per cent in five years. Our problem may therefore solve itself. But in the Faculty of Liberal Arts the situation is still acute. We propose, however, to meet it by the introduction in the current year of an intelligence test which will perhaps admit of the expulsion of fifty per cent of those now in attendance. The excellent result of these tests as now applied to railway employees, night watchmen, and bank janitors, warrants the assumption that it would apply *prima facie* and *mutatis mutandis* to students of the Liberal Arts at any rate as a *pro tanto* if not as a *sine qua non*.”

“Gee! he writes well, doesn’t he?” said Tom. “Talks Latin as easy as English. But say, Ned, I don’t like this intelligence test idea. We might get chucked out.”

“Nah,” answered Ned, “not on your tin-type. Too big a stand-in, both of us. With your grandfather an old Shuck and with Dolly Dump vamping you in the office, you should worry!

“But come along,” added Ned, “get your things on; let’s get busy. We’ve got to go over to the Phi Gamma Gamma to make up a slate for the Delta Sigma raffle for the prettiest girl. Get a move on.”

Tom dismissed the slight preoccupation that had come over his mind at the vague thought of the intelligence test, and away they went.

If young Tom Buncom had had any illusions in his mind about college life being a mere easy loaf they were rudely shattered from the very first day, when he stepped out of his dormitory with his chum, Ned Fairfakes. In the days and weeks that followed, Tom realized that college life nowadays is a strenuous existence crowded

with activity. He made the discovery that a student of today has got to work and to work hard all the time.

To begin with, there was a lot of work to be done in connection with the entry into a “frat” or fraternity. Tom was up against the difficult task of making a choice, more or less irrevocable, as to whether he would join the Phi Gamma Gamma or the Gamma Gamma Phi with just a possibility of falling back on the Omega Omega Nu. All three of these were “out” for Tom, so that a large part of his first week was taken up with eating lunch with different delegates of the “frats.” These, of course, were resident societies with premises of their own. But in addition to these Tom had to be “tried out” for a variety of other social organizations. There was the Coal Heavers’ Club, one of the most aristocratic and exclusive at Shucksford, admitting any men whose grandfathers had owned coal mines. There was the All Night Club, whose members were pledged only to go to bed once a week; the Apple Pie Club, whose object was eating; the Flowing Bowl, that met twice a week for drinking; the Walter Raleigh Society, that met for smoking; the Pedestrians, all pledged to walk half a mile a day; and the Coach and Motor Club, pledged to drive three thousand miles a month. It was the boast of Shucksford that no college was richer in activities of this sort.

Along with them, of course, were a great number of leagues and organizations of a wider and more general character, designed simply to promote mutual acquaintance, in short, to give to the students a chance to know one another. It was a standing apprehension at Shucksford College—or it had once been—that the students might be so absorbed in their studies that they wouldn’t know one another. Hence the Get-Together Society and the Keep-Together Club and Voluntary Friendship Association (compulsory in the first year).

Tom Buncom, however, was not the kind of boy to devote all his time to societies such as these. He was anxious also to get into contact with the things that meant Art and Literature. He put his name down at once for the autumn try-outs of the Banjo Clubs and for the clog dance entrance-test for the Drama Society. He had even hopes of getting a footing in the Arts and Letters Society, the oldest of the academic organizations which had descended directly from the Literary Society of by-gone days. For this, however, a proposed member must have certain recognized qualifications such as a talent for coon songs, or ability to imitate Yiddish, or to draw a dog in four strokes—in other words, native genius.

Within a few weeks therefore, Tom Buncom found himself acquiring a real footing in his college, going forward every day with that sense of something done, something accomplished, which is the real soul of college life. Now it was a lunch at

the frat house to work up new coon songs for the Friendship League, now a busy afternoon of clog dancing or a long hard day canvassing men so as to pick out men to select the team for the inter-class banjo contest.

With all this Tom found time to devote to his regular study options as selected with Dean Dump. He took his dog out for a walk at some time every day, made trout flies whenever he could, and in his spare time thought about religion, and even added on a half-unit of prayer.

Each time he went into Dean Dump's office to get his credit sheet signed, the Dean expressed her approval. "You're doing fine, Tom," she said and gave his hand a tight squeeze. "Come back next week and let me know all you're doing." Then she squeezed his hand again.

When Tom told Ned about Dean Dump, Ned shook his head. "You want to go easy with that old dame, Tom—if you're not careful you'll get in wrong."

"I think she wanted to kiss me last time," Tom said.

"Well, you'd better be pretty canny," Ned answered. "If you get in wrong she'll make trouble."

But for the rest, such small difficulties or dilemmas or the over-kindness of Dean Dolly Dump were but light clouds floating in a summer sky. Beyond that all was serene.

Nor was Tom's life all work. There was pleasure in it too. The evenings for the most part were given over to amusement. As a rule, after the dinner in the dormitory, Nita Zigzag and one or two co-eds would turn up outside and throw up rocks at the window, and then take Tom and Ned out in their car. At times Nita, who cared nothing for college rules, would come right up to the sitting-room and take Tom by the ear and drag him away from his evening paper. "Come on, Tommy," she said, "you're such a hell of a bookworm you'd sit and read that damned old rag all evening. Come out in the car, we'll go out to the Hop and Song Pavilion and make a night of it."

Other evenings were quieter. Old Dr. Mumble, the chaplain, who had taken a fancy to Tom and who had learned that Tom was taking Religion would drop in at Tom's room and spend the evening smoking and drinking beer out of a can. The old man would discuss such things as Predestination, fixed Fate, and the difference between mind and matter, till the beer was all gone; after which he left. The boys liked his society and felt at ease with him the more so because like all deeply religious people he never mentioned religion.

So passed the college days, gliding through the autumn sunshine.

“Hullo,” said Ned, looking up one morning from the papers of the *Daily Shuck*, “Professor Woolgather is here today. I’d like to see him.”

“Who’s he?” asked Tom.

“Listen to this. ‘Students of Shucksford will have the opportunity of renewing acquaintance with Professor Woolgather of the Department of Botany. The professor has just returned from a two years’ leave of absence during which he has been engaged in studying the poppy plant in Java. We understand that he will now go back to Java with another three years’ leave for further study of the poppy. When interviewed yesterday by a representative of the *Daily Shuck* Professor Woolgather said that on his return he would probably devote himself to a study of the lotus plant for which he would very likely need to spend a few years either in the Galápagos Islands or at Miami, Florida. Meantime his volume of the dandelion which he completed while still working on the campus will be published this autumn.’ I’d like to see him,” said Ned; “my uncle was in his class.”

“Why doesn’t he stay here?” asked Tom. “He can’t,” said Ned, “there’s nothing for him. He finished the dandelions two years ago and before that he had worked on burdocks and Timothy hay. These are the only three types, you know, in this climate. So the trustees sent him to Java.”

“Why, that reminds me,” said Tom, “I meant to ask you ever so many times and kept forgetting it. Where are all the professors? Aren’t there any at Shucks? In father’s time there were ever so many, and they gave lectures.”

“Oh, they’re here all right,” Ned answered, “only of course they don’t give lectures as there aren’t any lectures to give. That whole system ended years ago. They’re mostly doing research and things like that. Wait, I’ll show you.”

Ned went to the door and called down the hallway. “Phil! Haven’t you got a *Shucksford Academic Directory* in your room?”

There was the noise of a book flying through the air.

“Thanks,” called Ned, and came in with the book.

“Now,” he said, “here they are, the whole lot of them—they’re in alphabetically.” He began to read:

Abbott, A. A. Professor Abbott during the present session has been granted leave of absence to spend a year in Kurdistan where he will look for Dinosaur eggs. The egg which he found last year turned out to be a wild turkey’s egg.

Bonehead. Professor McBean Bonehead is absent on leave in Scotland making

researches on the distillation of alcohol from barley malt. The professor reports that he is getting results already.

“They’re all working like that,” Ned explained, turning over the leaves of the directory. “‘Professor Loafer has just been awarded two years’ leave for making sociological investigations in England. He will do this in London, working from the Piccadilly Hotel, both intensively and extensively. . . .’ I wouldn’t mind doing that myself, or this one either: ‘Professor Snoop of the Anthropological Department will conduct investigations in Italy during the coming summer. His special field will be anthropometric measurement and he will measure at least a thousand Italian girls of the ages between sixteen and nineteen with a view to obtaining comparative data. It is understood that he will not be able to find time to measure the older women.’ And so it goes on.

“You see,” said Ned, shutting the book up with a snap, “they are all working. But naturally they can’t do their work here. There’s nothing here for them.”

“It must have been funny in the old days,” said Tom, “when the professors actually gave lectures, long talks to the students. I’d like to have heard one.”

“Why, you can,” explained Ned. “They have a lot of the old lectures on all sorts of things canned up in phonographs in the old lecture rooms. It’s all kept locked up but I got in once last year with special leave and heard some.”

“What on?” asked Tom.

Ned shook his head. “We couldn’t tell,” he said, “the lecture didn’t say. Some of us thought it was history but others said it was medicine. You couldn’t tell. The title had got torn out.”

“I wish I could hear some,” said Tom, “it would be interesting.”

“You, why, of course you could—with your stand-in with Dolly Dump. You go to the old bird’s office and say you want to get keys to get in and hear a lecture. She’ll fall for you all right. Only don’t let the old girl come along with you. Shove her out of it if she tries to. I tell you what we’ll do. I’ll get Phil and we’ll go over and get Nita and Dorothy and one or two of the girls to come, and then you can say to Dolly that it’s a group of students and not just *you* and that may keep her out. Get busy and get ready.”

“Why, of course, Tom, you may have the keys,” said Dean Dump, “I’ll send one of the janitors with you.” Then she added in a heart-to-heart voice, “You’ve been so much in my mind of late; I’ve been hoping that everything is well with you.” She took his hand a moment and clasped it with an eye-to-eye look that meant volumes. “Now,” she continued, “let me see, I wonder if I can find time to go with you.” She

took a look at her gold watch. "Yes, perhaps, let me think."

They moved together towards the door. As Tom held it half open they could see the little group of students in the corridor and he heard quite distinctly Nita's rough voice saying, "I hope to God he doesn't bring his old vamp with him."

Whether Dean Dump heard the words, Tom, not being a woman, didn't know. He only knew that her manner turned suddenly rigid. "I'm afraid I've no time, Mr. Buncom," she said. Nor did Tom know that after he was gone Dean Dump said to her secretary, "Will you hand me please the list of women students liable next month to a character test."

Meantime Tom joined the other students.

"Your lady-love not coming, eh?" laughed the girls.

"No time," said Tom, and the girls laughed again.

It gave the students, even the co-eds, a certain sense of awe as they were ushered by the janitor into the locked-up wing of the old lecture rooms. The walls were dusty. Little sunlight came from the shuttered windows, and the corridor seemed to echo with forgotten voices and with the sound of footsteps long since gone by.

The door of the lecture room creaked on its hinges. The janitor threw back a shutter to let some light into the room. "My grandfather took lectures here," said Ned. He spoke low as in a church.

"A hell of a place," said Nita in the same reverential tone.

All about them stood tall upright phonographs with inscriptions on them. "Lectures in Psychology, 1888." "Mediæval History, 1896." "Political Science, 1901."

"Which shall I turn on, gentlemen?" asked the janitor.

"Which do you want, girls?" asked Ned.

"What in hell is Political Science, anyway?" asked Dorothy gently.

"I don't know," said Ned. "I think it was a sort of introduction to Communism. Turn it on, Harry, and see."

The janitor wound up and started the mechanism of the phonograph. The machine began to talk, reproducing word for word the long-forgotten lecture.

"We begin today, gentlemen, the first of our lectures on the Elements of Political Science. Any treatise on Political Science must necessarily begin with some discussion as to the scope and province of the science itself, and its relation to the other branches of human knowledge of a kindred character. This is especially

necessary for two reasons. In the first place the term Political Science has been used with a great deal of latitude, not to say ambiguity both in colloquial language and in common discussion. In the second place—”

“Oh, cut out the second place,” said Nita. “The first is quite enough.”

The janitor stopped the machine.

“Say, my heavens! Can you imagine anything so fierce as that? Imagine sitting listening to that stuff. Why, Dorothy, what’s the matter? The kid’s crying.”

“I’m not,” said Dorothy with a snuffle, “only it all seemed so queer, such long-ago stuff.”

“Ah, forget it,” said Nita, “let’s get back into the sunshine.” And with that they left.

As Tom and Ned crossed the campus on the way to their dormitory, they came across Professor Woolgather standing under a tree. Ned went up to him and put out his hand. “You don’t know me, Professor,” he said, “my name is Fairfakes and I think my Uncle George was in your class years ago.”

The Professor looked a little dazed and then shook hands rather spasmodically.

“Ah, yes, yes,” he said. “I think I remember your uncle very well, Mr.—er—Fairman, yes . . . yes . . . and you’re here now at Shucksford. First year, I suppose? . . .”

“No, sir,” Ned said. “I’m a sophomore.”

“Ah, yes, a sophomore, second year, yes, and how are you getting on, Mr. Fairweather? Taking what?”

“Very well, thank you, sir,” answered Ned. “I’m taking mostly the open options, sir.”

“Ah, yes, quite naturally. And your friend, Mr. Fairtree? Is he in the second year too?”

“No, sir, the first. Let me introduce Mr. Thomas Buncom, sir.”

“The name,” said the Professor, stooping a little forward with his hand to his ear.

“Buncom,” said Tom.

“Ah, yes,” said the Professor, “Bome, yes, Bome. I always like to get a name correctly; it’s the only way to retain it. Once seized one can hold it. And now perhaps you’ll excuse me, Mr. Feathertrue, as I have”—he grabbed at his watch—“an almost immediate engagement. Good-bye, Mr. Bickam.”

And with that he went striding off—anywhere.

As Tom walked back to the dormitory he paid but little attention to Ned’s

enthusiastic talk about Professor Woolgather. His mind kept running on the fact that Dean Dump had called him “Mr. Buncom.” Instinctively he felt it meant something.

Chapter IV

Danger Ahead

All that evening and at intervals in the days following Tom worried over the possible consequences of the sudden coldness of Dean Dump. But after all, such small troubles as this were easily forgotten in the strenuous but agreeable life at Shucksford.

This was all the more true as the college was now at the height of the football season and the day had come for the big game of the year, the annual contest between Shucksford and its great rival, Nutt College. On that day, once a year, every old Shuck and every old Nutt listened in on the radio to the great game, or rather, to use the proper term, "look-listened" through the radio television. It was said to be the biggest gathering of graduates on the air that took place all the year round. There was, of course, a huge air-crowd for commencement day every June, and the air was crowded again for some of the hockey finals, but it was generally said that the Nutt-Shucksford game took more air than anything. Every graduate was in on it.

Indeed Tom felt a fine sense of college companionship, a sort of feeling of a band of brothers as he and Ned sat in their sitting-room that Saturday to listen in on the big game.

Football games, of course, were no longer played at Shucksford itself. That antiquated system had gone long ago and the old-time stadium had been turned, years before, into a students' private aerodrome. The Shucksford-Nutt game, like all the big football of the year, was played out in the Nevada desert where the absolute dryness, the clear light, the complete isolation and the freedom from any possible form of bribery made conditions for football ideal. The Shucksford team had been sent out to Nevada in cages a month back. But the special interest of this year's game lay in the fact that one of the Shucksford team, Jim Doherty, was actually a student at Shucksford.

"It used to be like that, altogether," Ned Fairfakes explained to Tom as they sat waiting for the game to begin. "I've heard old-timers who have read it up explain that in the old days all the players actually were students of the college."

"It must have been hard to arrange," said Tom. "I don't see how they'd get very good men that way."

"They didn't," Ned said. "Why, you look at this list here"—he picked up the programme as he spoke—"Bullock comes from Yorkshire; they hired him in England last summer. Toussaint Camouflage is from Madagascar and Cheng Go-to-Heaven

was picked up at the Chinese Missionary College in Canton. Jimmy Doherty is the only white one, unless you count Bullock. But wait a bit, I guess it's starting."

Ned turned a button and a voice began. "The game today is presented to the public by Chaw's Chewing Tobacco. The players in this contest are Shucksford College and Nutt College and in your television glass the entire line-up can now be seen chewing Chaw's Chewing Tobacco. The game will be introduced by President Snide of Shucksford, who will say a few words."

"Is Prexie out in Nevada?" murmured Tom in the ensuing pause.

"No, no," said Ned, "they took him here in front of a dummy cardboard set. There he goes."

Tom saw the president's familiar form step out, apparently in front of a group of players, and heard his voice. "Ladies and gentlemen, we are privileged today by Chaw's Chewing Tobacco to look on one of the greatest events of the football year on the continent. Football is a grand old game. As I was remarking this morning to the president of Chaw's Chewing Tobacco over a plug of long number one which sells at the popular price of five cents per plug, football is a manly sport, a splendid exercise for millions of our young people. It trains our young people to acquire the *mens sana in corpore sano*. I may say that the president of Chaw's Chewing Tobacco expresses his entire assent."

And with that Tom found himself carried away with the rush and excitement of the game. Not only the voice of the announcer, but the television itself showed the pictures of it. Tom followed every phase of it, breathless, as it was announced.

"First quarter, second minute, Bullock punts behind the Nutt college line, Makiyama returns . . . Komsky fumbles . . . tackles . . . ball dead . . . Chaw's Chewing Tobacco beg to announce in the interval, Harvard-Oxford, nothing-nothing; Moscow Y.M.C.A. against Vatican, nothing-nothing . . . game on . . . punt . . . touch . . . ball dead . . . man hurt . . . by kindness of Chaw's Chewing Tobacco . . . International Copper six, International Nickel ten . . . revolutions in Paraguay . . . game continues . . ."

It was Tom's first experience of big football. He followed it with tense interest every second and when the final score was called nothing-nothing, he felt that he had really seen something.

He shut off the instrument with a half sigh. "Hand me that plug of Chaw's Chewing Tobacco, will you, Ned, the smaller plug which sells at the popular price of five cents, thus guaranteeing its wide appeal."

The Monday following the great football game was, if Tom Buncom had only known it, one of the turning points in his life.

A note, half printed, half written, was brought by a janitor to the dormitory:

President Snide will be pleased to see Mr. Thomas Buncom in his office this morning at 10.17.

“Why’s that, Ned?” asked Tom. “Anything the matter?”

“I don’t suppose so,” said Ned, looking at the note. “It’s the other way. It’s a compliment. He knew your people, didn’t he?”

“He was at college with father,” said Tom.

“Ah, then, there you have it. But say, Tom, did your governor ever give any donation to Shucksford?”

“I don’t think so,” Tom answered.

“Well, it might be that. The president, you know, is said to be the finest money-getter on the continent.”

As Tom entered the president’s office he realized that Ned’s praise of the president was more than justified by his appearance. Alert, keen, with every faculty awake—with a figure as erect at fifty as at twenty-five—the president’s appearance was that of the ideal money-getter. There was something in the firmness of his face, and in his keen intelligent eye which suggested the getting of money, while his long prehensile hand, with every finger joint working to perfection, suggested the keeping, or retention, of it.

Never before had Tom realized more clearly the truth of the assertion that the ideal college president must be a money-getter. He felt, as it were, awed in the presence of the man who had got the money for the brass band, who had raised, single-handed, the money for the whole equipment of the pool rooms, who had got together the money for the college garage, for the oil tank station, for the swimming baths, for the dance hall—in fact for most of the things that were making the college what it was.

“Well, well, Mr. Buncom,” said the president, cordially shaking hands. “I’m delighted to make your acquaintance. Your father and I were at college together.”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom, “he has often told me so.”

“Not only at college together, but in the same class—*terque quaterque beati*—we took Latin in those days, Mr. Buncom—indeed I might add, *sine qua non, e pluribus unum*, so to speak.”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom. It was impressive to find oneself in the presence of such a scholar as the president.

“And how is your father, Mr. Buncom?” asked Dr. Snide.

“Very well, indeed, sir,” answered Tom.

“That’s good, that’s good,” said the president, rubbing his hands, “and keeping well, I hope. Not affected I trust by the rather—how shall I say—adverse business conditions.”

“I don’t think so,” said Tom. “He hasn’t said anything about it.”

“Ah, hasn’t said anything about it. Now you know I’ve been wondering, Mr. Buncom, whether your father, as an old Shuck, might not feel like—how shall I say—doing something to keep alive his contact with his own college. Some of our old Shucks do one thing, some another. But on the whole we find that perhaps the best form of contact with a college is giving money to it.”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom.

“Money, after all,” said the president, seeking a moment for a word, “is *money*. In fact I might say *pecunia non olet*.”

“It is, sir,” said Tom.

“So I ventured to write to your father—Miss Flame, please hand me my yesterday’s letter to Mr. Thomas Buncom, Senior—a letter which he will have received this morning. I’ll read the copy:

“DEAR MR. BUNCOM:

“The presence at Shucksford of your son, of whom I hear excellent reports, recalls to me our old college days of thirty years ago. I have therefore been wondering whether you would care to endow and equip a college distillery.

“You are no doubt aware that at the present, our students, both men and women, have no better access to distilled spirits than that which can be obtained by mere random purchase.

“I need hardly tell you what hardships and indeed what frauds this imposes on them, and in fact on the whole college community. Only last week I myself was compelled to pay ten dollars for a bottle of what I call very inferior gin.

“It has therefore occurred to a number of professors and trustees that if we had our own distillery on the premises we should be able to offer to these young people under our charge a continuous supply of what I might call first class stuff. We could easily arrange, by personal inspection and

test, to guarantee its excellence.

“Your name occurs to me as that of one eminently suited for this form of philanthropy. I shall take an early opportunity to call you by ’phone and arrange to talk over the matter.”

“There!” said the president. “That went to your father yesterday. I presume he has it this morning. In sending for you this morning, my idea is that you may now speak with your father—”

“Speak with him?” said Tom.

“Exactly—over the long distance. Miss Flame, will you get the connection if you please.”

Misery and apprehension sank into Tom’s heart as he sat waiting for his father’s voice. Only too well he knew what the answer would be; only too often had he heard his father tell of how when he was at college they used to call the present president “Slippery Snide.”

But even Tom was hardly prepared for the burst of profanity that broke out at the other end of the telephone. Fortunately for him, the president couldn’t hear it. Had Tom been skilled in dissimulation he might have carried off the situation. But his tell-tale face betrayed his father’s refusal.

“Well, Mr. Buncom,” said the president, “what does he say?”

“He’s—he’s—” Tom stammered for words—“he’s going to think it over.”

“Ah,” said Dr. Snide. He knew with lynx-like quickness that Tom’s father had utterly refused. “Ah, yes, think it over—excellent. And now a rather smaller matter, Mr. Buncom. We like to think at Shucksford that even our students, the wealthier ones like yourself, have opportunities for aiding and helping the college.”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom.

“I have a fund, the exact purpose of which I need not trouble you with, but call it simply a *fund*—”

“Yes, sir,” said Tom.

“—into which may be put any sum large, or if need be, small; in short, anything. Even a hundred dollars, for example, would find a place in this fund. Have you, Mr. Buncom, for instance, a hundred dollars?”

“No, sir,” said Tom.

The president frowned.

“Fifty?”

“I’m afraid I haven’t,” Tom said. “The truth is that all I have now, till father sends me more, is this—”

As he spoke, he took out of his pocket a two-dollar bill and some silver.

The president took the two-dollar bill. "It's very good of you to subscribe it, Mr. Buncom," he said. Then he added, "But I must not detain you longer."

And in a moment Tom was outside the door, wondering what had happened.

"It looks bad, Tom," said Ned. "You see you're in bad with Dolly Dump and now with Prexie. Why on earth didn't you offer to write, or draw on your father for a thousand dollars?"

"I never thought of it," said Tom.

"It may not be too late. Why not write now and ask for a thousand?"

Tom shook his head.

"I can't," he said, "father wouldn't like it."

The blow fell next morning. Pushed under the dormitory door was a formal notice:

Mr. Tom Buncom will present himself this morning at 10.30 at the Department of Psychology for an intelligence test.

Chapter V

Sunk and Saved!

The Intelligence and Character tests, as of course Tom and Ned and all Shucksford students knew, were carried out in the quarters of the Department of Psychology. This department fulfilled at Shucksford much the same functions as those of the Executioner at a mediæval court.

This distinction had been earned by the department by sheer merit. Shucksford, like all other great schools, had taken its part in that astounding progress of psychology which had been one of the outstanding features of twentieth century education. It had shared in the brilliant discovery that the real test of knowledge is not what a man knows but whether he is capable of knowing anything. The old notion that learning implies a well-filled mind neglects the obvious idea that there may be a leak in it. Thus the whole academic work at Shucksford was planned to disregard entirely the question of what a man learns or knows or thinks, and to lay stress on the question, could he learn anything if he had to? Could he think, if he were compelled to? Hence all rank and standing at the College turned on practical laboratory tests. The department carried out these tests in Intelligence, Efficiency, Personality, Urbanity, Honesty, Transparency and various other criteria from which they were able to estimate in each case the reaction to Environment, Opportunity, Responsibility, Emolument, and any other concomitant. By plotting these out on a chart the department could make a graphic survey of all the things for which the individual was utterly unfitted.

The proof of the system lay in its splendid practical results, both in the college and outside. The department tested business executives for honesty with a micrometer; tested criminals for their crime-pressure, salesmen for urbanity, and clergymen for transparency. In one case it exposed an apparently successful railway president who had no "train-reaction" and a sea-captain whose percentage of salt was forty points below the normal.

For the students, naturally the straight intelligence test was applied for all questions of promotion, dismissal or reward.

It was such a test as this that Tom Buncom found himself called upon to face.

As Tom went across the campus to go to the Departmental Test Laboratories he met Nita Zigzag standing among the falling leaves of the November trees. About her were one or two sympathetic friends. Nita, from her face and attitude seemed divided between choking back tears and uttering imprecations.

“Look at this, Tommy,” she said, holding out a paper as he came near. “Isn’t that the dirt?”

“What is it?”

“A character test,” said Dorothy, who stood near by. “Dean Dump has reported Nita as lacking in the standard of character and deportment.”

“Isn’t that a heller!” Nita half sobbed. “The dirty old cat, and of course, she’ll be on the board herself and I won’t have a god’s ghost of a chance.”

When Tom left Nita he made his way to the Psychological Department, where he had been directed to present himself before Professor Rattrap and a board of assistants. The aspect of the Intelligence Board, seated in caps and gowns beside a long table, was of itself sufficiently disconcerting. Still more, the words with which the chairman greeted Tom as he took his place, standing, in front of them.

“I understand, Mr. Buncom,” said Dr. Rattrap, “that you are sent here at the request of the president for a test as to your intelligence. What is your reaction to that?”

“I beg your pardon,” Tom began.

“Exactly, you haven’t any,” said the chairman. “And now, Mr. Buncom, will you please spell your Christian name backwards omitting the vowels—”

“My Christian name?” said Tom.

“Yes, you can’t do it,” said Dr. Rattrap. “Indeed I may inform you that your reflexes are decidedly slow. Dr. Edge, will you kindly test the candidate on his perception?”

“Certainly,” said the examiner on the right. “Now, Mr. Buncom, kindly close your eyes. Are they tight shut?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then tell me how many window panes there are in this room.”

“I didn’t count them, sir,” said Tom.

“Tut! tut! Mr. Buncom, do you mean to say you enter a room without counting the window panes? Kindly keep your eyes shut and tell me how many chairs are in the room?”

“I’m afraid I didn’t notice, sir.”

“Oh, oh! Mr. Buncom! Then I suppose that you never count the chairs either. Well then, at least tell me this—keeping your eyes closed, please—in the picture of George Washington hanging behind me, what is General Washington’s attitude?”

“I’m afraid I didn’t notice it.”

“Yet you saw the picture of Washington?”

“Oh, yes, sir,” said Tom.

“Did you really, Mr. Buncom? Well it isn’t Washington. It’s Abraham Lincoln. I’m afraid, Mr. Chairman, our candidate’s perception is practically nil.”

“Mark on the record, please,” said the chairman, “perception varying from nil to none at all. That seems a fair statement as I understand it. And now, Dr. Cipher, will you test Mr. Buncom in Mathematical Synthesis; let us hope we may get better results.”

“With pleasure,” said the examiner at the other end of the table, adjusting his glasses and looking over his notes. “Mr. Buncom, I presume you have some acquaintance with arithmetic?”

“I think so, sir,” said Tom.

“Ah, yes,” said the examiner pleasantly, “some acquaintance with arithmetic. And so perhaps, Mr. Buncom, you will kindly tell the examiners, what is arithmetic?”

“Arithmetic?” said Tom.

“Yes, arithmetic.”

“Arithmetic,” repeated Tom.

“Yes, sir, arithmetic,” said Dr. Cipher.

“Well,” said Tom desperately, “it’s—arithmetic.”

“Correct!” said Dr. Cipher.

There was a rather awkward pause; the examiner was not prepared for clear-cut thinking of this sort. But the examiner rapidly recovered himself.

“Let me ask you this, Mr. Buncom. Let us suppose that Mary Jones is twenty years old and that Mary Jones is twice as old as Anne Jones was when Mary Jones was as old as Anne Jones is now. How old is Anne Jones?”

Tom remained silent.

“Any further questions?” asked the examiner-in-chief. “Perhaps members of the board would like to satisfy themselves with a few random, efficiency questions; or with your permission I will put a few myself.

“Mr. Buncom, without stopping to reflect, which is the west end of a cow going east backwards? . . . If two snakes each swallow the other by the tail, what ultimately happens? . . . If a herring and a half, Mr. Buncom, costs a penny halfpenny, how many do you get for a shilling? . . .”

The examiner paused. Tom remained silent. His senses seemed to have deserted him. He only half heard the chairman summing up for the board the result of their investigation. But the full import of the concluding words was clear, even to his stunned intelligence.

“I presume, then,” Dr. Rattrap was saying, “that we must advise the president

that Mr. Buncom's intelligence is not sufficient to warrant his remaining at Shucksford! You all concur in that? Thank you, gentlemen. Then I need not detain you longer, Mr. Buncom."

Down on the campus under the trees Tom met Nita Zigzag. The tears had gone from her face though the traces were still there. But in place of sorrow, anger and resolution were in her countenance.

"Well, Nita?" Tom said.

"Flunked!" she answered. "Kicked out! The dirty old cat!"

"You're put out of Shucksford?"

"Hell, I knew it," said Nita, "as soon as they started to work that *character* stuff. The dirty old cat with her snoopy character questions! Anyway I made her sit up a bit with some of the answers! And what about you, Tommy?" Nita laid her hand on his arm. "Did you get the bounce, too?"

Tom nodded.

"Oh, that's too bad. That was dirty, because they had really nothing on you. What are you going to do, do you know? Come over to the Cafeteria and let's have a gin-sundae and talk."

"Well, what do you think you'll do, Tom?" asked Nita, repeating her questions a little later as they sat over their gin-chocolate-sundae in the Cafeteria. Both were already recovering their spirits and, with the resilience of youth, their minds already reached forward to welcome the unknown. "What do you think you'll do?"

"Well, I tell you, Nita," Tom said. "I half thought of a Rhodes Scholarship and going to Oxford. There's no intelligence involved. The pay is pretty good and I think my dog work would come in fine in England."

"No!" said Nita, "there's nothing in it. This college stuff is dead. I'd like to get into something where you've got to use your brains, something that takes real ability and gives you a chance."

"Such as what?"

"Such as I'll tell you what," answered Nita. "I was thinking over it the other day when I guessed I was going to get the kick. A gasoline station! You and I go partners in it. Will you do it? They say now there's a great demand for college-trained people for handing out gas. I had a book over in the dormitory on professional openings for college graduates, and it put pumping gas away up in the list. And there's money in it."

With which Tom and Nita began to figure out gas and Tom took a pencil and

showed that if you got say three cents a gallon for yourself and pumped one thousand gallons a day that would be thirty dollars. Nita said you need really to own your own station. And Tom said that very likely he could ask his father to put in the station and they could pay rent on it. And Nita said that if you built your own station you could make it artistic and that that attracted the public, especially if you had a dandy garden all around it with lots of flowers. And Tom said that really the only way was to live right there in the station, then you could be certain that it was always pretty and attractive. Nita thought that if you had one nice big room rigged up as a living room, and Tom added that then all you needed was a couple of bedrooms and a bathroom. And Nita said “a couple?” and they both laughed, and Tom reached out and took Nita’s hand and said, “Do you mean it?” Nita replied, “Why, of course, Tom, I always did from the first.”

Outside, the short November day had sunk to twilight and then to darkness; but Tom and Nita lingered on in the corner of the Cafeteria where an unmoved rubber tree nodded over the confession of their affection.

It was Tom Buncom’s last day at Shucksford. Eight weeks ago he had entered college, a raw untrained boy. He was leaving it now a mature man, ripe in knowledge and experience, disciplined, equipped and trained. His Alma Mater had set its stamp upon him. He was ready now to go out into the world and set his hand to its work on the gas pump.

Chapter VI

College in Utopia

It is clear enough to those who have the eyes to see it that the college is changing visibly from what it was. For those who can see a little further still into the future it is equally clear what will be the outcome. The college is coming to an end. The functions it fulfills will be broken up and divided among other and newer agencies. As witness here below the description, in the current press of the year 2000 A.D., the dissolution of Shucksford College.

Chapter VII
The Dissolution of Shucksford College A.D. 2000

(AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS)

The dissolution of Shucksford College, as formally announced yesterday in a speech by the president, falls into line with the general tendency now going on throughout the country. Indeed Shucksford may be said to have retained its corporate existence and to have carried on its corporate functions perhaps longer than any other college of the same rank. But, as Dr. Soap so wisely phrased it yesterday, events are stronger than men. The inevitable tendency towards the segregation of assets and the separation of functions was bound to bring with it sooner or later a dissolution of corporate life. That such a dissolution involves no loss to the community was clearly brought out in the speech of the president. Indeed we cannot put the whole matter in a clearer light than by reproducing the address itself.

Dr. Soap said in opening that he would first deal with the dissolution of the college from the point of view which would best appeal to his hearers, namely that of money. He was aware that all friends and benefactors of the college and all of its alumni would be asking themselves the question, "What about money?" He would hasten to assure them that the money side of the whole business was all right; he would add that if there were no money in dissolving the college, he himself would have had nothing to do with it.

The president went on to explain that the continued rise in value of the real estate on which the college and the campus stood had reached a point where the subdivision and sale of the land would bring in a handsome profit, he would say an enormous profit, over all original costs, endowments and contingent charges. He would hesitate to say how much there would be in it. But there would be a lot. If not, he might add, he would not be in it himself.

He was glad to announce that a syndicate formed exclusively of graduates of Shucksford had come forward with a proposition to buy the ground and to subdivide it into urban lots. These lots would then be offered to the public at large, without discrimination or favour, on the mere test of ability to pay. Another group of graduates had come forward to knock down the buildings, while a third group would come forward to take an option on the library, the gymnasium and all commercial apparatus. He would go so far as to say that practically all the graduates were in on it. The trustees were therefore assured in advance of the support of the whole graduate body.

The funds thus realized, continued Dr. Soap, would be ample to look after all

contingent charges and leave a handsome balance over. How handsome he would not like to say; but if there were not a handsome balance he himself would not be in on it. The question had been raised as to what would happen to the professoriate. He was happy to announce that the trustees were in a position to pension every professor at his full salary until his death. With what would happen after that the trustees could offer no guarantee. It would obviously depend on the efforts of the professor himself. But in any case, said the president, the proposed pension until death at full pay had called forth the unanimous support of all the professoriate. For what would happen to them after death they were willing to take a chance.

The president then proceeded to indicate the details of the segregation which are of course already familiar in outline, from the case of other institutions. The scientific research of the universities, Dr. Soap explained, had long since been absorbed and taken over by the great industrial companies. In the case of Shucksford most of the scientific laboratories were, as they knew, already carried on as a distillery. He himself was willing to leave it at that.

The athletics of the college, he need hardly recall, had already been capitalized and incorporated years ago as the Shucksford Hop Step and Jump Syndicate. The shareholders would continue as at present, and pay a lump capital sum in place of the annual Yelling Rights rented from the College. They would naturally look to the public for the same enthusiastic college spirit, the same esprit de corps, which they had enjoyed along with their Yelling Rights in the past. But if it were not forthcoming, they would get along without it.

The whole of the musical organization of the college, including the Banjo and Mandolin Club, the Brass Band, the Chapel Choir, the Faculty of Music, the Negro Minstrels and the Uncle Tom Show, would be amalgamated as the Shucksford Vaudeville Circuit.

It was unnecessary, the president said, to indicate further the details of the dissolution. A few points of difficulty, he admitted, still awaited solution. For example, the building originally that of the Faculty of Arts had so long been used merely as a rest room, restaurant and barber shop, that it was a delicate matter to indicate its proper allotment. He was glad to say that the barbers now in occupation had shown a most conciliatory spirit and, in short, were ready, as usual, to meet the public half-way. They hoped, however, to retain their chairs.

In conclusion the president ventured to touch upon a personal note. Alarm had been expressed in various quarters, he said, that he himself might not come off all right in the proposed arrangements. He wanted to tell his hearers that they need have no such alarm. He could assure them that there was no need for any anxiety about

him. Arrangements had been made, he would call them generous arrangements, for his financial welfare, not only till death, but for the future. Indeed he might say that without these arrangements he never would have acted at all. He would say, however, that if he found that anything had been left out that he needed, he would not hesitate to ask for it.

In conclusion, Dr. Soap said that any of those in the audience who cared to put a nickel in the slot in front of their seats would receive a memorial card with the word "Good-bye."

Part V
The Band of Brothers

THE MEMOIRS OF A FUTURE COMMUNIST

Chapter I
Reflections on the Fall of Capitalism

WRITTEN A.D. 2020

Looking back from the present year of 2020 A.D. one is able to see things of the past in retrospect with a clearer perspective than was visible for the people of the time. It ought to have been possible for anyone, even as early let us say as the year 1932, to see that great changes were impending. The so-called “capitalist system” was already doomed. In fact it was doomed just as soon as people began to call it by such a name. They had also taken to calling it the “individualist system” and the “profit system” and a lot of other names just as opprobrious. People who had lived all their lives under it and never knew it was there turned bitter about it.

In short, it was clear that the whole industrial world was going to smash. Some economists gave it another generation still to live, some half a century, others only a few years. But none of them foresaw the suddenness or the full extent of the Revolution of Brotherly Love which overwhelmed it in disaster.

I am among the few elderly people whose childish recollections can carry back so far. I have even haunting memories, dim but terrible, of the shootings and hangings that accompanied the institution of the government of Peace and Harmony. This gives me an opportunity to judge things of today somewhat differently perhaps from the point of view of my fellow comrades and sisters. Still more so, perhaps, can I see things in their right light by reason of my lifelong affection for reading old books and memoirs of the past. I can picture to myself the days of the first Queen Victoria, long before the rebuilding of London. I have a quite clear mental picture of the old motor-car which went by gasoline. I have even actually seen a horse, not one of the mechanical contrivances now known by that name, but the living animal. What with early recollection and continuous reading I can, as it were, reconstruct for myself the world of a hundred years ago, and realize that its end was inevitable.

The people of a century, or a century and a half ago, lived in what seemed to them a beautifully simple and stable world. I am thinking here not only of the days of Victoria the First but of the times of the Georges who were before her and ruled over both England and the United States. (Victoria herself, of course, did not govern the United States, the Royal Family having decided to give it up.)

This old economic world was one in which were set up a few fixed beacons and boundaries as signboards for the guidance of society. These were thought to be all that was necessary. Law and order, property, industry, honesty—that was the whole of it.

I have about me some of the old books, long since prohibited, in which this system was written down. Here is Adam Smith on the Wealth of Nations, John Stuart Mill on Liberty and the essays of the brilliant American, Thomas Jefferson. Readers of these memoirs will be surprised that I would openly admit the possession of these books for any one of which a man would go to jail today. But my official position and my close connection with many of the Comrade Super Commissioners gives me a kind of immunity in these things. Our government today, with all its shortcomings, has its indulgent side. Indeed only the other day Comrade Ilyitch Smith, chief censor of propaganda, saw on my table a copy of Chalmers' Sermons, and only laughed about it. He himself once lent me a volume of Euclid's Geometry, and admitted that he personally saw nothing to criticize in it.

But I grow garrulous with advancing years. I was only trying to say that the world of the earlier nineteenth century was economically a very simple place, regulated by a few maxims. Work hard—that was the first idea. People used to talk approvingly of being “as busy as a bee” and of “working like a beaver.”

By dint of calling himself a beaver, and an ant, and a horse, civilized man succeeded here in England and still more in America in persuading himself into the “work habit,” which remains even now as one of our perplexities. It never occurred to him that “work” is an idea quite unknown to the beaver or the bee; the bee is busy all day, but so is a man who is playing golf or buried in a game of chess. Animals don't work; they're just in business. But man acquired the work habit, not realizing that it would be fatal in the long run.

Next to work was saving. “Waste not, want not”—“A penny saved is a penny earned”—“Put by something for a rainy day.” These were the little maxims of industrious humanity in our great-great-grandfathers' time.

After work and saving came honesty. That was a little harder perhaps for our ancestors to put over. Man, under capitalism, being born a crook, the maxim, “An honest man's the noblest work of God,” didn't call forth much competition. Better, perhaps, was the compromise, “Honesty is the best policy.” On that basis was built up the blend called “business honesty,” which presently flourished alongside of “Christian infidelity,” “humane warfare” and other nineteenth century paradoxes.

Next came the idea of trade; sell all that you can and live on what you can't sell. Don't waste money on extravagance. All of the economic writers of the time laid stress on the wickedness of the spendthrift. He was an enemy to society. How wicked to waste his money on champagne and cigars when he might have asked for pig-iron!

This warning sank in. People got afraid to spend money. Rather than buy a yacht

they would found a Chair of Theology; whole colleges were endowed by people afraid to have a good time with their money.

Last—indeed, in a sense, first—was education, the pursuit of knowledge, science. Equip a nation with that and it moved ahead. Education stimulated invention, the very key to progress. Mankind in 4,000 years had invented the alphabet, the wheelbarrow, the distillation of whiskey, gunpowder and printing—then stuck dead. With that Europe was content. After all, to sit in a comfortable wheelbarrow and read a printed book of poetry, with a bottle of whiskey and a shotgun within reach was not so bad.

But the people of nineteenth century capitalism, and especially the Americans, took hold of a good thing, improved it, and spoiled it. Within a hundred years they had covered their country—land, sea and air—with a vast clutter of roaring machinery.

The end—we can see it now—was bound to come. People working like beavers for a hundred years, rising with the lark, never spending any money except on pig-iron and machinery, were simply heading for disaster.

So it was that civilized man both in Europe and America went roaring along from decade to decade, piling up savings, machinery, industrial power.

In other words, the ground was all prepared, or rather let me say that it was all undermined, for the explosion which tore the existing framework of society to pieces.

I don't know exactly why I should have put down these reflections. They are meant as a sort of preface to the notes and memoranda which follow. What I intend to write is a mere random record of comment upon our present government. It seems best to set it against this background.

Chapter II

Our Courts of Justice

This morning I paid a visit to the Criminal Court, a place which by natural disposition I would sedulously avoid. But I was glad I went. It made me feel that after all and in spite of all the troubles that surround us, we certainly have progressed and are progressing. Looking around at all the present day dangers and the threats of social revolution, one is apt to think that all said and done the world is just as imperfect as in the old days of capitalism.

Even though nobody talks about it openly, yet everybody is alarmed nowadays at the rapid spread of revolutionary ideas. Capitalism has been driven underground, but it is none the less dangerous. Everyone knows that the man who murdered Comrade Marcus Scipio Wilkins last week was a capitalist. Everyone knows that the gang who blew up the new Upper Thames bridge last summer were capitalists. It is whispered that even in the best ranks of society, if the truth were known, there are dozens and dozens of capitalists. The colleges and schools are said to be full of capitalistic ideas, not only among the students, but even in the ranks of the professors. Only last week in a public lecture Comrade Professor Dope, lecturing on the history of public institutions, openly said that for his part he'd like to have a house of his own and a room of his own instead of having to sleep with the other professors. There was a fuss made about it, of course, but the Commission of Superior Education decided to let it go with a reprimand. After all, the man is old; his memory, like my own, goes back to other days. Like myself, perhaps, he gets garrulous and talkative as he gets older. They let it go.

Still it alarms one as one looks about—so many troubles facing us on all sides. Not only capitalism, but religion. One hears of nothing—in whispers, it is true—but the spread of religion. People are actually, indeed more or less openly, using the churches for religious services. People go into the churches on Sundays on the pretence of playing cards, but in reality they hold services. Among the revolutionaries in the slums there are said to be a number of clergymen and even bishops. And with that, sects and sectaries of every sort, the Philanthropists, the Churchworkers, and the Vegetarians. In spite of all the public executions two years ago Vegetarianism has come to life again—more threatening than ever, it seems.

So, as I say, I was glad to go to the criminal courts and see that at least in some respects we are far, far away from the cruel hard old times of the criminal courts of a hundred years ago.

I went to the court with my friend Comrade Itchalot Jones, Second Super-

Commissioner of this district, Renovated London, Outside Ring Number 2, Section Greenwich. And perhaps for those who read these memoirs, if any ever do, I must explain who Comrade Itchalot Jones is and why I came to go with him. He and I were sitting in the Free-For-All-Come-In Club, a very exclusive institution which the Super-Commissioners have established for themselves here on the Thames, and I said that in some ways I doubted whether in every respect our world was better than the England of a century before. It was a dangerous thing to say out loud, but luckily no one heard it. For a minute Itchalot Jones looked startled and afraid, but, as it happened, no one heard. Itchalot Jones himself, I always feel, doesn't matter. He is a thoroughly good fellow in spite of being a Super-Commissioner, and although he's a public official, quite honest. In any case, as between him and me, there is a queer personal connection that goes back at least a hundred years. His grandfather lived as a gardener on my grandfather's estate down beside the Channel on what we now call the Island of Marine Brotherhood, but which was then called the Isle of Wight. If it were not against the law to do so, I'd say it was in Hampshire. Itchalot Jones's grandfather and all his great-grandfathers before that were gardeners to my great-grandfather. So when his grandfather came to the top as a revolutionary at the time of the Great Massacre of Brotherly Love that started communism, his family looked after my family.

It may sound an odd thing, and I know it is an illegal thing to write, but there was a great deal in the old system of families and living in families, with only one wife, and keeping track of which were your children. No doubt I'm old-fashioned. I seem to miss it though I've never enjoyed it; it often seems to me, in fact, as if I belonged somehow to a past age and not to this. To have a house of one's own and actually know it was one's own house, and to have a little boy, a son of your own, and know he was your own son—how wonderful it must have been. I know, of course, that this system is higher and nobler—to have a share in all the houses and a share in all the children is the greater destiny. The law makes me, for example, a district parent of all the children in this District Number 16, Renovated London, Outside Ring Number 2, with a vote on the annual question of increasing the number of children or cutting them down. It's higher, of course, and the law is right to forbid all discussion of the point. But the old family life must have had a certain attraction to it.

Hence comes the queer connection between Itchalot Jones, the Super-Commissioner, and myself, an old family relationship not to be shaken off. Why, I can remember that when I was a little boy, Itchalot Jones's father once by accident called my father "my lord." It was only a slip of the tongue, but a queer slip that went back through the centuries.

So it comes about that in the new world the Itchalot Joneses have looked after us. Itchalot Jones got me my present post of Corrector of Astronomical Time at the Greenwich Observatory. My hours of work, like everybody else's, are five hours a day, together with writing a weekly report on whether astronomical time has varied. As it is not likely to do so for at least a million years, my duties are not onerous. Indeed, like all those similar offices, I can absent myself as much as I like, provided that I take the risk of everything going on all right in my absence.

So when yesterday Itchalot Jones said, "Come and see the courts if you want to realize our progress," I said, "What about my astronomical time? It might go wrong!" I meant it, of course, just for a mild joke, but I noticed that Itchalot Jones didn't like it and frowned. It is characteristic of the people of this time and epoch that they do not like a joke. They seem afraid of laughter. It's being said, in fact, that Head Super-Commissioner Cæsar Alexander Tompkins said in the council not long ago that there were too damn many Humorists, and that the Humorists were getting dangerous and that state action was getting necessary. He himself, he said, liked a joke as much as anyone and dared anyone to say he didn't appreciate humour, but if he wanted a joke, he wanted it to be out of the government joke-book authorized by the State, and guaranteed to contain nothing dangerous. That reminded everybody of the trouble with the Humorists of ten years ago. Some were even executed, one heard. One fellow, so they said, was found to have copies of an old paper of a century ago called *Punch* (the possession of which was long since prohibited by law), which contained under a thin veil of humour some desperately fierce propaganda.

It seems that in these memoirs I keep drifting backwards instead of forwards,—my disposition again. I was only saying that Itchalot Jones didn't like a joke.

"Come along to the criminal courts," he said, "and you'll see one good side of things. And while you're there," he added, "let me remind you not to say too much, or better, not to say anything at all; there are rumours that are difficult to contradict. Someone heard you even in our own club reciting some lines of poetry, old stuff by a poet called Wordsworth, wasn't it? You left some of it written on a pad and one of the servants reported it to the District Censorship of Loving Thoughts to get you arrested. I had a lot of trouble to straighten it out. It was a lot of stuff called '*We are Seven*.' They claimed it was anti-communistic because it violated the state monopoly of arithmetic. So this time keep quiet."

I promised I would. But Jones need have had no fear as all that I saw delighted me—the pleasant sunlit atmosphere of the court-room, with its easy lounge seats, the judge smiling over his papers, and the "prisoner" sitting at a little table inside the

dock with an omelette and a glass of Moselle in front of him. Here and there one saw a good-natured warden or two, a couple of policemen playing cards in a corner, and a few odd spectators seated to listen.

My reading of history and stories told down through my family make me aware of how vastly different all this is from the terrible and cruel courts of the past. We still—why I cannot tell—keep to such antiquated terms as the word “prisoner,” meaning the gentleman for whose sake the court is held, and “dock” to mean the small private enclosure reserved for his table, papers, refreshments, etc., just as we used the word “policeman” to indicate his selected companion who refuses to leave him. But beyond the names, the similarity is all gone.

In the old days, history tells us, a “prisoner” was regarded as a man who had done wrong and must be punished. But already, even in the earlier twentieth century the contrary idea was gaining ground that the prisoner was a man who had met misfortune and must be helped. Indeed we are told that this point of view was one of the earliest tenets and one of the earliest reforms of communism. Here, for example, was a poor fellow who had stolen ten pounds. He needed help. Here was another who had picked up a bag, not his own, in a railway station and gone off with it. He needed light. Or here another who had signed another man’s name to a cheque and received money for it. He needed education. Or more deplorable still—here was a poor chap who had cracked another over the head with a pintpot and killed him. What he needed was more practice, better knowledge of mass, momentum, and inertia as compared with kinetic energy, in short knowledge of what a pintpot will, or will not, do. Even when the matter at first sight looked really grave, as when a man was found to have strangled his uncle for his inheritance, it resolved itself on close enquiry into a mere case of “atavism,” that is, of survival of past tendencies—in short, nothing serious.

I must say that everything I saw that day in our criminal court convinced me of how far we have travelled on our new road. While I was still looking with a pleased interest at the scene about me, the judge looked up from his papers.

“Have you finished?” he asked the prisoner.

“Half an egg left,” said the prisoner.

“Quite all right,” said the judge; “please don’t hurry.”

Presently the prisoner pushed aside his plate and finished his Moselle.

“Well!” he said.

“It seems here,” said the judge, running his eye over the indictment, “that you are charged with breaking into a house at night, with the theft of a gold watch, and with having given the occupant of the house what is called a ‘bat’ over the head which is

said in the words of this indictment to have 'knocked him silly.' I'm afraid I don't like it."

"He was silly, anyway," said the prisoner carelessly.

"But you admit you broke into the house? It says you climbed in at the upper window."

"I had to," said the prisoner indignantly; "the front door was locked."

"Oh, it was locked, was it?" said the judge. "I must make a note of that. That puts a different aspect on it. Locked, eh?"

He began to scribble some notes.

"Yes, and with one of those dirty patent locks with the narrow key. I couldn't make a thing of it. I hurt my finger on the rim of the lock and my electric torch went out, and there I was. It was a dirty, dark night, and this man actually had a dog loose somewhere round. I heard him growling in the shrubbery. So naturally I left the front door and climbed up the verandah post."

"Naturally," said the judge.

I must say that as I listened I could see the reasonableness of it all. Even in the old days it was always felt that what was called crime could all be clearly understood if one saw it from the right point of view. Here was this poor man, shut out in the dark, his torch gone, the lock refusing to open and a fierce dog within a few feet of him.

The judge sat tapping with his pencil on the desk and murmuring, "I see, I see. But when you at last got up the post and into his bedroom, you *did* take his watch?"

"Oh, I took his watch, all right."

The judge shook his head.

"That's different," he said. "Have you any explanation to make for that?"

"Yes," said the prisoner, "atavism."

"How so?"

"My great-grandfather used to steal watches in the old days under capitalism; I don't seem able to get over it." He wiped his sleeve across his eye.

"Poor chap!" said the judge. "But just one more thing. This bat over the head?"

But at this moment a man whom I had noticed seated near the judge in an easy chair and turning over the pages of a magazine, rose to speak. As he did so I recognized him as Comrade Acumen Edwards, State Prosecutor of the district.

"I don't think," he said, "that the State proposes to go into that, Comrade Judge. The indictment says that the prisoner 'knocked him silly,' but his friends say that he is no sillier than he was."

“Very good,” said the judge, looking up and down over his notes. “But I’m afraid I’ll have to suggest a term in seclusion.”

“Where?” said the prisoner.

“What about Wormwood Gardens?”

“No,” said the prisoner, decidedly, “out of the question.”

“Well, what about Dartmouth-by-the-Sea?”

The prisoner seemed to hesitate.

“You’ll like it,” said the judge, “splendid air, better golf than in any other prison in the country, absolutely quiet—come, now!”

“All right,” said the prisoner, “I’ll go.”

“Good,” said the judge, beaming through his spectacles, “and shall we say two years?”

“One!” said the prisoner.

“Well—eighteen months—eh, what?”

“All right,” said the prisoner, “eighteen months.”

I strolled out of the court with the judge and Comrade State Prosecutor Acumen Edwards, more than ever impressed with the gentle and humane character of our communistic justice. Unfortunately, something of the full bloom of my satisfaction was dissipated by a scene that took place just as we emerged from the gates of the court grounds on the streets. A group of police officials were dragging in a couple of “capitalists”—rough, ill-looking fellows in shabby rags, I admit, and yet, after all, human beings. They had been arrested, I presume, for propaganda and I suppose there was no doubt of their guilt. Yet it went to my heart to see them dragged along in the dust and beaten with clubs. I have, I hope, as much detestation of a capitalist as anyone, and I know that we cannot allow men to stand up openly in the street and advocate private property. Of course it won’t do. One of these scoundrels, so I heard afterwards, had publicly said that he’d like to have a hundred thousand pounds of his own. That’s dangerous, and I know it. And yet one wonders if it’s right to treat them as we do. I would have spoken up and said something—in fact I nearly did, but Comrade Jones took me by the arm with a warning grip. “It’s as much as your life is worth,” he whispered.

So I came home, saddened after all.

Chapter III

Our System in Operation

I suppose that each successive generation of mankind has imagined itself to be living in an age of peculiar importance, of impending danger, and of fleeting happiness. Certain it is that in this age of communism the lights and shadows seem thrown in fiercer contrast than ever before.

Today, having nothing urgent to do in connection with astronomical time, I went out on a little excursion with Itchalot Jones and his friend, Super-Commissioner Clockwork Smith, director of Industry. I think perhaps Jones had planned the excursion in order to remove from my mind the painful impression carried away from our outing of yesterday. Comrade Smith, one of the Directors of Industry, is in especial charge of the Commission of Enforced Leisure for the Working Class. His function is to see that the working people do not work too hard. The Commissioner is a man of great intelligence and of wide reading and was telling us as we rode about in his car something of the origin and meaning of his office.

“The danger under communism,” he said, “is that the workers will work too hard and injure their health. This was foreseen at the very start by the keener minds, but only after the lapse of half a generation did we learn how to cope with it. Even now it needs watchfulness on our part.”

“Indeed!” I said.

“Very much so. Only yesterday I was called in to use my authority for a very difficult case—the case of a drain digger who refused to quit digging. In our city drain digging, as in everything else, you know, five hours is considered the maximum permissible day’s work. Indeed there are rigorous notices in all the drains and sewers that men must absolutely come up at the end of five hours. Of course we have to wink at minor breaches of the rule. Very often the men go on digging in the drain for an extra hour or two without our liking to interfere. But here was a case of a fellow who had been in the sewer for ten hours and was still digging away. They had called down to him repeatedly to come out of the sewer, but he merely shouted back, ‘It’s all right; just let me work a little longer; just a few more bucketfuls of muck and I’ll come up.’ In the end we had to send men down and take away his spade. The poor fellow was quite hysterical when they fetched him up.”

Jones proposed that as the morning was pleasant and the weather agreeable, we should first see something of work in the country. We accordingly drove right away out of London into the beautiful rolling wooded country of Food District Number 2, once called, I believe, the county of Surrey. It was haymaking time and the work,

shared in by men and women alike, was at its height.

There is nothing, I believe, so cheering to the mind as the spectacle of the busy, happy labour of the field. From the earliest times, poets have sung of the work of the hay and the harvest, the fragrance of the fields, the joy of work in the wind and sun, and the sweetness of rest after the long toil of the day. And of all field labour, I suppose that of haymaking has the greatest appeal. So at least we found it this morning. Here was one group of haymakers seated in the shade of a branching tree, playing cards. Here was another group on the grass beside an ancient thorn, drinking beer, while in another part of the field men and women were playing dominoes among the hedges. One or two of the workers, with that taste for solitude which marks the truly rural mind, could be seen along the banks of a little stream, fishing. Everywhere was activity.

One of the directors of the work—I presume a gangster, or overseer—approached us and saluted my companion. “All busy, I see,” said Clockwork Smith.

“Very busy,” answered the gangster; “in fact they’ve been going it a bit too hard; I’m trying to get them to rest up. I was wondering whether you could get the district council to send us down a roulette wheel. It’s a bit hard on them having only the dominoes and the cards, and many of them get tired of fishing.”

“What about golf?” asked Smith.

The gangster shook his head.

“The chaps don’t seem to care for it,” he said. “Too much like work, they say; after being used to a pitchfork, they find a golf club pretty strenuous.”

“All right,” said Smith, “I’ll arrange for the roulette table.”

We drove back by a roundabout way so as to come into the Power and Mechanism Area, where the factories are. Smith suggested that we look in at one of the works, and under the guidance of a comrade overseer we went through one of the great mechanical plants. Charming as is the spectacle of work in the country, there is something perhaps more impressive in the aspect of a great industrial factory. The vast glittering machines, the huge wheels, the universal regularity and order, combine to convey an imposing sense of human power. The impression given by the workers was different from that one received from the haymakers, but contained many of the same elements. Here was a little group seated around a steel drum, throwing dice; another group, reclining on a huge leather belt which served as a sort of hammock, were playing spillikins; or a solitary worker might be observed pleasantly seated in the angle of two cogged wheels, reading a book.

“Not working today?” asked Smith of an overseer.

“Yes, indeed,” he said, “we’re very busy. Consumption overtook us a week or

so ago and we're running on full time. This," he added, "is the lunch hour"—he looked at his watch—"or, no, it's more likely afternoon tea; or perhaps they have sent someone out for a can of beer and oysters. We find our output is better if we slacken up now and then, though at times it's hard to stop them."

We passed on to various other plants, all presenting the same appearance of industry and activity, and all illustrating that nice adjustment of production and consumption which is characteristic of our era. One plant we saw, highly specialized after the fashion of communistic industry, was devoted solely to making bolts and nuts. Here no work was being done. The men had made nuts enough to last for years and were all off at the seaside. Here in another plant was a peculiarly interesting situation. An intricate electrical engine had broken down and they couldn't start it again. A comrade therefore had been sent to take a two years' course at Cambridge—in the great boiler factory—and learn how to fix it. Till then, as Itchalot Jones explained to me, the industry must remain shut down. The fate of the individual workers does not count under our iron discipline. For the good of the majority, they must stop work; most of them, in fact, had gone yachting.

Such was the encouraging appearance, almost everywhere the same, of our industrial system. It gave me a great feeling of confidence. Indeed as we returned to London in the later part of the afternoon, I felt cheered and relieved at the thought that our social difficulties and revolutionary dangers are as nothing beside our obvious and practical success.

But the pleasant impression conveyed by the day's outing was marred, if not obliterated, by what happened towards its close. On our way back into town, we ran into a huge street procession, or parade, of "capitalists." There must have been two or three thousand of them in line. Rough, evil-looking fellows they seemed, or at least their clothes made them seem so, though here and there I thought I saw one or two faces of real power. They carried humbly devised banners and streamers with such mottoes as LIBERTY, EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF, LET ME LIVE OR DIE IN MY OWN WAY.

We learned afterwards that they had held a monster gathering in the new park, the Gardens of Sweet Converse (where all speech is strictly forbidden except with a police license). There had been a lot of inflammatory talk, wild stuff about human rights and the liberty of the individual, which no government could tolerate. The police had hung back, not liking to interfere. Then the capitalists had started in a big procession, heading, so people said, for the house of the Parliament. They were probably not all capitalists. Their ranks had been joined on the way by a rabble of

Vegetarians, and Churchworkers and Philanthropists, in short, by all the roughs and outcasts of the city. Yet I must say again, some of them looked fierce, brave men, full of purpose.

I think the police were afraid of them. Till we came, they were hanging back and merely trying persuasion. "Come, gentlemen, come now," they were saying, "you've had your little bit of fun; come now, kindly drop those banners."

Then, just as we came near by, we could see soldiers on horseback appearing at the end of the street, and the police plucked up courage and began striking in among the capitalists with their heavy clubs, smashing at their arms and fingers to make them let go the banners. The capitalists fought back bare-handed. For all their rags, they were a brave lot. At the sides of the street and on the door-steps of the houses the people watched, and there were cries of "Shame, Shame!" even from the onlookers. I noticed especially the younger women, shouting at the police, "Shame, you brutes!" They looked fierce as furies. Some of them even threw themselves into the fight.

Then at the end of the street we could hear volley firing beginning, and the crowd began to break into a surging mass. I didn't see the end. Itchalot Jones seized me by the arm and dragged me up a side street and from there, through backyards and passages clear away from the scene. A thing that surprised me was that as the crowd was surging past us, Jones spoke to one tall man, evidently a leader of the capitalists. "You're mad," he said; "I told you it was months too soon." He spoke in a low and hurried voice for no one to hear, but the words reached me and set me wondering.

That evening at the Free-for-All Club we talked things over. It is about the only place where we could talk since the membership is very exclusive, in fact confined to the class called officially Men of the Heavy Burdens, meaning those who receive the highest salaries from the State.

The parade and riot had started, it seems, from a big seizure of unlawful books that the police had been carrying out. Super-Commissioner Smith said he had seen cartloads of a lot of the most vicious stuff. Some of it was out and out Vegetarian propoganda such as *Cabbages and How to Grow Them*, *Spinach as a Stimulant*, *Why Kill a Hen?* and *Ham is Death*.

This led us to speak of Vegetarianism and how the police had practically driven it underground. I suppose it had to be done. If the communist State orders all comrades to eat forty-eight ounces of meat per week and adjusts its animal production to that, you can't have a set of people preaching that it's wrong to eat meat. Yet on the other hand, as I said to the Commissioner (for we spoke with great

freedom), if a man keeps his ideas to himself why punish him for that? “Here,” said I, “you have a case of a man in whose room you find a book on *Cabbages* or a pamphlet on *Vermicelli Soup*. Would you send him to jail?”

The Commissioner shook his head. “I’m afraid we have to,” he said; “you can’t allow people to disseminate opinions contrary to law.”

For a good deal of the other books and printed matter that was seized there was no excuse. A lot of it was just rank capitalism, such as John Stuart Mill’s *Liberty*, and the *Declaration of Independence* and trash of that sort. Some of it was more subtle, but yet calculated to make people want to get back to the old world that was, by painting it in false colours, such as an atrocious volume of poems by the man Tennyson, of whom one had read, or novels of the period of Queen Victoria the First (just after the Georges). There was one book in especial called the *Pickwick Papers*. Commissioner Smith said the police seemed powerless to suppress it. Yet it had done endless harm in presenting a false view of the world as a happy place full of pleasant people and needing only to be left alone.

After the others had gone home, I stayed on and talked to Jones by himself. He spoke of capitalism and he made it clearer to me than before just how and why they are “capitalists.”

A capitalist, so to speak, is a man who says, “I don’t believe in your system and I won’t share in it. I will not work under your bosses.” Well, what can you do with him? Put him in jail—so we do. Shoot him? It seems, according to Jones, that there are an appalling lot of executions in the Homes of Rest, or what used to be called the Political Prisons. Yet you can’t shoot or imprison them all. So there you have these ragged people living in the abandoned parts of the city—in what used to be around Hyde Park—a district of dilapidated houses, without heat or water or light service, a space densely grown with the shrubs and trees of a hundred years. This was once the fashionable part of London, so it is said. Here live the capitalist class, feeding as best they can; it is rumoured that they have underground connections with the outside, that farmers on the State farms are in league with them. Jones told me that they even have an organization of their own, that they recognize old forgotten titles and dignities. Then he said quite suddenly, “You heard that man speak to me.” “Yes,” I said. “Well,” said Jones quietly, “he’s a Marquis. The first day he wants to, he can lead a thousand men against the government.” And then Jones added, “He’s only one of scores like that.”

We said no more but sat smoking beside the fire in silence. I began to understand the bearing of what Jones had said to the man in the street.

Chapter IV

Lights and Shadows

Such a bright pleasant morning, calculated to take away the evil effects of yesterday's rioting. In the first place, the morning newspaper, *The Voice of Truth*, explains that the rioting was of no real extent or consequence and arose out of a misunderstanding on the part of a few misguided people; that the number of people hurt, apart from being clubbed or shot, was very few. In short, that there is no occasion at all for social alarm, a thing which, with my disposition, I was glad to learn.

So this morning, having nothing to do, I drove over with my friend Comrade Doctor Chipperman to the State Maternity and spent a pleasant hour with him, walking through the delightful wards and nurseries. It did one's heart good to see such beves and flocks of soft-looking babies and sweet-looking infants. And to think that all the dear little fellows belong to everybody in common. My own share, statistically speaking, would be, I think, more than four of them, four decimal two, Chipperman said. This Birth District in which I have my share has, it seems, a fairly high percentage. Seeing the children gives one a pleasant feeling of ownership. Any citizen comrade of the district, so Chipperman tells me, has the right to come in and talk baby talk to the babies or sing to them. One of the nurses offered me one, but I felt afraid to take hold of it. Each dear little fellow has his number, and all are dressed in the same way, and each has one Teddy Bear, one rattle, and one bottle. The most perfect equality! It is wonderful to think that we have got away from the old brutal selfishness of fatherhood. The idea of forcing a group of little children to recognize two particular grown-up beings as their "father and mother" was too tyrannous for words. Thank goodness, we have at least got beyond that.

Yet the day has not all been happy. This afternoon, having nothing particular to do, I sat in the club after lunch, reading a report, a confidential report, on the food supply. It seems there's a lot of starvation. The nice adjustment of supply to wants, the commissioner's report says, is very difficult. Last year there were twenty bags of potatoes too many. This meant socially needless work. So all the potato growers went on a holiday to the seaside. This year there are hardly any potatoes. The commissioner says, of course, that they went too far; once at the sea it was hard to get them back. Some, I believe, got drowned.

But it proves that even under our system, economic life is hard to regulate.

I doubt a little whether the strongest part of our new era is its music. Last night I

attended a concert along with a very pleasant party—Commissioner Comrade Jones, three of his wives—or rather I should say, three lady comrades, and two husbands of one of them, and Commissioners Melody Mudge, Clockwork Smith and one or two others. I see I have been betrayed into writing the illegal words “husband” and “wife,” but these multilateral relationships, pleasant though they are, are a little perplexing. Indeed I fear I made a slight faux pas last night in thinking that Comrade Sister Jemina was a wife to Commissioner Smith—which it appears she never was.

Melody Mudge, the Commissioner, is an excellent fellow but difficult to be with because he is so deaf. He is Chief Commissioner of Music, but his deafness, I fear, works against him, although it is possible that he is also handicapped by never having had any taste for music. He was elected into the office because of his disastrous failure as the head of a railway.

No doubt the system is all right, but somehow it leaves a lot to be desired.

The people who had been elected to sing for the evening seemed to me hopeless. And there was a man who played—or rather who had been elected by a district vote to play—the ’cello. He had never played before and he owed his election to the spirited way in which he offered to try to play if elected. He explained this and did his best, but, as he said himself, it was his first attempt and he was not sure whether the instrument he brought with him was a ’cello or not. However, the audience gave him round after round of applause.

The whole thing set me thinking. It reminded me of the Communist Academy of Painting last spring. The same difficulty occurred. The general council voted the National Gold Medal to Comrade Tompkins, a first cousin of Super-Commissioner Tompkins (a fact which gave him the election). Then they told Tompkins to paint the picture. But Tompkins was very busy at the time, and, never having painted before, only just managed to get the picture done by working half the night before the Academy exhibition. He said also that the oil that the Hardware Paint and Oil Division supplied to him was poor stuff. He said he couldn’t make it go further than a gallon to a square yard. The picture was to have been called “Spring” but at the last minute he changed it, with white lead, into “Winter.” I could not help but doubt its merit. How strange it must have been in the old days when people were actually allowed—but perhaps that is getting too close to high treason for even these memoirs.

Yet all the time I find myself thinking about it and wondering, can things last as they are? Last night, for example, I accidentally—it comes from my everlasting reading of old things—called Comrade Eliza “Mrs. Jones.” She and Jones have

always been together, more or less, in fact they celebrated their fiftieth birthdays on the same day not long ago. When I said “Mrs. Jones,” she shook her head so sadly, it seemed to me, and said, “You mustn’t say that; it’s illegal.” But there were tears in her eyes.

Chapter V

Revolution

The impossible has happened! Within forty-eight hours the whole world has been turned upside down!

Two days ago the people stormed the house of Parliament and threw the president out of his chair and declared Capitalism restored. It all came so suddenly that it seems unbelievable. But at this moment the streets are filled with crowds, parading up and down and shouting "Hoorah for Capital!" They have put up huge placards that read—FOR EVERY MAN HIS OWN! MAKE THE BUMS WORK! MY HOUSE IS MINE! ONE MAN ONE WIFE! All over the city there are placards and great banners with legends like that which would have been high treason the day before yesterday.

The "capitalists" and the "outcasts" of yesterday that were called the revolutionists and conspirators are today the "people" and the "patriots." The revolution must have been skillfully and deeply organized, it seems so complete, so overwhelming. What brains and strength and energy these underground people must have acquired! They seem to have sprung to life as natural leaders, men of exception. Before them the drowsy, lazy "Commissioners" and "Super-Commissioners" have simply faded away.

No doubt, too, their changed appearance has helped—the change from unseemly rags and squalor to brilliant uniforms and decorations. It appears that among the first things they did was to plunder the clothing shops, conscript all the tailors and have them make military uniforms. I saw one of the new leaders, General Sir Montague MacGregor Monteith riding on a black horse in front of the Parliament buildings this morning; it seemed incredible to believe that he was one of the two ragged "bums" that Itchalot Jones and I saw dragged along the street by the police only a week or so ago. With him also in uniform were Sir Everett Ironside and Sir Hellanall Paget. A week ago they were living in hiding in the slums. Today they are organizing the new army. With them was Lord Hardgrit. It is amazing where they get the titles from! They seem to fish them up in all directions.

On the street people are laughing and joking. They already are calling one another Mr. So and So and Miss So and So. It seems so pretty and so deferential; makes everybody feel higher in rank. If any man dared to call another "comrade" today he'd probably get knocked down for his pains. Lord Hardgrit was (three days ago) Commissioner Wilkins, but of course, like everybody else, he knew his real family name.

Most amazing are the young men and women. Even the bitterest enemies of

capitalism used to have to admit that after all it was a movement of the young. Something in its creed—the idea of relying on one’s own strength and power and fighting for oneself—always appealed to young people. Looking back on it, I can see now that all the “brother-brother” stuff of communism seemed hopelessly false. And marriage! Itchalot Jones told me yesterday that marriage will be back in a week. Nothing can stop it. All along the streets you see the young men and women, pairing into couples, their arms locked, their faces bright with love, their lives joined. Jones said that they are setting fire to the community dormitories all over town. They have leaflets out already saying, *“Give us houses. One family, one House. Give us back our Home.”*

Lord Penrimmon, who has been named Quartermaster General, is to prepare at once a new plan for rebuilding London, knocking down all the Dormitories and the Children’s Repositories and the Day Cribs and the Night Crèches. They are going to make a clean sweep of it. The energy and the driving power of these new people is marvellous!

Looking back, it seems difficult to set down a coherent account of how it all happened. The only thing clear is that the capitalist revolution was far more widely planned and more deeply based than anyone suspected. More than that, it must really have had a deep hold on great masses of people. The idea of being free to do what you want to, instead of spending every hour of the day under the control of a board or a commission appealed to something fundamental in human nature.

Itchalot Jones, who came over to the new movement at once, in fact who has somehow made himself one of the heads of it, says he saw it coming all along. Jones, by the way, is now to be Sir Shalot Jones and will be one of the ministry; either that, he says, or perhaps Archbishop. He has not yet decided.

At any rate, he said that he knew that the object of each of the big parades like the one we saw, was to gain access to the legislature and throw out the Parliament. Once the capitalists could do that, they knew that they could win. All the military organizations, and the uniforms, and the printing had been arranged beforehand. Communism, they knew, was just a hollow shell. It would collapse at a touch. So, two days ago, when the crowd stormed the Parliament, one of them went up to the “president” who was pounding the desk for order and simply said, “Get out, you bum! Your time’s out. We’re going to have a ‘Speaker.’” He only answered “Certainly.” Then they went through the departments’ offices and began throwing out the commissioners and super-commissioners and subcommissioners; “get out, you pack of loafers,” the crowd yelled. Yet, oddly enough, it all was done with laughter and hilarity. There was very little force. They did throw a few into the Thames; they

were seen swimming away towards the sea. The crowd called, “Let them swim to Russia!”

As for myself, it seems that I need have no particular anxiety about the future in spite of the fact that I was, technically, an official of the communist government.

A letter which Sir Shalot Jones sent to me an hour ago seems to make my future lot both easy and agreeable. Jones writes:

“My dear Lord Edward:

“You will allow me to address you by your proper title, which, I have no doubt, will be at once rendered regular and legal by royal warrant on the return of Prince George Edward Albert Henry Charles. Indeed His Majesty’s cable of this morning permits us to make all such interim and immediate appointments as the situation necessitates—”

It gave me something of a shock of surprise to find myself thus addressed as “Lord Edward.” But after all, my great-grandfather never voluntarily gave up his title, and Jones, excellent fellow that he is, knows his own place and rank in society too well to deny mine.

The reference in his letter to the return of the heir of the Royal Family did not surprise me. I always understood from my reading of history and old memoirs that when the Prince’s ancestors at the time of the communist revolution retired to their Tomato Farm in British Columbia, they left nothing behind them but good-will and esteem. Everyone knew that a capitalist overturn would bring back the young prince. The newspapers of yesterday had already indicated that nothing would delay the return of young Prince George Edward Albert Henry Charles except perhaps the condition of the tomato crop. This morning’s bulletins said that not even the tomato crop would stop him. Jones’s letter continues:

“I have the further pleasure to inform you that your name has been put on the list for the Reconstituted House of Peers and that you are invited to attend the Dedicatory Service tomorrow in Westminster Abbey (formerly known as Diet Dispensary Number One, District Number Two).

“I need hardly tell you that under His Majesty’s new government there can be no expectation of the continuance of such sinecure and useless offices as the Commissionership of Astronomical Time, which was held by you. It is felt that the new era must be one of effort and sacrifice, and that all such needless and unjustifiable posts must be ruthlessly abolished. On

the other hand, my dear Lord Edward, I am glad to say that the Ministers agree to my appointing you at once to be Master of the Royal Buckhounds, an office which automatically comes back into existence. To this end, I will endeavour to get you a buckhound as soon as possible.”

I put down Jones’s letter with a sigh and have sat musing beside it, thinking of the future and of my new office and its responsibilities. Out in the bright sunshine of early July, the crowds are singing and laughing in the street.

What a great change! How strange, how sudden! But I have no time to spend in musing. I must be up and doing. I must at once try to get hold of a tailor. I shall need white silk trousers.

Part VI
A Fragment from Utopia

THE FIFTY-FIFTY SEXES

Chapter I

The Fifty-fifty Sexes

NOTE:

In this third decade of the twentieth century, it is already clear that the two sexes are moving towards a complete equality. Political equality came first, a thing practically everywhere achieved and now taken for granted. Economic equality is rapidly following, and social and domestic equality will ensue as an obvious consequence. Only one element, perhaps, was very generally left out of consideration in this process of social change. The two sexes necessarily react upon one another. Equalization will therefore be brought about not solely by modifying the character and status of the women, but also by altering that of the men. As Utopia approaches, men will be found more and more endowed with the graciousness and charm of the other sex, while losing nothing of the virtues of their own. Without an appreciation of this fact, a person of today would be perplexed and mystified in reading any account of social life in Utopia. As witness of the fact, let us take the following pages, a fragment of a Utopian novel, to which this antecedent note supplies the key:

OMINOUS NEWS

Edward Evenshade had no sooner unfolded his newspaper on his way downtown that morning, than he saw that it contained news of the gravest importance, indeed news of an ominous significance. His eye had only half scanned the list of the foreign despatches when a telegraphic item arrested his attention. It read:

“Current advices from Paris seem to make it certain that this season the waistline will be brought down low, and will even be kept close to the hip-bones.”

All the way to his office, Edward could think of little else than this newest revolutionary dictate of fashion. If he had only known it, the news items of the year 1932, long before he was born, had contained exactly such an item. The waist-line had been shoved down to the hip-bones and held there. But in that remote day such an item referred only to women. In Edward Evenshade's time, men also had learned to take that anxious thought for a pleasing appearance which had previously been the sole prerogative of women. In Edward's day, if the waist-line were moved by a decree of fashion to the hip-bone, no business man could hope to carry on his

business without conforming to it. In fact, his clients and customers would expect it.

Evenshade threw the paper on his office desk.

“Have you seen it, Undertone?” he asked of his partner.

“I have,” said Undertone, with evident indisposition, “and it’s no use asking me. I *can’t*. Mine won’t stay there.”

“Of course,” said Edward, “if you will read a little further you’ll have to admit that they modify it just a little. You see, it says you can define it with a narrow suède belt, if it is preferred.”

“Can I do that?” asked Undertone. “Let me see it. Yes, that’s right, ‘can be defined if it is preferred by a narrow suède or fabric belt.’ That might not look so bad, eh—a suède belt. Does it say anything about the colour?”

“Not here, but I’ve read elsewhere that the colours allowed this season will be principally puce or beige or, in the evening, navy blue and carnation pink.”

“Is that so?” said Undertone. He seemed to fall into a sort of reverie. “Is that so?” he muttered again. Then, looking up from his fit of abstraction, “Did you say pink carnation or dull red carnation?” he asked.

“Pink,” answered Edward.

“Well, say, I don’t think pink would look so bad, eh? I’ve been trying it before the mirror here. Pink wouldn’t be too young for me, would it?”

Edward Evenshade was still thinking of this ominous news item when he went over to his bank where he had to meet two or three of the directors in the board room. As he came in, they were leaning across the table reading one of these same despatches.

“I call it ridiculous,” said the vice-president, the senior of the men present. “It is not only ridiculous but it is practically tyranny. Have you seen this, Evenshade?” he asked, turning to Edward as he entered.

“Yes,” Edward said, “I saw it. It is outrageous, isn’t it, to think that a set of men over in Paris—heaven knows who they are—should dictate to us men over here what we are to wear and how we are to wear it.”

“Listen to this,” said the vice-president. “‘Coats are to be loose or belted and to achieve a straight simplicity by intricate smooth goring.’ What this ‘goring’ is, I don’t know, but it seems to me that a man won’t be allowed to wear buttons on his coat.”

“That’s what it means,” said Edward, “because it tells you elsewhere that smooth surfaces will be stressed, eliminating buttons almost entirely.”

“What about pants?” asked the vice-president, “any buttons to them?”

“It doesn’t seem to mention them,” answered Edward.

The vice-president looked at the newspaper and ran his eye further down the column. “Listen to this—‘Wide shoulders will be broadened by tricky cuts rather than by big sleeves, and narrow hips will be simulated by tailored fabric belts giving the impression of a high waistline.’”

“What’s that?” interposed the general manager, a stout man, who hadn’t yet spoken. “Let me see that about the wide shoulders—there seems some sense in that, eh? I don’t know that I would object to that. When do we wear that, is that for the office or what?”

“Yes,” said the vice-president, “that’s for the daytime. It says that for the evening you wear a waistlength velvet evening jacket with a huge fur collar, often in skunk, and perhaps with cartridge-pleated velvet collar and cuffs.”

“That sounds pretty nifty, doesn’t it?” said the general manager.

“It does,” said the vice-president. “I admit there’s something in that. I’ve often thought, you know, that you’d get quite an effect with a really fine bit of fur like that—I mean for the evening when you want to wear something worth while. Does it say anything as to what kind of stuff or what coloured stuff you wear with it?”

They were all quite animated now, bending over the newspaper, their indignation apparently evaporated. “Here it is,” said Edward Evenshade. “The best things seem to be a smooth printed Shantung or a pink organdie, with pastels as a distinct feature.”

“I wonder how those would look?” said the vice-president.

“What is organdie, anyway?” asked the general manager.

“I don’t know,” said the third director, “but let’s send out and get some.” He rang the bell. “Young man,” he said, “kindly go down the street and get some Shantung and organdie.”

“Yes, sir,” said the young man, “already mixed or in two bottles?”

“No, no, it’s a fabric. Get—oh, get about ten pounds of each.”

“And while you’re there, ask them if they have any skunk fur and a case of cartridges.”

“Directly, sir,” said the young man.

“You know,” said the vice-president, stepping over to the large mirror at one side of the room and trimming his coat tight in to his waist, “I’ve often thought that in a way our clothes are all wrong. You take that line now—there—see what I mean, John—”

“I know,” said the general manager, “or even drawn in a little more smartly—allow me—so, like that, eh?”

“You’re right,” said the vice-president. “I see how it means. The paper says, doesn’t it, that the general effect aimed at is that of an Egyptian silhouette? Something like this, eh?”

Edward realized that it was no use for him to try to do business with his fellow directors in their present preoccupation. He left, promising to come back later in the day. They were so absorbed that they hardly saw him go.

From the bank, as his business of the day demanded, Evenshade went to the office of the president of one of the great railways.

“Can I see the president?” he asked of the secretary in the outer office. The president and Edward Evenshade were old personal friends, and Edward was never denied an access to the private office of the magnate.

“I’m afraid not,” said the young man.

“Is he busy with a conference?”

“No,” said the secretary somewhat reluctantly, “not exactly that. His milliner is with him.”

“His milliner?” said Edward.

“Yes. To tell the truth, it arose out of something in the morning’s paper about the new change in the waistline—wait a minute—I have it here—‘It is generally understood in Paris that the contemplated revolution in the waistline will react at once upon the hat. It is claimed that hats will be drawn lower in the brim than ever and set a little sideways with a suggestion of *espèglerie*, or even *diablerie* calculated to intrigue.’ Yes, that was it; he was talking about it with the traffic manager and they sent out for some. I think they’re trying them on.”

“Perhaps I might wait,” said Edward.

“I hardly think so,” said the secretary, “they’ve been half an hour already.”

At this moment a smart-looking messenger boy burst his way in. He had in each hand a huge round cardboard hat-box. “Hats for the president,” he said. “I don’t think—” began the secretary. “It’s all right,” said the boy. “He telephoned for them.”

Edward realized that the ominous news from Paris had utterly upset the commercial world for the day. It was impossible to transact business in an atmosphere so tense with apprehension.

In fact, for the rest of the day he made no attempt to carry on the usual work of the office, merely sitting with Undertone discussing the outlook for a modified waistline and exchanging with his friends, over the telephone, comments on the extent to which a man might hold out against the decree.

It was a great relief to Edward when the wearisome business day was at last over, and he was able to set his face homewards. The pleasure was all the greater in that Edward had before him the anticipation of a dinner party which would at any rate give him a chance to wear some of his pretty things so soon to be discarded at the inexorable bidding of fashion.

That evening at about seven o'clock Edward Evenshade was seated on a low stool in front of a long mirror, engaged in dressing for dinner. Several new people were expected and naturally Edward wished to look his best.

But a choice is difficult. The litter of frills and laces on the floor beside him showed the vacillation of his mind. He had already almost decided on an evening dress shirt of soft white foulard with ruchings up to the throat, when he rejected it in favour of a dainty clinging slip-over of passementerie worn over a low brasserie. Then again he wondered whether burnt umber was really his colour. He picked up the dainty little dinner jacket and turned it in his hands. It was sweet, there was no doubt of it. On the other hand, not everybody can wear burnt umber. Would he look better in terra cotta or potash? But then again, the evening candle light at dinner is not like sunlight. But if he didn't wear the burnt umber then a jacket with a higher collar would mean doing his hair all over again, or at least clipping it close round his ears. Or would that show the shape of his head too much? He knew that the shape of his head, though he hated to admit it, was not his best point. It was shaped too much like a nut.

So sat Edward Evenshade in perplexity till the slamming of the front door and the sound of hurried steps on the stairs told him that Clara had come home.

"I'm late as hell, Eddie!" she called from the landing, "but it will be all right. I've still time to chuck on my clothes for dinner."

"No, come in here," called Edward from his dressing-room. "I want you to help me pick something to wear."

Clara strode into Edward's dressing-room.

"Why, Eddie," she exclaimed, "you're only half ready."

"I know, Clara. I just couldn't decide about the colours. Look! how do you like that?"

As he spoke, Edward held the little burnt umber dinner jacket up against his cheeks.

"Why, you look perfectly sweet," Clara said.

"No, but is the colour too strong for me?"

"I don't think so, dear, not in evening light. But if you think it is, why not put on

something else? But I must skip. I've simply got to get ready. They'll be here in ten minutes."

"No, it's all right. They're invited for eight; there's lots of time. Before you go, what about money for Bridge tonight? Have you got any, or do you want any? And where do we stand today? You know, Clara, if we don't do up accounts each night it gets so complicated, doesn't it?"

"I know, Eddie," answered Clara, "but I write it down always. I've got it here in my little book. Yes, here it is. You paid me up to the day before yesterday, Tuesday — No, I'm wrong, we were square till last night. There's only today."

"All right, what are the items?"

Edward and Clara, like all other reasonable husbands and wives in Utopia, knew nothing of that economic dependence of the wife upon the husband which is the blot of our present situation. Although, in their case, Edward was the outside breadwinner and Clara lived at home, it was recognized that her functions in life and her work were just as much an economic contribution to their welfare as the money which Edward earned in his office. Their accounts were kept in accordance with this principle.

"What are the items?" asked Edward.

"Well," said Clara, "first, I took baby out of his cradle and washed him—two dollars is right, isn't it?"

"Quite right," said Edward. "If you sent him to the laundry they'd charge that."

"Then I rocked his cradle for an hour—"

"Two dollars," said Edward.

"But I sang to him," said Clara.

Edward looked doubtful. "I don't think that's extra," he said.

"All right, Eddie," said Clara good-naturedly, "let it go at that. Here are the other things, at the rates we've generally set for them—"

"Ordering the food over the telephone, fifty cents."

"Right!"

"Directions to maid about how not to cook the food for the dinner party, fifty cents."

"Right!"

"Having lunch with your mother at her house, five dollars."

"I suppose so," said Edward.

"Visit from the Reverend Canon Jaw and refusing a subscription to build a new chancel. What's that worth, Eddie, be fair? That saved a lot of money. And think of it! he was here an hour."

“I admit,” said Edward, “that’s tough; go on though, and we’ll lump it together. What else?”

“Well, really nothing much,” said Clara, looking at her notes. “Taking baby up, putting baby down, singing to baby, talking to Mrs. Woundup over the ’phone—but let that go. And then I went to golf at four and I’m just back.”

“Well, call it for the whole of it, fifteen dollars, will that be all right?”

“Oh, quite right, Eddie, perfectly fair.”

“As a matter of fact,” said Edward, as he felt in his pocket for the money, “it’s more than I made myself today downtown. Hardly any of us did much.”

“Why?” asked Clara.

“Oh, this blasted news from Paris.”

“I didn’t see it. What news? Is it another market smash?”

“No, no, not that. This infernal fall of the waistline to the hips. But I suppose if we’ve got to do it, we must make up our minds to it like men. But skip, Clara, and get ready.”

“Give me a kiss first,” said Clara.

“Who pays?” asked Eddie.

“Fifty-fifty,” she said.

FINIS

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

[The end of *Afternoons in Utopia: Tales of the New Time* by Stephen Leacock]