

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

in a thematic trinity

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THEMATIC TRINITY: THREE LENSES FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE

Our Three Themes

There are many themes that have been and that could be used to organize a survey of American Literature, and each lens will offer a different focus and perspective. Historically, certain texts and authors were always studied—crucial works of “the canon” that any educated individual was expected to be at least familiar with. But over the past 30-40 years especially, scholars and students alike have recognized that the canon excluded the writings and literature of Native Americans who inhabited this continent long before Europeans began to colonize it as well as the narratives and literature of African Americans who were brought to this continent against their will and their descendants who were doomed to spend their lives as slaves. The voices and experiences of “newer” Americans, as well, were often excluded: the Chinese, Japanese, Irish, Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans, etc. And of course, only a few women were considered to be sufficiently accomplished as writers to qualify as “literary.” You will read some authors and texts that I read as a student, and you will also read ones that I didn’t encounter until later in life, despite being an academic and literary scholar. The truth is, the volume (bad pun intended) of literature is almost infinite; it is far too vast to be read by one person, even one who devotes their life to learning. Even

when you narrow the scope down to a particular region or scope of time—in our case literature written predominantly in the continental United States between 1492 and the present—it is still so vast that it would be more than one lifetime’s errand to become a true expert.

Given this context, this textbook and survey course will attempt to balance a range of perspectives and texts, organized asynchronously and thematically rather than in geographical or chronological order. The themes themselves have been chosen because they encompass a range of experiences and perspectives within themselves; they can be interpreted and applied in multiple ways, depending on the perspective of the reader.

As part of our course approach, I will NOT assign these themes to specific readings—together we will consider how the themes and the readings intertwine and relate. Arguably the only “wrong” pairing of readings and themes is one that is careless and unconsidered.

French writer Andre Gide said that “One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.” If at times you feel lost, this is only natural. Use our themes and learning materials as a map, to help you chart your way. Ask questions of me and of your peers. We shall be on this voyage together. We only have a few weeks and the blink of an eye to gain some knowledge, insight, and understanding. Hopefully, the small sampling we will cover will be enough to open up New Worlds in your mind that will return to you and enrich your life in ways you can now only dimly imagine.

Theme 1: *E Pluribus Unum*—Out of Many, One

In 1782, the Constitutional Congress of the United States adopted this 13 letter phrase as a motto to signify

the union of the 13 former British colonies into a new nation. The founding documents of this nation included the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution. The men (for certainly at that time no woman could have had an official role) were passionate about the “American Experiment” in self-government. It is easy now to look back and see how much inequity remained despite the bold assertion that “all men are created equal.” But that revolutionary ideal, held imperfectly by imperfect men, has led to the greatest expansion and inclusion of freedom and rights for diverse individuals in modern history—and perhaps all of history.

From the very beginning we will see the conflict between the rights and worth of the individual versus the expectations and norms of society, the conflict between democracy versus hierarchy, the right to self-determination and to self-government, both for an individual and for a civic group, whether that be a town or a nation contrasted with and in competition with the desire of those in power to retain, consolidate and extend their dominion. It is not just in the American institution of slavery that we will see the collision between right and freedom for some but not all. It is also in the clash of societies and cultures, vying for space, for land, for power, and prestige. It is in the clash of the “new comer” and the established—and the demographics of those terms will change quite a bit over the course of American history.

What does it mean to create a union “out of many?” Unless your ancestors were the indigenous tribes and nations here long before Europeans or Africans set foot on this continent, you are the child of immigrants. Your parents might have been despised or desired—the strife

and division we experience today at our borders is nothing new.

These are not easily answered questions, and the real world issues are not easily solved either. The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States begins with these words: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a *more perfect* Union . . .” The men who wrote these words were idealists and pragmatists. They knew that their goals exceeded their capacity, and they knew that the nation they were establishing would encounter myriad challenges they could not anticipate. How to truly forge a society that can justly claim “out of many, one” has been one of the greatest of these challenges.

Theme 2: Terror and Transcendence

From Columbus’s first encounters with the American continent and peoples, Europeans were fascinated by this “New World” that was as exotic and exciting to them as the moon or Mars is to us today. Poems, stories, and essays were written about this marvelous and mysterious place whose geography, topography, botany, peoples, animals were all “new” and unknown. But the encounter between the “old world” of Europe and the “new world” brought brutality and destruction as well as knowledge and possibility

As most of us know by now, Columbus and his followers were not exactly charitable to the natives of the Americas. Using guile and superior weaponry and surprise, they murdered and subjugated individuals and wiped out entire civilizations and societies. The wealth that poured out of the Americas and into the coffers of Spain, Portugal, France and England was often produced by slaves—indigenous peoples, Africans brought to the colonies, and indentured English servants. Plantation

owners and overseers used extreme brutality and torture to keep enslaved people from revolting.

The colonizers brought terror to the New World; but they also experienced terror themselves. The vast forests and jungles of the Americas required survival skills that few possessed. The native inhabitants were not always pleased to see strangers show up and begin transforming and claiming their territory. New diseases, failed crops—this new world was definitely *terra incognita*—unfamiliar territory—and navigating it was not the same as living in a city, a town, a farm or village in Europe. Many early “colonists” were actually indentured servants, primarily impoverished people with few prospects for an occupation or income in England. They usually signed up willingly in the hopes of being able to start a new life once their time of servitude was over. But in reality, they were often brought to the colonies and “dumped” here, with inadequate provisions of food and shelter. The companies and investors that held their contracts did not hold much regard for their lives. Many starved, died of disease, or were massacred by natives.

One example of a failed colony is the infamous Roanoke settlement, first established in 1585 and abandoned in 1586 by the English on Roanoke Island, off the coast of North. In 1587 they made a second attempt. The leader of the new colony, John White, returned to England for supplies, but was delayed in returning to the colony until 1590. All he found was a deserted settlement and the words “cro” and “croatoan” carved into the wooden palisades. To this day, the fate of the 112-121 colonists remains a mystery—one that still has enough menace to inspire an entire season of American Horror Story.

Every culture tells horror stories, and as American culture developed, the seeds of our horror stories grew out of encounters between the indigenous peoples and the descendants of immigrants, the fear of what might be lurking in the primeval forest & hostile nature, the idea of a diseased or decayed “house” (and here you could read bloodlines or culture), the *doppelganger* or double—in short many of the tropes or motifs from German Romanticism, but through an American lens.

A peak time in the development of the themes of terror and transcendence was the years between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th—approximately 1775–1840. This time period is generally known as Romanticism—not in the sense of a boy/girl (or any variation thereof) love affair. Romanticism was a reaction to the rationality of the Enlightenment, and valued emotional and moving experiences—especially the experience of the *Sublime* which could be terrible, but also could be transcendent.

European (primarily German and English) Romanticism influenced the develop of American Romanticism, but on these shores the movement developed into the American Transcendental movement. You could say it married the awe and delight in nature of European Romanticism with the spiritual aims of the New England colonists. Communing with nature (to oversimplify extremely) was one way to commune with God or the Universal Spirit. Whether “transcendental” or “romantic,” this strain in American literature and culture was focused on immersion in life and its experiences. The idea of living life both simply and to its fullest is very “romantic” in this sense.

In many ways, terror and transcendence are polar

opposite experiences. But they could also be seen as the opposite ends of the same continuum: they are immediate, overwhelming, and profound.

Competing Strains: Divergent Visions of the End

“A vision demanded of me that I begin at the beginning, not at the beginning of the fall.”—Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*.

In my beginning is my end.”—T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

In my end is my beginning.”—motto, Mary Queen of Scots, *motto*

America has always perceived itself as exceptional. Our Puritan forefathers had a teleological (meaning that they had an ultimate purpose or end in mind) view of the world and of their “errand” into the wilderness of North America. In a sense, they came here with an apocalyptic vision that would, if it succeeded, establish a “New Jerusalem” on Earth, and they would be the inheritors of God’s covenant with the ancient Israelites. Needless to say, this is a VERY high bar for a community to aspire to, and it created a pressure cooker environment.

Because, if they failed, death and destruction would be the outcome. It all depended on if they could stay true to their purpose throughout the generations. That idea of being an ideal nation that brings other people and nations to the Light? In the modern era that begins, arguably, with the Puritans even if it doesn’t end there.

This theme considers the influence of sacred and secular visions of the purpose of the New World. For the Puritans, it was to create a new society that would live up to the promise of an ideal society led by God. The first generation of the Puritans were extremely devout and excited. But as time went on, the devotion and ardor

dimmed, and Puritan ministers did their best to rekindle it, reminding people of the glory of their future if they followed God's word—and the tribulation that would follow if they failed—as all model and utopian societies must.

Therefore, along with the rhetoric of *Divine Appointment* came the rhetoric of *infection*, appealing prominently in the writings of the Puritans and other early settlers. At times the infection refers to literal illness that devastated many of the early colonies. At other times, it refers to a spiritual taint, manifested by growing complacency on the part of the second and third generations or embodied, quite literally, in the Native Americans and the vast wilderness of the American continent. The rhetoric of infection as a threat to America's divine destiny, and therefore her mission and prosperity, can be traced to John Winthrop and Cotton Mather who envision infection as pernicious heresies or witchcraft. In *A Modell of Christina Charity*, Winthrop presents God's wrath as the price of failure and sets up the metaphor of the community as a body, susceptible to infection.

As American society became more diverse, this idea of *Divine Appointment* transformed into the idea of *Manifest Destiny*. In the mid-19th century, during the rush to expand west to the Pacific, a journalist coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny" in 1845 to promote the idea that the United States was blessed, even pre-ordained by Providence to stretch from "sea to shining sea." So, this nation that was profoundly influenced by theology began to see that spiritual mission develop into a secular version as well, where the United States would begin to take its

“rightful place” as a leader among nations—again, another very high mission driven by teleological fervor, with tremendous consequences for failure or success.

Among many other ramifications, this means that at least two distinct strains fuel the contemporary American obsession with the apocalypse, one sacred and one secular. Divergent in many ways, these competing narratives share a common source: the above-mentioned Puritan and early American jeremiads (sermons modelled after the prophet Jeremiah) and texts that warn of the dire consequences of failing to uphold the divine covenant we inherited.

From the spiritual *Divine Appointment* perspective, the “strain” of infection is our moral failure and depravity—based on a more traditional interpretation of Christianity—which will cause our destruction as a nation. As American society becomes more and more diverse, the way in which we balance our personal morality with our national identity and laws becomes more challenging.

From the secular *Manifest Destiny* perspective, the disease or infection threatening America and the world is our failure to act on our knowledge of climate change and species extinction and to control the destructive capacity of our technology. The apocalyptic threat coded into this vision for America informs the literary work of environmentalists. An early and important example is *Silent Spring*, written by Rachel Carson in 1962. This book foretells a time when spring might become silent, due to the extinction of bird species from the indiscriminate spraying of DDT. For this strain, you should also think of *The Walking Dead* or *12 Monkeys*, as well as the

numerous post-apocalyptic narratives and even the very current and pressing debate about openAI.

An unintentionally satirical twist on both of these perspectives are various contemporary social phenomenon, such as Burning Man, a secular-spiritual errand into the wilderness that has been perverted into a commercial venture. Or tik Tok or Instagram influencers performative environmentalism while they consume fast fashion and other vapid trends, trading authenticity for cash and promotions.

An underlying dis-ease in both strains is a perception of ourselves as the infection that perverts and destroys, an unsettling premonition that we will toxically alter our nature and environment, disrupting and distorting our inheritance. The idea of a polluted inheritance—whether spiritual or genetic—is endemic to apocalyptic narratives. And in both strains there is no escaping infection and its resulting mutation. In *The Walking Dead*, Dr. Jenner of the CDC informs Rick that all of the survivors are infected. Like original sin, this virulent evil is now in our blood.

Along with the warning to preserve, protect and purify our natures or be prepared for the consequences, both contemporary sacred and secular apocalyptic texts contrast what is with what could be, envisioning a potential “New Jerusalem” if we reverse course. However, the location and nature of this paradise diverges sharply, and this split is potentially the deciding factor in terms of real world strategies and consequences.

PART I.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

CHAPTER 1.

FIRE AND ICE

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

CHAPTER 2.

THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD

The Wonders of the Invisible World by Cotton Mather

[A People of God in the Devil's Territories] The New Englanders are a people of God settled in those, which were once the devil's territories; and it may easily be supposed that the devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a people here accomplishing the promise of old made unto our blessed Jesus, that He should have the utmost parts of the earth for His possession. There was not a greater uproar among the Ephesians, when the Gospel was first brought among them, than there was among the powers of the air (after whom those Ephesians walked) when first the silver trumpets of the Gospel here made the joyful sound. The devil thus irritated, immediately tried all sorts of methods to overturn this poor plantation: and so much of the church, as was fled into this wilderness, immediately found the serpent cast out of his mouth a flood for the carrying of it away. I believe that never were more satanical devices used for the unsettling of any people under the sun, than what have been employed for the extirpation of the vine which God has here planted, casting out the heathen, and preparing a room before it, and causing it to take deep root, and fill the land, so that it sent its boughs unto the Atlantic Sea eastward, and its branches unto the Connecticut River westward, and the hills were covered with a shadow thereof. But all those

attempts of hell have hitherto been abortive, many an Ebenezer has been erected unto the praise of God, by his poor people here; and having obtained help from God, we continue to this day. Wherefore the devil is now making one attempt more upon us; an attempt more difficult, more surprising, more snarled with unintelligible circumstances than any that we have hitherto encountered; an attempt so critical, that if we get well through, we shall soon enjoy halcyon days with all the vultures of hell trodden under our feet. He has wanted his incarnate legions to persecute us, as the people of God have in the other hemisphere been persecuted: he has therefore drawn forth his more spiritual ones to make an attack upon us. We have been advised by some credible Christians yet alive, that a malefactor, accused of witchcraft as well as murder, and executed in this place more than forty years ago, did then give notice of an horrible plot against the country by witchcraft, and a foundation of witchcraft then laid, which if it were not seasonably discovered, would probably blow up, and pull down all the churches in the country. And we have now with horror seen the discovery of such a witchcraft! An army of devils is horribly broke in upon the place which is the center, and after a sort, the first-born of our English settlements: and the houses of the good people there are filled with the doleful shrieks of their children and servants, tormented by invisible hands, with tortures altogether preternatural. After the mischiefs there endeavored, and since in part conquered, the terrible plague of evil angels hath made its progress into some other places, where other persons have been in like manner diabolically handled. These our poor afflicted neighbors, quickly after they become infected and

infested with these demons, arrive to a capacity of discerning those which they conceive the shapes of their troublers; and notwithstanding the great and just suspicion that the demons might impose the shapes of innocent persons in their spectral exhibitions upon the sufferers (which may perhaps prove no small part of the witch-plot in the issue), yet many of the persons thus represented, being examined, several of them have been convicted of a very damnable witchcraft: yea, more than one [and] twenty have confessed, that they have signed unto a book, which the devil showed them, and engaged in his hellish design of bewitching and ruining our land. We know not, at least I know not, how far the delusions of Satan may be interwoven into some circumstances of the confessions; but one would think all the rules of understanding human affairs are at an end, if after so many most voluntary harmonious confessions, made by intelligent persons of all ages, in sundry towns, at several times, we must not believe the main strokes wherein those confessions all agree: especially when we have a thousand preternatural things every day before our eyes, wherein the confessors do acknowledge their concernment, and give demonstration of their being so concerned. If the devils now can strike the minds of men with any poisons of so fine a composition and operation, that scores of innocent people shall unite, in confessions of a crime, which we see actually committed, it is a thing prodigious, beyond the wonders of the former ages, and it threatens no less than a sort of a dissolution upon the world. Now, by these confessions 'tis agreed that the devil has made a dreadful knot of witches in the country, and by the help of witches has dreadfully increased that knot: that these witches have driven a trade of commissioning

their confederate spirits to do all sorts of mischiefs to the neighbors, whereupon there have ensued such mischievous consequences upon the bodies and estates of the neighborhood, as could not otherwise be accounted for: yea, that at prodigious witch-meetings, the wretches have proceeded so far as to concert and consult the methods of rooting out the Christian religion from this country, and setting up instead of it perhaps a more gross diabolism than ever the world saw before. And yet it will be a thing little short of miracle, if in so spread a business as this, the devil should not get in some of his juggles, to confound the discovery of all the rest. [...] But I shall no longer detain my reader from his expected entertainment, in a brief account of the trials which have passed upon some of the malefactors lately executed at Salem, for the witchcrafts whereof they stood convicted. For my own part, I was not present at any of them; nor ever had I any personal prejudice at the persons thus brought upon the stage; much less at the surviving relations of those persons, with and for whom I would be as hearty a mourner as any man living in the world: The Lord comfort them! But having received a command so to do, I can do no other than shortly relate the chief matters of fact, which occurred in the trials of some that were executed, in an abridgment collected out of the court papers on this occasion put into my hands. You are to take the truth, just as it was; and the truth will hurt no good man. There might have been more of these, if my book would not thereby have swollen too big; and if some other worthy hands did not perhaps intend something further in these collections; for which cause I have only singled out four or five, which may serve to illustrate the way of

dealing, wherein witchcrafts use to be concerned; and I report matters not as an advocate, but as an historian.

The Trial of Martha Carrier AT THE COURT OF OYER AND TERMINER, HELD BY ADJOURNMENT AT SALEM, AUGUST 2, 1692. I. Martha Carrier was indicted for the bewitching certain persons, according to the form usual in such cases, pleading not guilty to her indictment; there were first brought in a considerable number of the bewitched persons who not only made the court sensible of an horrid witchcraft committed upon them, but also deposed that it was Martha Carrier, or her shape, that grievously tormented them, by biting, pricking, pinching and choking of them. It was further deposed that while this Carrier was on her examination before the magistrates, the poor people were so tortured that every one expected their death upon the very spot, but that upon the binding of Carrier they were eased. Moreover the look of Carrier then laid the afflicted people for dead; and her touch, if her eye at the same time were off them, raised them again: which things were also now seen upon her trial. And it was testified that upon the mention of some having their necks twisted almost round, by the shape of this Carrier, she replied, "It's no matter though their necks had been twisted quite off." II. Before the trial of this prisoner, several of her own children had frankly and fully confessed not only that they were witches themselves, but that this their mother had made them so. This confession they made with great shows of repentance, and with much demonstration of truth. They related place, time, occasion; they gave an account of journeys, meetings and mischiefs by them performed, and were very credible in what they said. Nevertheless, this evidence was not produced against the

prisoner at the bar, inasmuch as there was other evidence enough to proceed upon. III. Benjamin Abbot gave his testimony that last March was a twelvemonth, this Carrier was very angry with him, upon laying out some land near her husband's: her expressions in this anger were that she would stick as close to Abbot as the bark stuck to the tree; and that he should repent of it afore seven years came to an end, so as Doctor Prescott should never cure him. These words were heard by others besides Abbot himself; who also heard her say, she would hold his nose as close to the grindstone as ever it was held since his name was Abbot. Presently after this, he was taken with a swelling in his foot, and then with a pain in his side, and exceedingly tormented. It bred into a sore, which was lanced by Doctor Prescott, and several gallons of corruption ran out of it. For six weeks it continued very bad, and then another sore bred in the groin, which was also lanced by Doctor Prescott. Another sore than bred in his groin, which was likewise cut, and put him to very great misery: he was brought unto death's door, and so remained until Carrier was taken, and carried away by the constable, from which very day he began to mend, and so grew better every day, and is well ever since. Sarah Abbot also, his wife, testified that her husband was not only all this while afflicted in his body, but also that strange, extraordinary and unaccountable calamities befell his cattle; their death being such as they could guess at no natural reason for. IV. Allin Toothaker testified that Richard, the son of Martha Carrier, having some difference with him, pulled him down by the hair of the head. When he rose again he was going to strike at Richard Carrier but fell down flat on his back to the ground, and had not power to stir hand or foot, until

he told Carrier he yielded; and then he saw the shape of Martha Carrier go off his breast. This Toothaker had received a wound in the wars; and he now testified that Martha Carrier told him he should never be cured. Just afore the apprehending of Carrier, he could thrust a knitting needle into his wound four inches deep; but presently after her being seized, he was thoroughly healed. He further testified that when Carrier and he some times were at variance, she would clap her hands at him, and say he should get nothing by it; whereupon he several times lost his cattle, by strange deaths, whereof no natural causes could be given. V. John Rogger also testified that upon the threatening words of this malicious Carrier, his cattle would be strangely bewitched; as was more particularly then described. VI. Samuel Preston testified that about two years ago, having some difference with Martha Carrier, he lost a cow in a strange, preternatural, unusual manner; and about a month after this, the said Carrier, having again some difference with him, she told him he had THE WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD 6 lately lost a cow, and it should not be long before he lost another; which accordingly came to pass; for he had a thriving and well-kept cow, which without any known cause quickly fell down and died. VII. Phebe Chandler testified that about a fortnight before the apprehension of Martha Carrier, on a Lordsday, while the Psalm was singing in the Church, this Carrier then took her by the shoulder and shaking her, asked her, where she lived: she made her no answer, although as Carrier, who lived next door to her father's house, could not in reason but know who she was. Quickly after this, as she was at several times crossing the fields, she heard a voice, that she took to

be Martha Carrier's, and it seemed as if it was over her head. The voice told her she should within two or three days be poisoned. Accordingly, within such a little time, one half of her right hand became greatly swollen and very painful; as also part of her face: whereof she can give no account how it came. It continued very bad for some days; and several times since she has had a great pain in her breast; and been so seized on her legs that she has hardly been able to go. She added that lately, going well to the house of God, Richard, the son of Martha Carrier, looked very earnestly upon her, and immediately her hand, which had formerly been poisoned, as is abovesaid, began to pain her greatly, and she had a strange burning at her stomach; but was then struck deaf, so that she could not hear any of the prayer, or singing, till the two or three last words of the Psalm. VIII. One Foster, who confessed her own share in the witchcraft for which the prisoner stood indicted, affirmed that she had seen the prisoner at some of their witch-meetings, and that it was this Carrier, who persuaded her to be a witch. She confessed that the devil carried them on a pole to a witch-meeting; but the pole broke, and she hanging about Carrier's neck, they both fell down, and she then received an hurt by the fall, whereof she was not at this very time recovered. IX. One Lacy, who likewise confessed her share in this witchcraft, now testified, that she and the prisoner were once bodily present at a witch-meeting in Salem Village; and that she knew the prisoner to be a witch, and to have been at a diabolical sacrament, and that the prisoner was the undoing of her and her children by enticing them into the snare of the devil.

X. Another Lacy, who also confessed her share in this witchcraft, now testified, that the prisoner was at the

witch-meeting, in Salem Village, where they had bread and wine administered unto them. XI. In the time of this prisoner's trial, one Susanna Sheldon in open court had her hands unaccountably tied together with a wheelband so fast that without cutting, it could not be loosed: it was done by a specter; and the sufferer affirmed it was the prisoner's. Memorandum. This rampant hag, Martha Carrier, was the person of whom the confessions of the witches, and of her own children among the rest, agreed that the devil had promised her she should be Queen of Hebrews.

CHAPTER 3.

A FABLE FOR TOMORROW

from A Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. The town lay in the midst of a checkerboard of prosperous farms, with fields of grain and hillsides of orchards.

Along the roads laurel, viburnum and alder, great ferns and wildflowers delighted the traveller's eye through much of the year. Even in winter the roadsides were places of beauty, where countless birds came to feed on the berries and on the seed heads of the dried weeds rising above the snow. The streams flowed clear and cold out of the hills and contained shady pools where trout lay...

Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours.

There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example

– where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding stations in the backyards were deserted. The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens and scores of other bird voices there were now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.

On the farms the hens brooded, but no chicks hatched. The farmers complained that they were unable to raise any pigs – the litters were small and the young survived only a few days. The apple trees were coming into bloom but no bees droned among the blossoms, so there was no pollination and there would be no fruit.

The roadsides, once so attractive, were now lined with brown and withered vegetation as though swept by fire. These, too, were silent, deserted by all living things. Even the streams were now lifeless. Anglers no longer visited them, for all the fish had died.

In the gutters under the eaves and between the shingles of the roofs, a white granular powder still showed a few patches: some weeks before it had fallen like snow upon the roofs and the lawns, the fields and the streams.

No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves.

PART II.

**MESTIZO,
MISCEGENATION, AND
METAMORPHOSES**

CHAPTER 4.

THE MIRACULOUS VISION OF THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

THE STORY OF THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

Cuauhtlatatzin was one of the first Aztec men to convert to Christianity after the Spanish invasion. Renamed as Juan Diego, he soon thereafter reported an appearance of the Virgin Mary called the Virgin of Guadalupe. This apparition became an important symbol for a new native Christianity. These excerpts are translated from an account first published in Nahuatl by Luis Lasso de la Vega in 1649.

On a Saturday just before dawn, [Juan Diego] was on his way to pursue divine worship and to engage in his own errands. As he reached the base of the hill known as Tepeyac*, came the break of day, and he heard singing atop the hill, resembling singing of varied beautiful birds...

He then heard a voice from above the mount saying to him: "Juanito, Juan Dieguito." Then he ventured and went to where he was called. He was not frightened in the least; on the contrary, overjoyed.

Then he climbed the hill, to see from where he was being called. When he reached the summit, he saw a Lady, who was standing there and told him to come hither. Approaching her presence, he marveled greatly at her superhuman grandeur; her garments were shining like

the sun; the cliff where she rested her feet, pierced with glitter, resembling an anklet of precious stones, and the earth sparkled like the rainbow. The mezquites, nopales, and other different weeds, which grow there, appeared like emeralds, their foliage like turquoise, and their branches and thorns glistened like gold. He bowed before her and heard her word, tender and courteous, like someone who charms and esteems you highly.

She said: "Juanito, the most humble of my sons, where are you going?" He replied: "My Lady, I have to reach your church in Mexico, Tlatilolco*, to pursue things divine, taught and given to us by our priests, delegates of Our Lord."

She then spoke to him: "Know and understand well, you the most humble of my son, that I am the ever virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and the earth.

"I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may therein exhibit and give all my love, compassion, help, and protection, because I am your merciful mother, to you, and to all the inhabitants on this land and all the rest who love me, invoke and confide in me; listen there to their lamentations, and remedy all their miseries, afflictions and sorrows....

Then he descended to go to comply with the errand, and went by the avenue which runs directly into Mexico City.

.. the bishop did not give credence and said that he could not do what Juan had asked based only on his request. In addition, a sign was necessary, so that he could be believed that he was sent by the true Lady from heaven...

...when Juan Diego was to carry a sign so he could be believed, he failed to return, because, when he reached his home, his uncle, named Juan Bernardino, had become sick, and was gravely ill...

On Tuesday, before dawn, Juan Diego came from his home to Tlatilolco to summon a priest... Then he rounded the hill, going around, so he could not be seen by her who sees well everywhere. He saw her descend from the top of the hill and was looking toward where they previously met.

She approached him at the side of the hill and said to him: "What's there, my son? Where are you going?" .. [He replied], "Know that a servant of yours is very sick, my uncle. He has contracted the plague, and is near death..."

After hearing Juan Diego speak, the Most Holy Virgin answered: "Hear me and understand well, my son the least, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything. Do not be afflicted by the illness of your uncle, who will not die now of it. be assured that he is now cured." (And then his uncle was cured, as it was later learned.)

When Juan Diego heard these words from the Lady from heaven, he was greatly consoled. He was happy. He begged to be excused to be off to see the bishop, to take him the sign or proof, so that he might be believed. The Lady from heaven ordered to climb to the top of the hill, where they previously met. She told him: "Climb, my son the least, to the top of the hill; there where you saw me and I gave you orders, you will find different flowers. Cut

them, gather them, assemble them, then come and bring them before my presence.”

...He immediately went down the hill and brought the different roses which he had cut to the Lady from heaven, who, as she saw them, took them with her hand and again placed them back in the tilma, saying: “My son, this diversity of roses is the proof and the sign which you will take to the bishop. You will tell him in my name that he will see in them my wish and that he will have to comply to it. You are my ambassador, most worthy of all confidence...”

... the bishop realized that Juan Diego was carrying the proof, to confirm what the Indian requested. Immediately he ordered Juan Diego’s admission. As he entered, Juan Diego knelt before him, as he was accustomed to do, and again related what he had seen and admired, also the message...

He unfolded his white cloth, where he had the flowers; and when they scattered on the floor, all the different varieties of rosas de Castilla, suddenly there appeared the drawing of the precious Image of the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, in the manner as she is today kept in the temple at Tepeyacac, which is named Guadalupe...

As Juan Diego pointed out the spot where the lady from heaven wanted her temple built, he begged to be excused. He wished to go home to see his uncle Juan Bernardino...

As they arrived, they saw that his uncle was very happy and nothing ailed him. He was greatly amazed to see his nephew so accompanied and honored, asking the reason of such honors conferred upon him. His nephew answered that when he went to summon a priest to hear his confession and to absolve him, the Lady from heaven appeared to him at Tepeyacac, telling him not to be

afflicted, that his uncle was well, for which he was greatly consoled, and she sent him to Mexico, to see the bishop, to build her a house in Tepeyacac.

Then the uncle manifested that it was true that on that occasion he became well and that he had seen her in the same manner as she had appeared to his nephew, knowing through her that she had sent him to Mexico to see the bishop. Also, the Lady told him that when he would go to see the bishop, to reveal to him what he had seen and to explain the miraculous manner in which she had cured him, and that she would properly be named, and known as the blessed Image, the ever-virgin Holy Mary of Guadalupe.

CHAPTER 5.

THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

I.

During the winter of 1927–28 officials of the Federal government made a strange and secret investigation of certain conditions in the ancient Massachusetts seaport of Innsmouth. The public first learned of it in February, when a vast series of raids and arrests occurred, followed by the deliberate burning and dynamiting—under suitable precautions—of an enormous number of crumbling, worm-eaten, and supposedly empty houses along the abandoned waterfront. Uninquiring souls let this occurrence pass as one of the major clashes in a spasmodic war on liquor.

Keener news-followers, however, wondered at the prodigious number of arrests, the abnormally large force of men used in making them, and the secrecy surrounding the disposal of the prisoners. No trials, or even definite charges, were reported; nor were any of the captives seen thereafter in the regular gaols of the nation. There were vague statements about disease and concentration camps, and later about dispersal in various naval and military prisons, but nothing positive ever developed. Innsmouth itself was left almost depopulated,

and is even now only beginning to shew signs of a sluggishly revived existence.

Complaints from many liberal organisations were met with long confidential discussions, and representatives were taken on trips to certain camps and prisons. As a result, these societies became surprisingly passive and reticent. Newspaper men were harder to manage, but seemed largely to coöperate with the government in the end. Only one paper—a tabloid always discounted because of its wild policy—mentioned the deep-diving submarine that discharged torpedoes downward in the marine abyss just beyond Devil Reef. That item, gathered by chance in a haunt of sailors, seemed indeed rather far-fetched; since the low, black reef lies a full mile and a half out from Innsmouth Harbour.

People around the country and in the nearby towns muttered a great deal among themselves, but said very little to the outer world. They had talked about dying and half-deserted Innsmouth for nearly a century, and nothing new could be wilder or more hideous than what they had whispered and hinted years before. Many things had taught them secretiveness, and there was now no need to exert pressure on them. Besides, they really knew very little; for wide salt marshes, desolate and unpeopled, keep neighbours off from Innsmouth on the landward side.

But at last I am going to defy the ban on speech about this thing. Results, I am certain, are so thorough that no public harm save a shock of repulsion could ever accrue from a hinting of what was found by those horrified raiders at Innsmouth. Besides, what was found might possibly have

more than one explanation. I do not know just how much of the whole tale has been told even to me, and I have many reasons for not wishing to probe deeper. For my contact with this affair has been closer than that of any other layman, and I have carried away impressions which are yet to drive me to drastic measures.

It was I who fled frantically out of Innsmouth in the early morning hours of July 16, 1927, and whose frightened appeals for government inquiry and action brought on the whole reported episode. I was willing enough to stay mute while the affair was fresh and uncertain; but now that it is an old story, with public interest and curiosity gone, I have an odd craving to whisper about those few frightful hours in that ill-rumoured and evilly shadowed seaport of death and blasphemous abnormality. The mere telling helps me to restore confidence in my own faculties; to reassure myself that I was not simply the first to succumb to a contagious nightmare hallucination. It helps me, too, in making up my mind regarding a certain terrible step which lies ahead of me.

I never heard of Innsmouth till the day before I saw it for the first and—so far—last time. I was celebrating my coming of age by a tour of New England—sightseeing, antiquarian, and genealogical—and had planned to go directly from ancient Newburyport to Arkham, whence my mother's family was derived. I had no car, but was travelling by train, trolley, and motor-coach, always seeking the cheapest possible route. In Newburyport they told me that the steam train was the thing to take to Arkham; and it was only at the station ticket-office, when I demurred at the high fare, that I learned about

Innsmouth. The stout, shrewd-faced agent, whose speech shewed him to be no local man, seemed sympathetic toward my efforts at economy, and made a suggestion that none of my other informants had offered.

“You *could* take that old bus, I suppose,” he said with a certain hesitation, “but it ain’t thought much of hereabouts. It goes through Innsmouth—you may have heard about that—and so the people don’t like it. Run by an Innsmouth fellow—Joe Sargent—but never gets any custom from here, or Arkham either, I guess. Wonder it keeps running at all. I s’pose it’s cheap enough, but I never see more’n two or three people in it—nobody but those Innsmouth folks. Leaves the Square—front of Hammond’s Drug Store—at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. unless they’ve changed lately. Looks like a terrible rattletrap—I’ve never ben on it.”

That was the first I ever heard of shadowed Innsmouth. Any reference to a town not shewn on common maps or listed in recent guide-books would have interested me, and the agent’s odd manner of allusion roused something like real curiosity. A town able to inspire such dislike in its neighbours, I thought, must be at least rather unusual, and worthy of a tourist’s attention. If it came before Arkham I would stop off there—and so I asked the agent to tell me something about it. He was very deliberate, and spoke with an air of feeling slightly superior to what he said.

“Innsmouth? Well, it’s a queer kind of a town down at the mouth of the Manuxet. Used to be almost a city—quite a port before the War of 1812—but all gone to pieces in the last hundred years or so. No railroad now—B. & M. never

went through, and the branch line from Rowley was given up years ago.

“More empty houses than there are people, I guess, and no business to speak of except fishing and lobstering. Everybody trades mostly here or in Arkham or Ipswich. Once they had quite a few mills, but nothing’s left now except one gold refinery running on the leanest kind of part time.

“That refinery, though, used to be a big thing, and Old Man Marsh, who owns it, must be richer’n Croesus. Queer old duck, though, and sticks mighty close in his home. He’s supposed to have developed some skin disease or deformity late in life that makes him keep out of sight. Grandson of Captain Obed Marsh, who founded the business. His mother seems to’ve ben some kind of foreigner—they say a South Sea islander—so everybody raised Cain when he married an Ipswich girl fifty years ago. They always do that about Innsmouth people, and folks here and hereabouts always try to cover up any Innsmouth blood they have in ’em. But Marsh’s children and grandchildren look just like anyone else so far’s I can see. I’ve had ’em pointed out to me here—though, come to think of it, the elder children don’t seem to be around lately. Never saw the old man.

“And why is everybody so down on Innsmouth? Well, young fellow, you mustn’t take too much stock in what people around here say. They’re hard to get started, but once they do get started they never let up. They’ve ben telling things about Innsmouth—whispering ’em, mostly—for the last hundred years, I guess, and I gather they’re more scared than anything else. Some of the

stories would make you laugh—about old Captain Marsh driving bargains with the devil and bringing imps out of hell to live in Innsmouth, or about some kind of devil-worship and awful sacrifices in some place near the wharves that people stumbled on around 1845 or thereabouts—but I come from Panton, Vermont, and that kind of story don't go down with me.

“You ought to hear, though, what some of the old-timers tell about the black reef off the coast—Devil Reef, they call it. It's well above water a good part of the time, and never much below it, but at that you could hardly call it an island. The story is that there's a whole legion of devils seen sometimes on that reef—sprawled about, or darting in and out of some kind of caves near the top. It's a rugged, uneven thing, a good bit over a mile out, and toward the end of shipping days sailors used to make big detours just to avoid it.

“That is, sailors that didn't hail from Innsmouth. One of the things they had against old Captain Marsh was that he was supposed to land on it sometimes at night when the tide was right. Maybe he did, for I dare say the rock formation was interesting, and it's just barely possible he was looking for pirate loot and maybe finding it; but there was talk of his dealing with daemons there. Fact is, I guess on the whole it was really the Captain that gave the bad reputation to the reef.

“That was before the big epidemic of 1846, when over half the folks in Innsmouth was carried off. They never did quite figure out what the trouble was, but it was probably some foreign kind of disease brought from China or somewhere by the shipping. It surely was bad

enough—there was riots over it, and all sorts of ghastly doings that I don't believe ever got outside of town—and it left the place in awful shape. Never came back—there can't be more'n 300 or 400 people living there now.

“But the real thing behind the way folks feel is simply race prejudice—and I don't say I'm blaming those that hold it. I hate those Innsmouth folks myself, and I wouldn't care to go to their town. I s'pose you know—though I can see you're a Westerner by your talk—what a lot our New England ships used to have to do with queer ports in Africa, Asia, the South Seas, and everywhere else, and what queer kinds of people they sometimes brought back with 'em. You've probably heard about the Salem man that came home with a Chinese wife, and maybe you know there's still a bunch of Fiji Islanders somewhere around Cape Cod.

“Well, there must be something like that back of the Innsmouth people. The place always was badly cut off from the rest of the country by marshes and creeks, and we can't be sure about the ins and outs of the matter; but it's pretty clear that old Captain Marsh must have brought home some odd specimens when he had all three of his ships in commission back in the twenties and thirties. There certainly is a strange kind of streak in the Innsmouth folks today—I don't know how to explain it, but it sort of makes you crawl. You'll notice a little in Sargent if you take his bus. Some of 'em have queer narrow heads with flat noses and bulgy, stary eyes that never seem to shut, and their skin ain't quite right. Rough and scabby, and the sides of their necks are all shrivelled or creased up. Get bald, too, very young. The older

fellows look the worst—fact is, I don't believe I've ever seen a very old chap of that kind. Guess they must die of looking in the glass! Animals hate 'em—they used to have lots of horse trouble before autos came in.

“Nobody around here or in Arkham or Ipswich will have anything to do with 'em, and they act kind of offish themselves when they come to town or when anyone tries to fish on their grounds. Queer how fish are always thick off Innsmouth Harbour when there ain't any anywhere else around—but just try to fish there yourself and see how the folks chase you off! Those people used to come here on the railroad—walking and taking the train at Rowley after the branch was dropped—but now they use that bus.

Yes, there's a hotel in Innsmouth—called the Gilman House—but I don't believe it can amount to much. I wouldn't advise you to try it. Better stay over here and take the ten o'clock bus tomorrow morning; then you can get an evening bus there for Arkham at eight o'clock. There was a factory inspector who stopped at the Gilman a couple of years ago, and he had a lot of unpleasant hints about the place. Seems they get a queer crowd there, for this fellow heard voices in other rooms—though most of 'em was empty—that gave him the shivers. It was foreign talk, he thought, but he said the bad thing about it was the kind of voice that sometimes spoke. It sounded so unnatural—slopping-like, he said—that he didn't dare undress and go to sleep. Just waited up and lit out the first thing in the morning. The talk went on most all night.

This fellow—Casey, his name was—had a lot to say about how the Innsmouth folks watched him and seemed kind of on guard. He found the Marsh refinery a queer place—it’s in an old mill on the lower falls of the Manuxet. What he said tallied up with what I’d heard. Books in bad shape, and no clear account of any kind of dealings. You know it’s always ben a kind of mystery where the Marshes get the gold they refine. They’ve never seemed to do much buying in that line, but years ago they shipped out an enormous lot of ingots.

“Used to be talk of a queer foreign kind of jewellery that the sailors and refinery men sometimes sold on the sly, or that was seen once or twice on some of the Marsh womenfolks. People allowed maybe old Captain Obed traded for it in some heathen port, especially since he was always ordering stacks of glass beads and trinkets such as seafaring men used to get for native trade. Others thought and still think he’d found an old pirate cache out on Devil Reef. But here’s a funny thing. The old Captain’s ben dead these sixty years, and there ain’t ben a good-sized ship out of the place since the Civil War; but just the same the Marshes still keep on buying a few of those native trade things—mostly glass and rubber gewgaws, they tell me. Maybe the Innsmouth folks like ’em to look at themselves—Gawd knows they’ve gotten to be about as bad as South Sea cannibals and Guinea savages.

“That plague of ’46 must have taken off the best blood in the place. Anyway, they’re a doubtful lot now, and the Marshes and the other rich folks are as bad as any. As I told you, there probably ain’t more’n 400 people in the whole town in spite of all the streets they say there are.

I guess they're what they call 'white trash' down South—lawless and sly, and full of secret doings. They get a lot of fish and lobsters and do exporting by truck. Queer how the fish swarm right there and nowhere else.

Nobody can ever keep track of these people, and state school officials and census men have a devil of a time. You can bet that prying strangers ain't welcome around Innsmouth. I've heard personally of more'n one business or government man that's disappeared there, and there's loose talk of one who went crazy and is out at Danvers now. They must have fixed up some awful scare for that fellow.

"That's why I wouldn't go at night if I was you. I've never ben there and have no wish to go, but I guess a daytime trip couldn't hurt you—even though the people hereabouts will advise you not to make it. If you're just sightseeing, and looking for old-time stuff, Innsmouth ought to be quite a place for you."

And so I spent part of that evening at the Newburyport Public Library looking up data about Innsmouth. When I had tried to question the natives in the shops, the lunch room, the garages, and the fire station, I had found them even harder to get started than the ticket-agent had predicted; and realised that I could not spare the time to overcome their first instinctive reticences. They had a kind of obscure suspiciousness, as if there were something amiss with anyone too much interested in Innsmouth. At the Y.M.C.A., where I was stopping, the clerk merely discouraged my going to such a dismal, decadent place; and the people at the library shewed much the same attitude. Clearly, in the eyes of the

educated, Innsmouth was merely an exaggerated case of civic degeneration.

The Essex County histories on the library shelves had very little to say, except that the town was founded in 1643, noted for shipbuilding before the Revolution, a seat of great marine prosperity in the early nineteenth century, and later a minor factory centre using the Manuxet as power. The epidemic and riots of 1846 were very sparsely treated, as if they formed a discredit to the county.

References to decline were few, though the significance of the later record was unmistakable. After the Civil War all industrial life was confined to the Marsh Refining Company, and the marketing of gold ingots formed the only remaining bit of major commerce aside from the eternal fishing. That fishing paid less and less as the price of the commodity fell and large-scale corporations offered competition, but there was never a dearth of fish around Innsmouth Harbour. Foreigners seldom settled there, and there was some discreetly veiled evidence that a number of Poles and Portuguese who had tried it had been scattered in a peculiarly drastic fashion.

Most interesting of all was a glancing reference to the strange jewellery vaguely associated with Innsmouth. It had evidently impressed the whole countryside more than a little, for mention was made of specimens in the museum of Miskatonic University at Arkham, and in the display room of the Newburyport Historical Society. The fragmentary descriptions of these things were bald and prosaic, but they hinted to me an undercurrent of persistent strangeness. Something about them seemed so

odd and provocative that I could not put them out of my mind, and despite the relative lateness of the hour I resolved to see the local sample—said to be a large, queerly proportioned thing evidently meant for a tiara—if it could possibly be arranged.

The librarian gave me a note of introduction to the curator of the Society, a Miss Anna Tilton, who lived nearby, and after a brief explanation that ancient gentlewoman was kind enough to pilot me into the closed building, since the hour was not outrageously late. The collection was a notable one indeed, but in my present mood I had eyes for nothing but the bizarre object which glistened in a corner cupboard under the electric lights.

It took no excessive sensitiveness to beauty to make me literally gasp at the strange, unearthly splendour of the alien, opulent phantasy that rested there on a purple velvet cushion. Even now I can hardly describe what I saw, though it was clearly enough a sort of tiara, as the description had said. It was tall in front, and with a very large and curiously irregular periphery, as if designed for a head of almost freakishly elliptical outline. The material seemed to be predominantly gold, though a weird lighter lustrousness hinted at some strange alloy with an equally beautiful and scarcely identifiable metal. Its condition was almost perfect, and one could have spent hours in studying the striking and puzzlingly untraditional designs—some simply geometrical, and some plainly marine—chased or moulded in high relief on its surface with a craftsmanship of incredible skill and grace.

The longer I looked, the more the thing fascinated me; and in this fascination there was a curiously disturbing

element hardly to be classified or accounted for. At first I decided that it was the queer other-worldly quality of the art which made me uneasy. All other art objects I had ever seen either belonged to some known racial or national stream, or else were consciously modernistic defiances of every recognised stream. This tiara was neither. It clearly belonged to some settled technique of infinite maturity and perfection, yet that technique was utterly remote from any—Eastern or Western, ancient or modern—which I had ever heard of or seen exemplified. It was as if the workmanship were that of another planet.

However, I soon saw that my uneasiness had a second and perhaps equally potent source residing in the pictorial and mathematical suggestions of the strange designs. The patterns all hinted of remote secrets and unimaginable abysses in time and space, and the monotonously aquatic nature of the reliefs became almost sinister. Among these reliefs were fabulous monsters of abhorrent grotesqueness and malignity—half ichthyic and half batrachian in suggestion—which one could not dissociate from a certain haunting and uncomfortable sense of pseudo-memory, as if they called up some image from deep cells and tissues whose retentive functions are wholly primal and awesomely ancestral. At times I fancied that every contour of these blasphemous fish-frogs was overflowing with the ultimate quintessence of unknown and inhuman evil.

In odd contrast to the tiara's aspect was its brief and prosy history as related by Miss Tilton. It had been pawned for a ridiculous sum at a shop in State Street in 1873, by a drunken Innsmouth man shortly afterward killed in

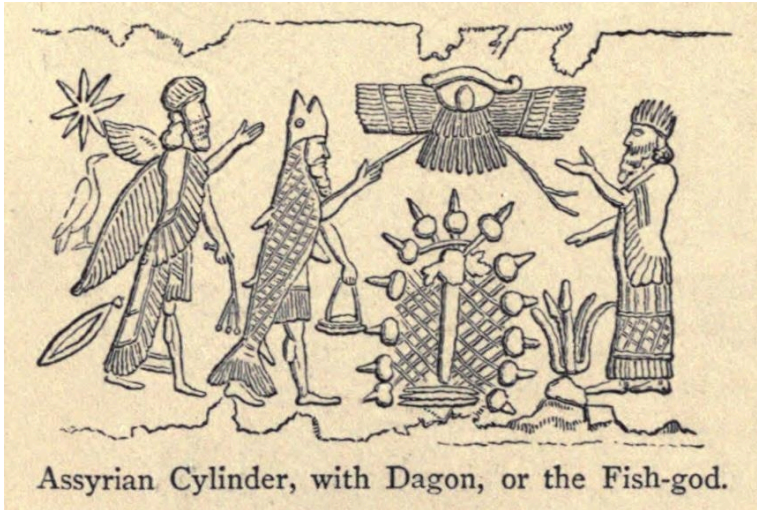
a brawl. The Society had acquired it directly from the pawnbroker, at once giving it a display worthy of its quality. It was labelled as of probable East-Indian or Indo-Chinese provenance, though the attribution was frankly tentative.

Miss Tilton, comparing all possible hypotheses regarding its origin and its presence in New England, was inclined to believe that it formed part of some exotic pirate hoard discovered by old Captain Obed Marsh. This view was surely not weakened by the insistent offers of purchase at a high price which the Marshes began to make as soon as they knew of its presence, and which they repeated to this day despite the Society's unvarying determination not to sell.

As the good lady shewed me out of the building she made it clear that the pirate theory of the Marsh fortune was a popular one among the intelligent people of the region. Her own attitude toward shadowed Innsmouth—which she had never seen—was one of disgust at a community slipping far down the cultural scale, and she assured me that the rumours of devil-worship were partly justified by a peculiar secret cult which had gained force there and engulfed all the orthodox churches.

It was called, she said, "The Esoteric Order of Dagon", and was undoubtedly a debased, quasi-pagan thing imported from the East a century before, at a time when the Innsmouth fisheries seemed to be going barren. Its persistence among a simple people was quite natural in view of the sudden and permanent return of abundantly fine fishing, and it soon came to be the greatest influence on the town, replacing Freemasonry altogether and

taking up headquarters in the old Masonic Hall on New Church Green.



Assyrian Cylinder, with Dagon, or the Fish-god.

All this, to the pious Miss Tilton, formed an excellent reason for shunning the ancient town of decay and desolation; but to me it was merely a fresh incentive. To my architectural and historical anticipations was now added an acute anthropological zeal, and I could scarcely sleep in my small room at the “Y” as the night wore away.

II.

Shortly before ten the next morning I stood with one small valise in front of Hammond’s Drug Store in old Market Square waiting for the Innsmouth bus. As the hour for its arrival drew near I noticed a general drift of the loungers to other places up the street, or to the Ideal Lunch across the square. Evidently the ticket-agent had not exaggerated the dislike which local people bore toward Innsmouth and its denizens. In a few moments a small motor-coach of extreme decrepitude and dirty grey colour rattled down State Street, made a turn, and

drew up at the curb beside me. I felt immediately that it was the right one; a guess which the half-illegible sign on the windshield—“*Arkham-Innsmouth-Newb’port*”—soon verified.

There were only three passengers—dark, unkempt men of sullen visage and somewhat youthful cast—and when the vehicle stopped they clumsily shambled out and began walking up State Street in a silent, almost furtive fashion. The driver also alighted, and I watched him as he went into the drug store to make some purchase. This, I reflected, must be the Joe Sargent mentioned by the ticket-agent; and even before I noticed any details there spread over me a wave of spontaneous aversion which could be neither checked nor explained. It suddenly struck me as very natural that the local people should not wish to ride on a bus owned and driven by this man, or to visit any oftener than possible the habitat of such a man and his kinsfolk.

When the driver came out of the store I looked at him more carefully and tried to determine the source of my evil impression. He was a thin, stoop-shouldered man not much under six feet tall, dressed in shabby blue civilian clothes and wearing a frayed grey golf cap. His age was perhaps thirty-five, but the odd, deep creases in the sides of his neck made him seem older when one did not study his dull, expressionless face. He had a narrow head, bulging, watery blue eyes that seemed never to wink, a flat nose, a receding forehead and chin, and singularly undeveloped ears. His long, thick lip and coarse-pored, greyish cheeks seemed almost beardless except for some sparse yellow hairs that straggled and curled in irregular patches; and in places the surface seemed queerly irregular, as if peeling from some cutaneous disease. His

hands were large and heavily veined, and had a very unusual greyish-blue tinge. The fingers were strikingly short in proportion to the rest of the structure, and seemed to have a tendency to curl closely into the huge palm. As he walked toward the bus I observed his peculiarly shambling gait and saw that his feet were inordinately immense. The more I studied them the more I wondered how he could buy any shoes to fit them.

A certain greasiness about the fellow increased my dislike. He was evidently given to working or lounging around the fish docks, and carried with him much of their characteristic smell. Just what foreign blood was in him I could not even guess. His oddities certainly did not look Asiatic, Polynesian, Levantine, or negroid, yet I could see why the people found him alien. I myself would have thought of biological degeneration rather than alienage.

I was sorry when I saw that there would be no other passengers on the bus. Somehow I did not like the idea of riding alone with this driver. But as leaving time obviously approached I conquered my qualms and followed the man aboard, extending him a dollar bill and murmuring the single word "Innsmouth". He looked curiously at me for a second as he returned forty cents change without speaking. I took a seat far behind him, but on the same side of the bus, since I wished to watch the shore during the journey.

At length the decrepit vehicle started with a jerk, and rattled noisily past the old brick buildings of State Street amidst a cloud of vapour from the exhaust. Glancing at the people on the sidewalks, I thought I detected in them a curious wish to avoid looking at the bus—or at least a wish to avoid seeming to look at it. Then we turned to the left into High Street, where the going was smoother;

flying by stately old mansions of the early republic and still older colonial farmhouses, passing the Lower Green and Parker River, and finally emerging into a long, monotonous stretch of open shore country.

The day was warm and sunny, but the landscape of sand, sedge-grass, and stunted shrubbery became more and more desolate as we proceeded. Out the window I could see the blue water and the sandy line of Plum Island, and we presently drew very near the beach as our narrow road veered off from the main highway to Rowley and Ipswich. There were no visible houses, and I could tell by the state of the road that traffic was very light hereabouts. The small, weather-worn telephone poles carried only two wires. Now and then we crossed crude wooden bridges over tidal creeks that wound far inland and promoted the general isolation of the region.

Once in a while I noticed dead stumps and crumbling foundation-walls above the drifting sand, and recalled the old tradition quoted in one of the histories I had read, that this was once a fertile and thickly settled countryside. The change, it was said, came simultaneously with the Innessmouth epidemic of 1846, and was thought by simple folk to have a dark connexion with hidden forces of evil. Actually, it was caused by the unwise cutting of woodlands near the shore, which robbed the soil of its best protection and opened the way for waves of wind-blown sand.

At last we lost sight of Plum Island and saw the vast expanse of the open Atlantic on our left. Our narrow course began to climb steeply, and I felt a singular sense of disquiet in looking at the lonely crest ahead where the rutted roadway met the sky. It was as if the bus were about to keep on in its ascent, leaving the sane earth

altogether and merging with the unknown arcana of upper air and cryptical sky. The smell of the sea took on ominous implications, and the silent driver's bent, rigid back and narrow head became more and more hateful. As I looked at him I saw that the back of his head was almost as hairless as his face, having only a few straggling yellow strands upon a grey scabrous surface.

Then we reached the crest and beheld the outspread valley beyond, where the Manuxet joins the sea just north of the long line of cliffs that culminate in Kingsport Head and veer off toward Cape Ann. On the far, misty horizon I could just make out the dizzy profile of the Head, topped by the queer ancient house of which so many legends are told; but for the moment all my attention was captured by the nearer panorama just below me. I had, I realised, come face to face with rumour-shadowed Innsmouth.

It was a town of wide extent and dense construction, yet one with a portentous dearth of visible life. From the tangle of chimney-pots scarcely a wisp of smoke came, and the three tall steeples loomed stark and unpainted against the seaward horizon. One of them was crumbling down at the top, and in that and another there were only black gaping holes where clock-dials should have been. The vast huddle of sagging gambrel roofs and peaked gables conveyed with offensive clearness the idea of wormy decay, and as we approached along the now descending road I could see that many roofs had wholly caved in. There were some large square Georgian houses, too, with hipped roofs, cupolas, and railed "widow's walks". These were mostly well back from the water, and one or two seemed to be in moderately sound condition. Stretching inland from among them I saw the rusted, grass-grown line of the abandoned railway, with leaning

telegraph-poles now devoid of wires, and the half-observed lines of the old carriage roads to Rowley and Ipswich.

The decay was worst close to the waterfront, though in its very midst I could spy the white belfry of a fairly well-preserved brick structure which looked like a small factory. The harbour, long clogged with sand, was enclosed by an ancient stone breakwater; on which I could begin to discern the minute forms of a few seated fishermen, and at whose end were what looked like the foundations of a bygone lighthouse. A sandy tongue had formed inside this barrier, and upon it I saw a few decrepit cabins, moored dories, and scattered lobster-pots. The only deep water seemed to be where the river poured out past the belfried structure and turned southward to join the ocean at the breakwater's end.

Here and there the ruins of wharves jutted out from the shore to end in indeterminate rottenness, those farthest south seeming the most decayed. And far out at sea, despite a high tide, I glimpsed a long, black line scarcely rising above the water yet carrying a suggestion of odd latent malignancy. This, I knew, must be Devil Reef. As I looked, a subtle, curious sense of beckoning seemed superadded to the grim repulsion; and oddly enough, I found this overtone more disturbing than the primary impression.

We met no one on the road, but presently began to pass deserted farms in varying stages of ruin. Then I noticed a few inhabited houses with rags stuffed in the broken windows and shells and dead fish lying about the littered yards. Once or twice I saw listless-looking people working in barren gardens or digging clams on the fishy-smelling beach below, and groups of dirty, simian-visaged

children playing around weed-grown doorsteps. Somehow these people seemed more disquieting than the dismal buildings, for almost every one had certain peculiarities of face and motions which I instinctively disliked without being able to define or comprehend them. For a second I thought this typical physique suggested some picture I had seen, perhaps in a book, under circumstances of particular horror or melancholy; but this pseudo-recollection passed very quickly.

As the bus reached a lower level I began to catch the steady note of a waterfall through the unnatural stillness. The leaning, unpainted houses grew thicker, lined both sides of the road, and displayed more urban tendencies than did those we were leaving behind. The panorama ahead had contracted to a street scene, and in spots I could see where a cobblestone pavement and stretches of brick sidewalk had formerly existed. All the houses were apparently deserted, and there were occasional gaps where tumbledown chimneys and cellar walls told of buildings that had collapsed. Pervading everything was the most nauseous fishy odour imaginable.

Soon cross streets and junctions began to appear; those on the left leading to shoreward realms of unpaved squalor and decay, while those on the right shewed vistas of departed grandeur. So far I had seen no people in the town, but there now came signs of a sparse habitation—curtained windows here and there, and an occasional battered motor-car at the curb. Pavement and sidewalks were increasingly well defined, and though most of the houses were quite old—wood and brick structures of the early nineteenth century—they were obviously kept fit for habitation. As an amateur antiquarian I almost lost my olfactory disgust and my

feeling of menace and repulsion amidst this rich, unaltered survival from the past.

But I was not to reach my destination without one very strong impression of poignantly disagreeable quality. The bus had come to a sort of open concourse or radial point with churches on two sides and the bedraggled remains of a circular green in the centre, and I was looking at a large pillared hall on the right-hand junction ahead. The structure's once white paint was now grey and peeling, and the black and gold sign on the pediment was so faded that I could only with difficulty make out the words "Esoteric Order of Dagon". This, then, was the former Masonic Hall now given over to a degraded cult. As I strained to decipher this inscription my notice was distracted by the raucous tones of a cracked bell across the street, and I quickly turned to look out the window on my side of the coach.

The sound came from a squat-towered stone church of manifestly later date than most of the houses, built in a clumsy Gothic fashion and having a disproportionately high basement with shuttered windows. Though the hands of its clock were missing on the side I glimpsed, I knew that those hoarse strokes were telling the hour of eleven. Then suddenly all thoughts of time were blotted out by an onrushing image of sharp intensity and unaccountable horror which had seized me before I knew what it really was. The door of the church basement was open, revealing a rectangle of blackness inside. And as I looked, a certain object crossed or seemed to cross that dark rectangle; burning into my brain a momentary conception of nightmare which was all the more maddening because analysis could not shew a single nightmarish quality in it.

It was a living object—the first except the driver that I had seen since entering the compact part of the town—and had I been in a steadier mood I would have found nothing whatever of terror in it. Clearly, as I realised a moment later, it was the pastor; clad in some peculiar vestments doubtless introduced since the Order of Dagon had modified the ritual of the local churches. The thing which had probably caught my first subconscious glance and supplied the touch of bizarre horror was the tall tiara he wore; an almost exact duplicate of the one Miss Tilton had shewn me the previous evening. This, acting on my imagination, had supplied namelessly sinister qualities to the indeterminate face and robed, shambling form beneath it. There was not, I soon decided, any reason why I should have felt that shuddering touch of evil pseudo-memory. Was it not natural that a local mystery cult should adopt among its regimentals an unique type of head-dress made familiar to the community in some strange way—perhaps as treasure-trove?

A very thin sprinkling of repellent-looking youngish people now became visible on the sidewalks—lone individuals, and silent knots of two or three. The lower floors of the crumbling houses sometimes harboured small shops with dingy signs, and I noticed a parked truck or two as we rattled along. The sound of waterfalls became more and more distinct, and presently I saw a fairly deep river-gorge ahead, spanned by a wide, iron-railed highway bridge beyond which a large square opened out. As we clanked over the bridge I looked out on both sides and observed some factory buildings on the edge of the grassy bluff or part way down. The water far below was very abundant, and I could see two vigorous

sets of falls upstream on my right and at least one downstream on my left. From this point the noise was quite deafening. Then we rolled into the large semicircular square across the river and drew up on the right-hand side in front of a tall, cupola-crowned building with remnants of yellow paint and with a half-effaced sign proclaiming it to be the Gilman House.

I was glad to get out of that bus, and at once proceeded to check my valise in the shabby hotel lobby. There was only one person in sight—an elderly man without what I had come to call the “Innsmouth look”—and I decided not to ask him any of the questions which bothered me; remembering that odd things had been noticed in this hotel. Instead, I strolled out on the square, from which the bus had already gone, and studied the scene minutely and appraisingly.

One side of the cobblestoned open space was the straight line of the river; the other was a semicircle of slant-roofed brick buildings of about the 1800 period, from which several streets radiated away to the southeast, south, and southwest. Lamps were depressingly few and small—all low-powered incandescents—and I was glad that my plans called for departure before dark, even though I knew the moon would be bright. The buildings were all in fair condition, and included perhaps a dozen shops in current operation; of which one was a grocery of the First National chain, others a dismal restaurant, a drug store, and a wholesale fish-dealer’s office, and still another, at the eastern extremity of the square near the river, an office of the town’s only industry—the Marsh Refining Company. There were perhaps ten people visible, and four or five automobiles and motor trucks stood scattered about. I did not need to be told that this

was the civic centre of Innsmouth. Eastward I could catch blue glimpses of the harbour, against which rose the decaying remains of three once beautiful Georgian steeples. And toward the shore on the opposite bank of the river I saw the white belfry surmounting what I took to be the Marsh refinery.

For some reason or other I chose to make my first inquiries at the chain grocery, whose personnel was not likely to be native to Innsmouth. I found a solitary boy of about seventeen in charge, and was pleased to note the brightness and affability which promised cheerful information. He seemed exceptionally eager to talk, and I soon gathered that he did not like the place, its fishy smell, or its furtive people. A word with any outsider was a relief to him. He hailed from Arkham, boarded with a family who came from Ipswich, and went back home whenever he got a moment off. His family did not like him to work in Innsmouth, but the chain had transferred him there and he did not wish to give up his job.

There was, he said, no public library or chamber of commerce in Innsmouth, but I could probably find my way about. The street I had come down was Federal. West of that were the fine old residence streets—Broad, Washington, Lafayette, and Adams—and east of it were the shoreward slums. It was in these slums—along Main Street—that I would find the old Georgian churches, but they were all long abandoned. It would be well not to make oneself too conspicuous in such neighbourhoods—especially north of the river—since the people were sullen and hostile. Some strangers had even disappeared.

Certain spots were almost forbidden territory, as he

had learned at considerable cost. One must not, for example, linger much around the Marsh refinery, or around any of the still used churches, or around the pillared Order of Dagon Hall at New Church Green. Those churches were very odd—all violently disavowed by their respective denominations elsewhere, and apparently using the queerest kind of ceremonials and clerical vestments. Their creeds were heterodox and mysterious, involving hints of certain marvellous transformations leading to bodily immortality—of a sort—on this earth. The youth's own pastor—Dr. Wallace of Asbury M. E. Church in Arkham—had gravely urged him not to join any church in Innsmouth.

As for the Innsmouth people—the youth hardly knew what to make of them. They were as furtive and seldom seen as animals that live in burrows, and one could hardly imagine how they passed the time apart from their desultory fishing. Perhaps—judging from the quantities of bootleg liquor they consumed—they lay for most of the daylight hours in an alcoholic stupor. They seemed sullenly banded together in some sort of fellowship and understanding—despising the world as if they had access to other and preferable spheres of entity. Their appearance—especially those staring, unwinking eyes which one never saw shut—was certainly shocking enough; and their voices were disgusting. It was awful to hear them chanting in their churches at night, and especially during their main festivals or revivals, which fell twice a year on April 30th and October 31st.

They were very fond of the water, and swam a great deal in both river and harbour. Swimming races out to Devil Reef were very common, and everyone in sight

seemed well able to share in this arduous sport. When one came to think of it, it was generally only rather young people who were seen about in public, and of these the oldest were apt to be the most tainted-looking. When exceptions did occur, they were mostly persons with no trace of aberrancy, like the old clerk at the hotel. One wondered what became of the bulk of the older folk, and whether the “Innsmouth look” were not a strange and insidious disease-phenomenon which increased its hold as years advanced.

Only a very rare affliction, of course, could bring about such vast and radical anatomical changes in a single individual after maturity—changes involving osseous factors as basic as the shape of the skull—but then, even this aspect was no more baffling and unheard-of than the visible features of the malady as a whole. It would be hard, the youth implied, to form any real conclusions regarding such a matter; since one never came to know the natives personally no matter how long one might live in Innsmouth.

The youth was certain that many specimens even worse than the worst visible ones were kept locked indoors in some places. People sometimes heard the queerest kind of sounds. The tottering waterfront hovels north of the river were reputedly connected by hidden tunnels, being thus a veritable warren of unseen abnormalities. What kind of foreign blood—if any—these beings had, it was impossible to tell. They sometimes kept certain especially repulsive characters out of sight when government agents and others from the outside world came to town.

It would be of no use, my informant said, to ask the natives anything about the place. The only one who would talk was a very aged but normal-looking man who lived at the poorhouse on the north rim of the town and spent his time walking about or lounging around the fire station. This hoary character, Zadok Allen, was ninety-six years old and somewhat touched in the head, besides being the town drunkard. He was a strange, furtive creature who constantly looked over his shoulder as if afraid of something, and when sober could not be persuaded to talk at all with strangers. He was, however, unable to resist any offer of his favourite poison; and once drunk would furnish the most astonishing fragments of whispered reminiscence.

After all, though, little useful data could be gained from him; since his stories were all insane, incomplete hints of impossible marvels and horrors which could have no source save in his own disordered fancy. Nobody ever believed him, but the natives did not like him to drink and talk with strangers; and it was not always safe to be seen questioning him. It was probably from him that some of the wildest popular whispers and delusions were derived.

Several non-native residents had reported monstrous glimpses from time to time, but between old Zadok's tales and the malformed denizens it was no wonder such illusions were current. None of the non-natives ever stayed out late at night, there being a widespread impression that it was not wise to do so. Besides, the streets were loathsomely dark.

As for business—the abundance of fish was certainly almost uncanny, but the natives were taking less and less

advantage of it. Moreover, prices were falling and competition was growing. Of course the town's real business was the refinery, whose commercial office was on the square only a few doors east of where we stood. Old Man Marsh was never seen, but sometimes went to the works in a closed, curtained car.

There were all sorts of rumours about how Marsh had come to look. He had once been a great dandy, and people said he still wore the frock-coated finery of the Edwardian age, curiously adapted to certain deformities. His sons had formerly conducted the office in the square, but latterly they had been keeping out of sight a good deal and leaving the brunt of affairs to the younger generation. The sons and their sisters had come to look very queer, especially the elder ones; and it was said that their health was failing.

One of the Marsh daughters was a repellent, reptilian-looking woman who wore an excess of weird jewellery clearly of the same exotic tradition as that to which the strange tiara belonged. My informant had noticed it many times, and had heard it spoken of as coming from some secret hoard, either of pirates or of daemons. The clergymen—or priests, or whatever they were called nowadays—also wore this kind of ornament as a head-dress; but one seldom caught glimpses of them. Other specimens the youth had not seen, though many were rumoured to exist around Innesmouth.

The Marshes, together with the other three gently bred families of the town—the Waites, the Gilmans, and the Eliots—were all very retiring. They lived in immense houses along Washington Street, and several were

reputed to harbour in concealment certain living kinsfolk whose personal aspect forbade public view, and whose deaths had been reported and recorded.

Warning me that many of the street signs were down, the youth drew for my benefit a rough but ample and painstaking sketch map of the town's salient features. After a moment's study I felt sure that it would be of great help, and pocketed it with profuse thanks. Disliking the dinginess of the single restaurant I had seen, I bought a fair supply of cheese crackers and ginger wafers to serve as a lunch later on. My programme, I decided, would be to thread the principal streets, talk with any non-natives I might encounter, and catch the eight o'clock coach for Arkham. The town, I could see, formed a significant and exaggerated example of communal decay; but being no sociologist I would limit my serious observations to the field of architecture.

Thus I began my systematic though half-bewildered tour of Innsmouth's narrow, shadow-blighted ways. Crossing the bridge and turning toward the roar of the lower falls, I passed close to the Marsh refinery, which seemed oddly free from the noise of industry. This building stood on the steep river bluff near a bridge and an open confluence of streets which I took to be the earliest civic centre, displaced after the Revolution by the present Town Square.

Re-crossing the gorge on the Main Street bridge, I struck a region of utter desertion which somehow made me shudder. Collapsing huddles of gambrel roofs formed a jagged and fantastic skyline, above which rose the ghoulish, decapitated steeple of an ancient church. Some

houses along Main Street were tenanted, but most were tightly boarded up. Down unpaved side streets I saw the black, gaping windows of deserted hovels, many of which leaned at perilous and incredible angles through the sinking of part of the foundations. Those windows stared so spectrally that it took courage to turn eastward toward the waterfront. Certainly, the terror of a deserted house swells in geometrical rather than arithmetical progression as houses multiply to form a city of stark desolation. The sight of such endless avenues of fishy-eyed vacancy and death, and the thought of such linked infinities of black, brooding compartments given over to cobwebs and memories and the conqueror worm, start up vestigial fears and aversions that not even the stoutest philosophy can disperse.

Fish Street was as deserted as Main, though it differed in having many brick and stone warehouses still in excellent shape. Water Street was almost its duplicate, save that there were great seaward gaps where wharves had been. Not a living thing did I see, except for the scattered fishermen on the distant breakwater, and not a sound did I hear save the lapping of the harbour tides and the roar of the falls in the Manuxet. The town was getting more and more on my nerves, and I looked behind me furtively as I picked my way back over the tottering Water Street bridge. The Fish Street bridge, according to the sketch, was in ruins.

North of the river there were traces of squalid life—active fish-packing houses in Water Street, smoking chimneys and patched roofs here and there, occasional sounds from indeterminate sources, and infrequent shambling forms in the dismal streets and unpaved

lanes—but I seemed to find this even more oppressive than the southerly desertion. For one thing, the people were more hideous and abnormal than those near the centre of the town; so that I was several times evilly reminded of something utterly fantastic which I could not quite place. Undoubtedly the alien strain in the Innsmouth folk was stronger here than farther inland—unless, indeed, the “Innsmouth look” were a disease rather than a blood strain, in which case this district might be held to harbour the more advanced cases.

One detail that annoyed me was the *distribution* of the few faint sounds I heard. They ought naturally to have come wholly from the visibly inhabited houses, yet in reality were often strongest inside the most rigidly boarded-up facades. There were creakings, scurryings, and hoarse doubtful noises; and I thought uncomfortably about the hidden tunnels suggested by the grocery boy. Suddenly I found myself wondering what the voices of those denizens would be like. I had heard no speech so far in this quarter, and was unaccountably anxious not to do so.

Pausing only long enough to look at two fine but ruinous old churches at Main and Church Streets, I hastened out of that vile waterfront slum. My next logical goal was New Church Green, but somehow or other I could not bear to repress the church in whose basement I had glimpsed the inexplicably frightening form of that strangely diademed priest or pastor. Besides, the grocery youth had told me that the churches, as well as the Order of Dagon Hall, were not advisable neighbourhoods for strangers.

Accordingly I kept north along Main to Martin, then turning inland, crossing Federal Street safely north of the Green, and entering the decayed patrician neighbourhood of northern Broad, Washington, Lafayette, and Adams Streets. Though these stately old avenues were ill-surfaced and unkempt, their elm-shaded dignity had not entirely departed. Mansion after mansion claimed my gaze, most of them decrepit and boarded up amidst neglected grounds, but one or two in each street shewing signs of occupancy. In Washington Street there was a row of four or five in excellent repair and with finely tended lawns and gardens. The most sumptuous of these—with wide terraced parterres extending back the whole way to Lafayette Street—I took to be the home of Old Man Marsh, the afflicted refinery owner.

In all these streets no living thing was visible, and I wondered at the complete absence of cats and dogs from Innsmouth. Another thing which puzzled and disturbed me, even in some of the best-preserved mansions, was the tightly shuttered condition of many third-story and attic windows. Furtiveness and secretiveness seemed universal in this hushed city of alienage and death, and I could not escape the sensation of being watched from ambush on every hand by sly, staring eyes that never shut.

I shivered as the cracked stroke of three sounded from a belfry on my left. Too well did I recall the squat church from which those notes came. Following Washington Street toward the river, I now faced a new zone of former industry and commerce; noting the ruins of a factory ahead, and seeing others, with the traces of an old railway station and covered railway bridge beyond,

up the gorge on my right.

The uncertain bridge now before me was posted with a warning sign, but I took the risk and crossed again to the south bank where traces of life reappeared. Furtive, shambling creatures stared cryptically in my direction, and more normal faces eyed me coldly and curiously. Innsmouth was rapidly becoming intolerable, and I turned down Paine Street toward the Square in the hope of getting some vehicle to take me to Arkham before the still-distant starting-time of that sinister bus.

It was then that I saw the tumbledown fire station on my left, and noticed the red-faced, bushy-bearded, watery-eyed old man in nondescript rags who sat on a bench in front of it talking with a pair of unkempt but not abnormal-looking firemen. This, of course, must be Zadok Allen, the half-crazed, liquorish nonagenarian whose tales of old Innsmouth and its shadow were so hideous and incredible.

III.

It must have been some imp of the perverse—or some sardonic pull from dark, hidden sources—which made me change my plans as I did. I had long before resolved to limit my observations to architecture alone, and I was even then hurrying toward the Square in an effort to get quick transportation out of this festering city of death and decay; but the sight of old Zadok Allen set up new currents in my mind and made me slacken my pace uncertainly.

I had been assured that the old man could do nothing but hint at wild, disjointed, and incredible legends, and I had been warned that the natives made it unsafe to be

seen talking to him; yet the thought of this aged witness to the town's decay, with memories going back to the early days of ships and factories, was a lure that no amount of reason could make me resist. After all, the strangest and maddest of myths are often merely symbols or allegories based upon truth—and old Zadok must have seen everything which went on around Innsmouth for the last ninety years. Curiosity flared up beyond sense and caution, and in my youthful egotism I fancied I might be able to sift a nucleus of real history from the confused, extravagant outpouring I would probably extract with the aid of raw whiskey.

I knew that I could not accost him then and there, for the firemen would surely notice and object. Instead, I reflected, I would prepare by getting some bootleg liquor at a place where the grocery boy had told me it was plentiful. Then I would loaf near the fire station in apparent casualness, and fall in with old Zadok after he had started on one of his frequent rambles. The youth said that he was very restless, seldom sitting around the station for more than an hour or two at a time.

A quart bottle of whiskey was easily, though not cheaply, obtained in the rear of a dingy variety-store just off the Square in Eliot Street. The dirty-looking fellow who waited on me had a touch of the staring "Innsmouth look", but was quite civil in his way; being perhaps used to the custom of such convivial strangers—truckmen, gold-buyers, and the like—as were occasionally in town.

Reëntering the Square I saw that luck was with me; for—shuffling out of Paine Street around the corner of the Gilman House—I glimpsed nothing less than the tall,

lean, tattered form of old Zadok Allen himself. In accordance with my plan, I attracted his attention by brandishing my newly purchased bottle; and soon realised that he had begun to shuffle wistfully after me as I turned into Waite Street on my way to the most deserted region I could think of.

I was steering my course by the map the grocery boy had prepared, and was aiming for the wholly abandoned stretch of southern waterfront which I had previously visited. The only people in sight there had been the fishermen on the distant breakwater; and by going a few squares south I could get beyond the range of these, finding a pair of seats on some abandoned wharf and being free to question old Zadok unobserved for an indefinite time. Before I reached Main Street I could hear a faint and wheezy "Hey, Mister!" behind me, and I presently allowed the old man to catch up and take copious pulls from the quart bottle.

I began putting out feelers as we walked along to Water Street and turned southward amidst the omnipresent desolation and crazily tilted ruins, but found that the aged tongue did not loosen as quickly as I had expected. At length I saw a grass-grown opening toward the sea between crumbling brick walls, with the weedy length of an earth-and-masonry wharf projecting beyond. Piles of moss-covered stones near the water promised tolerable seats, and the scene was sheltered from all possible view by a ruined warehouse on the north. Here, I thought, was the ideal place for a long secret colloquy; so I guided my companion down the lane and picked out spots to sit in among the mossy stones. The air of death and desertion was ghoulish, and the smell

of fish almost insufferable; but I was resolved to let nothing deter me.

About four hours remained for conversation if I were to catch the eight o'clock coach for Arkham, and I began to dole out more liquor to the ancient tippler; meanwhile eating my own frugal lunch. In my donations I was careful not to overshoot the mark, for I did not wish Zadok's vinous garrulousness to pass into a stupor. After an hour his furtive taciturnity shewed signs of disappearing, but much to my disappointment he still sidetracked my questions about Innsmouth and its shadow-haunted past. He would babble of current topics, revealing a wide acquaintance with newspapers and a great tendency to philosophise in a sententious village fashion.

Toward the end of the second hour I feared my quart of whiskey would not be enough to produce results, and was wondering whether I had better leave old Zadok and go back for more. Just then, however, chance made the opening which my questions had been unable to make; and the wheezing ancient's rambling took a turn that caused me to lean forward and listen alertly. My back was toward the fishy-smelling sea, but he was facing it, and something or other had caused his wandering gaze to light on the low, distant line of Devil Reef, then shewing plainly and almost fascinatingly above the waves. The sight seemed to displease him, for he began a series of weak curses which ended in a confidential whisper and a knowing leer. He bent toward me, took hold of my coat lapel, and hissed out some hints that could not be mistaken.

“Thar’s whar it all begun—that cursed place of all wickedness whar the deep water starts. Gate o’ hell—sheer drop daown to a bottom no saoundin’-line kin tech. Ol’ Cap’n Obed done it—him that faound aout more’n was good fer him in the Saouth Sea islands.

“Everybody was in a bad way them days. Trade fallin’ off, mills losin’ business—even the new ones—an’ the best of our menfolks kilt a-privateerin’ in the War of 1812 or lost with the *Elizy* brig an’ the *Ranger* snow—both of ’em Gilman venters. Obed Marsh he had three ships afloat—brigantine *Columby*, brig *Hetty*, an’ barque *Sumatry Queen*. He was the only one as kep’ on with the East-Injy an’ Pacific trade, though Esdras Martin’s barkentine *Malay Pride* made a venter as late as ’twenty-eight.

“Never was nobody like Cap’n Obed—old limb o’ Satan! Heh, heh! I kin mind him a-tellin’ abaout furren parts, an’ callin’ all the folks stupid fer goin’ to Christian meetin’ an’ bearin’ their burdens meek an’ lowly. Says they’d orter git better gods like some o’ the folks in the Injies—gods as ud bring ’em good fishin’ in return for their sacrifices, an’ ud reely answer folks’s prayers.

“Matt Eliot, his fust mate, talked a lot, too, only he was agin’ folks’s doin’ any heathen things. Told abaout an island east of Otaheité whar they was a lot o’ stone ruins older’n anybody knew anything abaout, kind o’ like them on Ponape, in the Carolines, but with carvin’s of faces that looked like the big statues on Easter Island. They was a little volcanic island near thar, too, whar they was other ruins with diff’rent carvin’s—ruins all wore away like they’d ben under the sea onct, an’ with picters of

awful monsters all over 'em.

“Wal, Sir, Matt he says the natives araound thar had all the fish they cud ketch, an' sported bracelets an' armlets an' head rigs made aout of a queer kind o' gold an' covered with picters o' monsters jest like the ones carved over the ruins on the little island—sorter fish-like frogs or frog-like fishes that was drawed in all kinds o' positions like they was human bein's. Nobody cud git aout o' them whar they got all the stuff, an' all the other natives wondered haow they managed to find fish in plenty even when the very next islands had lean pickin's. Matt he got to wonderin' too, an' so did Cap'n Obed. Obed he notices, besides, that lots of the han'some young folks ud drop aout o' sight fer good from year to year, an' that they wa'n't many old folks araound. Also, he thinks some of the folks looks durned queer even fer Kanakys.

“It took Obed to git the truth aout o' them heathen. I dun't know haow he done it, but he begun by tradin' fer the gold-like things they wore. Ast 'em whar they come from, an' ef they cud git more, an' finally wormed the story aout o' the old chief—Walakea, they called him. Nobody but Obed ud ever a believed the old yeller devil, but the Cap'n cud read folks like they was books. Heh, heh! Nobody never believes me naow when I tell 'em, an' I dun't s'pose you will, young feller—though come to look at ye, ye hev kind o' got them sharp-readin' eyes like Obed had.”

The old man's whisper grew fainter, and I found myself shuddering at the terrible and sincere portentousness of his intonation, even though I knew his tale could be nothing but drunken phantasy.

“Wal, Sir, Obed he larnt that they’s things on this arth as most folks never heerd abaout—an’ wouldn’t believe ef they did hear. It seems these Kanakys was sacrificin’ heaps o’ their young men an’ maidens to some kind o’ god-things that lived under the sea, an’ gittin’ all kinds o’ favour in return. They met the things on the little islet with the queer ruins, an’ it seems them awful picters o’ frog-fish monsters was supposed to be picters o’ these things. Mebbe they was the kind o’ critters as got all the mermaid stories an’ sech started. They had all kinds o’ cities on the sea-bottom, an’ this island was heaved up from thar. Seems they was some of the things alive in the stone buildin’s when the island come up sudden to the surface. That’s haow the Kanakys got wind they was daown thar. Made sign-talk as soon as they got over bein’ skeert, an’ pieced up a bargain afore long.

“Them things liked human sacrifices. Had had ’em ages afore, but lost track o’ the upper world arter a time. What they done to the victims it ain’t fer me to say, an’ I guess Obed wa’n’t none too sharp abaout askin’. But it was all right with the heathens, because they’d ben havin’ a hard time an’ was desp’rate abaout everything. They give a sarten number o’ young folks to the sea-things twict every year—May-Eve an’ Hallowe’en—reg’lar as cud be. Also give some o’ the carved knick-knacks they made. What the things agreed to give in return was plenty o’ fish—they druv ’em in from all over the sea—an’ a few gold-like things naow an’ then.

“Wal, as I says, the natives met the things on the little volcanic islet—goin’ thar in canoes with the sacrifices et cet’ry, and bringin’ back any of the gold-like jools as was

comin' to 'em. At fust the things didn't never go onto the main island, but arter a time they come to want to. Seems they hankered arter mixin' with the folks, an' havin' j'int ceremonies on the big days—May-Eve an' Hallowe'en. Ye see, they was able to live both in an' aout o' water—what they call amphibians, I guess. The Kanakys told 'em as haow folks from the other islands might wanta wipe 'em aout ef they got wind o' their bein' thar, but they says they dun't keer much, because they cud wipe aout the hull brood o' humans ef they was willin' to bother—that is, any as didn't hev sarten signs sech as was used onct by the lost Old Ones, whoever they was. But not wantin' to bother, they'd lay low when anybody visited the island.

“When it come to matin' with them toad-lookin' fishes, the Kanakys kind o' balked, but finally they larnt something as put a new face on the matter. Seems that human folks has got a kind o' relation to sech water-beasts—that everything alive come aout o' the water onct, an' only needs a little change to go back agin. Them things told the Kanakys that ef they mixed bloods there'd be children as ud look human at fust, but later turn more'n more like the things, till finally they'd take to the water an' jine the main lot o' things daown thar. An' this is the important part, young feller—they as turned into fish things an' went into the water *wouldn't never die*. Them things never died excep' they was kilt violent.

“Wal, Sir, it seems by the time Obed knowed them islanders they was all full o' fish blood from them deep-water things. When they got old an' begun to shew it, they was kep' hid until they felt like takin' to the water an' quittin' the place. Some was more teched than others, an' some never did change quite enough to take to the water;

but mostly they turned aout jest the way them things said. Them as was born more like the things changed arly, but them as was nearly human sometimes stayed on the island till they was past seventy, though they'd usually go daown under fer trial trips afore that. Folks as had took to the water gen'rally come back a good deal to visit, so's a man ud often be a-talkin' to his own five-times-great-grandfather, who'd left the dry land a couple o' hundred years or so afore.

“Everybody got aout o' the idee o' dyin'—excep' in canoe wars with the other islanders, or as sacrifices to the sea-gods daown below, or from snake-bite or plague or sharp gallopin' ailments or somethin' afore they cud take to the water—but simply looked forrad to a kind o' change that wa'n't a bit horrible arter a while. They thought what they'd got was well wuth all they'd had to give up—an' I guess Obed kind o' come to think the same hissself when he'd chewed over old Walakea's story a bit. Walakea, though, was one of the few as hadn't got none of the fish blood—bein' of a royal line that intermarried with royal lines on other islands.

“Walakea he shewed Obed a lot o' rites an' incantations as had to do with the sea-things, an' let him see some o' the folks in the village as had changed a lot from human shape. Somehaow or other, though, he never would let him see one of the reg'lar things from right aout o' the water. In the end he give him a funny kind o' thingumajig made aout o' lead or something, that he said ud bring up the fish things from any place in the water whar they might be a nest of 'em. The idee was to drop it daown with the right kind o' prayers an' sech. Walakea allaowed as the things was scattered all over the world,

so's anybody that looked abaout cud find a nest an' bring 'em up ef they was wanted.

“Matt he didn't like this business at all, an' wanted Obed shud keep away from the island; but the Cap'n was sharp fer gain, an' faound he cud git them gold-like things so cheap it ud pay him to make a specialty of 'em. Things went on that way fer years, an' Obed got enough o' that gold-like stuff to make him start the refinery in Waite's old run-daown fullin' mill. He didn't dass sell the pieces like they was, fer folks ud be all the time askin' questions. All the same his crews ud git a piece an' dispose of it naow and then, even though they was swore to keep quiet; an' he let his women-folks wear some o' the pieces as was more human-like than most.

“Wal, come abaout 'thutty-eight—when I was seven year' old—Obed he faound the island people all wiped aout between v'yages. Seems the other islanders had got wind o' what was goin' on, an' had took matters into their own hands. S'pose they musta had, arter all, them old magic signs as the sea-things says was the only things they was afraid of. No tellin' what any o' them Kanakys will chance to git a holt of when the sea-bottom throws up some island with ruins older'n the deluge. Pious cusses, these was—they didn't leave nothin' standin' on either the main island or the little volcanic islet excep' what parts of the ruins was too big to knock daown. In some places they was little stones strewed abaout—like charms—with somethin' on 'em like what ye call a swastika naowadays. Prob'ly them was the Old Ones' signs. Folks all wiped aout, no trace o' no gold-like things, an' none o' the nearby Kanakys ud breathe a word abaout the matter. Wouldn't even admit they'd ever ben any people on that

island.

“That naturally hit Obed pretty hard, seein’ as his normal trade was doin’ very poor. It hit the whole of Innsmouth, too, because in seafarin’ days what profited the master of a ship gen’ly profited the crew proportionate. Most o’ the folks araound the taown took the hard times kind o’ sheep-like an’ resigned, but they was in bad shape because the fishin’ was peterin’ aout an’ the mills wa’n’t doin’ none too well.

“Then’s the time Obed he begun a-cursin’ at the folks fer bein’ dull sheep an’ prayin’ to a Christian heaven as didn’t help ’em none. He told ’em he’d knowed of folks as prayed to gods that give somethin’ ye reely need, an’ says ef a good bunch o’ men ud stand by him, he cud mebbe git a holt o’ sarten paowers as ud bring plenty o’ fish an’ quite a bit o’ gold. O’ course them as sarved on the *Sumatry Queen* an’ seed the island knowed what he meant, an’ wa’n’t none too anxious to git clost to sea-things like they’d heerd tell on, but them as didn’t know what ’twas all abaout got kind o’ swayed by what Obed had to say, an’ begun to ast him what he cud do to set ’em on the way to the faith as ud bring ’em results.”

Here the old man faltered, mumbled, and lapsed into a moody and apprehensive silence; glancing nervously over his shoulder and then turning back to stare fascinatedly at the distant black reef. When I spoke to him he did not answer, so I knew I would have to let him finish the bottle. The insane yarn I was hearing interested me profoundly, for I fancied there was contained within it a sort of crude allegory based upon the strangenesses of Innsmouth and elaborated by an imagination at once

creative and full of scraps of exotic legend. Not for a moment did I believe that the tale had any really substantial foundation; but none the less the account held a hint of genuine terror, if only because it brought in references to strange jewels clearly akin to the malign tiara I had seen at Newburyport. Perhaps the ornaments had, after all, come from some strange island; and possibly the wild stories were lies of the bygone Obed himself rather than of this antique toper.

I handed Zadok the bottle, and he drained it to the last drop. It was curious how he could stand so much whiskey, for not even a trace of thickness had come into his high, wheezy voice. He licked the nose of the bottle and slipped it into his pocket, then beginning to nod and whisper softly to himself. I bent close to catch any articulate words he might utter, and thought I saw a sardonic smile behind the stained, bushy whiskers. Yes—he was really forming words, and I could grasp a fair proportion of them.

“Poor Matt—Matt he allus was agin’ it—tried to line up the folks on his side, an’ had long talks with the preachers—no use—they run the Congregational parson aout o’ taown, an’ the Methodist feller quit—never did see Resolved Babcock, the Baptist parson, agin—Wrath o’ Jehovy—I was a mighty little critter, but I heerd what I heerd an’ seen what I seen—Dagon an’ Ashtoreth—Belial an’ Beëlzebub—Golden Caff an’ the idols o’ Canaan an’ the Philistines—Babylonish abominations—*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin—*”

He stopped again, and from the look in his watery blue eyes I feared he was close to a stupor after all. But when I gently shook his shoulder he turned on me with

astonishing alertness and snapped out some more obscure phrases.

“Dun’t believe me, hey? Heh, heh, heh—then jest tell me, young feller, why Cap’n Obed an’ twenty odd other folks used to row aout to Devil Reef in the dead o’ night an’ chant things so laoud ye cud hear ’em all over taown when the wind was right? Tell me that, hey? An’ tell me why Obed was allus droppin’ heavy things daown into the deep water t’other side o’ the reef whar the bottom shoots daown like a cliff lower’n ye kin saound? Tell me what he done with that funny-shaped lead thingumajig as Walakea give him? Hey, boy? An’ what did they all haowl on May-Eve, an’ agin the next Hallowe’en? An’ why’d the new church parsons—fellers as used to be sailors—wear them queer robes an’ cover theirselves with them gold-like things Obed brung? Hey?”

The watery blue eyes were almost savage and maniacal now, and the dirty white beard bristled electrically. Old Zadok probably saw me shrink back, for he had begun to cackle evilly.

“Heh, heh, heh, heh! Beginnin’ to see, hey? Mebbe ye’d like to a ben me in them days, when I seed things at night aout to sea from the cupalo top o’ my haouse. Oh, I kin tell ye, little pitchers hev big ears, an’ I wa’n’t missin’ nothin’ o’ what was gossiped abaout Cap’n Obed an’ the folks aout to the reef! Heh, heh, heh! Haow abaout the night I took my pa’s ship’s glass up to the cupalo an’ seed the reef a-bristlin’ thick with shapes that dove off quick soon’s the moon riz? Obed an’ the folks was in a dory, but them shapes dove off the far side into the deep water an’ never come up. . . . Haow’d ye like to be a little shaver alone up

in a cupalo a-watchin' shapes as *wa'n't human shapes?* . . . Hey? . . . Heh, heh, heh, heh. . . .”

The old man was getting hysterical, and I began to shiver with a nameless alarm. He laid a gnarled claw on my shoulder, and it seemed to me that its shaking was not altogether that of mirth.

“S’pose one night ye seed somethin’ heavy heaved offen Obed’s dory beyond the reef, an’ then larned nex’ day a young feller was missin’ from home? Hey? Did anybody ever see hide or hair o’ Hiram Gilman agin? Did they? An’ Nick Pierce, an’ Luelly Waite, an’ Adoniram Saouthwick, an’ Henry Garrison? Hey? Heh, heh, heh, heh. . . . Shapes talkin’ sign language with their hands . . . them as had reel hands. . . .

“Wal, Sir, that was the time Obed begun to git on his feet agin. Folks see his three darters a-wearin’ gold-like things as nobody’d never see on ’em afore, an’ smoke started comin’ aout o’ the refin’ry chimblly. Other folks were prosp’rin’, too—fish begun to swarm into the harbour fit to kill, an’ heaven knows what sized cargoes we begun to ship aout to Newb’ryport, Arkham, an’ Boston. ’Twas then Obed got the ol’ branch railrud put through. Some Kingsport fishermen heerd abaout the ketch an’ come up in sloops, but they was all lost. Nobody never see ’em agin. An’ jest then our folks organised the Esoteric Order o’ Dagon, an’ bought Masonic Hall offen Calvary Commandery for it . . . heh, heh, heh! Matt Eliot was a Mason an’ agin’ the sellin’, but he dropped aout o’ sight jest then.

“Remember, I ain’t sayin’ Obed was set on hevin’ things jest like they was on that Kanaky isle. I dun’t think

he aimed at fust to do no mixin', nor raise no younguns to take to the water an' turn into fishes with eternal life. He wanted them gold things, an' was willin' to pay heavy, an' I guess the *others* was satisfied fer a while. . . .

“Come in 'forty-six the taown done some lookin' an' thinkin' fer itself. Too many folks missin'—too much wild preachin' at meetin' of a Sunday—too much talk about that reef. I guess I done a bit by tellin' Selectman Mowry what I see from the cupalo. They was a party one night as follered Obed's craowd aout to the reef, an' I heerd shots betwixt the dories. Nex' day Obed an' thutty-two others was in gaol, with everbody a-wonderin' jest what was afoot an' jest what charge agin' 'em cud be got to holt. God, ef anybody'd look'd ahead . . . a couple o' weeks later, when nothin' had ben throwed into the sea fer that long. . . .”

Zadok was shewing signs of fright and exhaustion, and I let him keep silence for a while, though glancing apprehensively at my watch. The tide had turned and was coming in now, and the sound of the waves seemed to arouse him. I was glad of that tide, for at high water the fishy smell might not be so bad. Again I strained to catch his whispers.

“That awful night . . . I seed 'em . . . I was up in the cupalo . . . hordes of 'em . . . swarms of 'em . . . all over the reef an' swimmin' up the harbour into the Manuxet. . . . God, what happened in the streets of Innsmouth that night . . . they rattled our door, but pa wouldn't open . . . then he clumb aout the kitchen winder with his musket to find Selectman Mowry an' see what he cud do. . . . Maounds o' the dead an' the dyin' . . . shots an' screams . . .

shaoutin' in Ol' Squar an' Taown Squar an' New Church Green... gaol throwed open... proclamation... treason... called it the plague when folks come in an' faound haff our people missin'... nobody left but them as ud jine in with Obed an' them things or else keep quiet... never heerd o' my pa no more...."

The old man was panting, and perspiring profusely. His grip on my shoulder tightened.

"Everything cleaned up in the mornin'—but they was *traces*. . . . Obed he kinder takes charge an' says things is goin' to be changed... *others'll* worship with us at meetin'-time, an' sarten haouses hez got to entertain *guests*... *they* wanted to mix like they done with the Kanakys, an' he fer one didn't feel baound to stop 'em. Far gone, was Obed... jest like a crazy man on the subjeck. He says they brung us fish an' treasure, an' shud hev what they hankered arter...."

"Nothin' was to be diff'runt on the aoutside, only we was to keep shy o' strangers ef we knowed what was good fer us. We all hed to take the Oath o' Dagon, an' later on they was secon' an' third Oaths that some on us took. Them as ud help special, ud git special rewards—gold an' sech— No use balkin', fer they was millions of 'em daown thar. They'd ruther not start risin' an' wipin' aout humankind, but ef they was gave away an' forced to, they cud do a lot toward jest that. We didn't hev them old charms to cut 'em off like folks in the Saouth Sea did, an' them Kanakys wudn't never give away their secrets.

"Yield up enough sacrifices an' savage knick-knacks an' harbourage in the taown when they wanted it, an' they'd let well enough alone. Wudn't bother no strangers

as might bear tales aoutside—that is, withaout they got pryin’. All in the band of the faithful—Order o’ Dagon—an’ the children shud never die, but go back to the Mother Hydra an’ Father Dagon what we all come from onct—*Iä! Iä! Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph’nglui mglw’nafh Cthulhu R’lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn—*”

Old Zadok was fast lapsing into stark raving, and I held my breath. Poor old soul—to what pitiful depths of hallucination had his liquor, plus his hatred of the decay, alienage, and disease around him, brought that fertile, imaginative brain! He began to moan now, and tears were coursing down his channelled cheeks into the depths of his beard.

“God, what I seen senct I was fifteen year’ old—*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin!*—the folks as was missin’, an’ them as kilt theirselves—them as told things in Arkham or Ipswich or sech places was all called crazy, like you’re a-callin’ me right naow—but God, what I seen— They’d a kilt me long ago fer what I know, only I’d took the fust an’ secon’ Oaths o’ Dagon offen Obed, so was pertected unlessen a jury of ’em proved I told things knowin’ an’ delib’rit . . . but I wudn’t take the third Oath—I’d a died ruther’n take that—

“It got wuss araound Civil War time, *when children born senct ’forty-six begun to grow up*—some of ’em, that is. I was afeard—never did no pryin’ arter that awful night, an’ never see one of—*them*—clost to in all my life. That is, never no full-blooded one. I went to the war, an’ ef I’d a had any guts or sense I’d a never come back, but settled away from here. But folks wrote me things wa’n’t so bad. That, I s’pose, was because gov’munt draft men

was in taown arter 'sixty-three. Arter the war it was jest as bad agin. People begun to fall off—mills an' shops shet daown—shippin' stopped an' the harbour choked up—railrud give up—but *they* . . . they never stopped swimmin' in an' aout o' the river from that cursed reef o' Satan—an' more an' more attic winders got a-boarded up, an' more an' more noises was heerd in haouses as wa'n't s'posed to hev nobody in 'em. . . .

“Folks aoutside hev their stories abaout us—s'pose you've heerd a plenty on 'em, seein' what questions ye ast—stories abaout things they've seed naow an' then, an' abaout that queer joolry as still comes in from somewhars an' ain't quite all melted up—but nothin' never gits def'nite. Nobody'll believe nothin'. They call them gold-like things pirate loot, an' allaow the Innsmouth folks hez furren blood or is distempered or somethin'. Besides, them that lives here shoo off as many strangers as they kin, an' encourage the rest not to git very cur'ous, specially raound night time. Beasts balk at the critters—hosses wuss'n mules—but when they got autos that was all right.

“In 'forty-six Cap'n Obed took a second wife *that nobody in the taown never see*—some says he didn't want to, but was made to by them as he'd called in—had three children by her—two as disappeared young, but one gal as looked like anybody else an' was eddicated in Europe. Obed finally got her married off by a trick to an Arkham feller as didn't suspect nothin'. But nobody aoutside'll hev nothin' to do with Innsmouth folks naow. Barnabas Marsh that runs the refin'ry naow is Obed's grandson by his fust wife—son of Onesiphorus, his eldest son, *but his mother was another o' them as wa'n't never seed aoutdoors*.

“Right naow Barnabas is abaout changed. Can’t shet his eyes no more, an’ is all aout o’ shape. They say he still wears clothes, but he’ll take to the water soon. Mebbe he’s tried it already—they do sometimes go daown fer little spells afore they go fer good. Ain’t ben seed abaout in public fer nigh on ten year’. Dun’t know haow his poor wife kin feel—she come from Ipswich, an’ they nigh lynched Barnabas when he courted her fifty odd year’ ago. Obed he died in ’seventy-eight, an’ all the next gen’ration is gone naow—the fust wife’s children dead, an’ the rest . . . God knows. . . .”

The sound of the incoming tide was now very insistent, and little by little it seemed to change the old man’s mood from maudlin tearfulness to watchful fear. He would pause now and then to renew those nervous glances over his shoulder or out toward the reef, and despite the wild absurdity of his tale, I could not help beginning to share his vague apprehensiveness. Zadok now grew shriller, and seemed to be trying to whip up his courage with louder speech.

“Hey, yew, why dun’t ye say somethin’? Haow’d ye like to be livin’ in a taown like this, with everything a-rottin’ an’ a-dyin’, an’ boarded-up monsters crawlin’ an’ bleatin’ an’ barkin’ an’ hoppin’ araoun’ black cellars an’ attics every way ye turn? Hey? Haow’d ye like to hear the haowlin’ night arter night from the churches an’ Order o’ Dagon Hall, *an’ know what’s doin’ part o’ the haowlin’*? Haow’d ye like to hear what comes from that awful reef every May-Eve an’ Hallowmass? Hey? Think the old man’s crazy, eh? Wal, Sir, *let me tell ye that ain’t the wust!*”

Zadok was really screaming now, and the mad frenzy of his voice disturbed me more than I care to own.

“Curse ye, dun’t set thar a-starin’ at me with them eyes—I tell Obed Marsh he’s in hell, an’ hez got to stay thar! Heh, heh . . . in hell, I says! Can’t git me—I hain’t done nothin’ nor told nobody nothin’—

“Oh, you, young feller? Wal, even ef I hain’t told nobody nothin’ yet, I’m a-goin’ to naow! You jest set still an’ listen to me, boy—this is what I ain’t never told nobody. . . . I says I didn’t do no pryin’ arter that night—but *I faound things aout jest the same!*

“Yew want to know what the reel horror is, hey? Wal, it’s this—it ain’t what them fish devils *hez done, but what they’re a-goin’ to do!* They’re a-bringin’ things up aout o’ whar they come from into the taown—ben doin’ it fer years, an’ slackenin’ up lately. Them haouses north o’ the river betwixt Water an’ Main Streets is full of ’em—them devils *an’ what they brung*—an’ when they git ready. . . . I say, *when they git ready . . . ever hear tell of a shoggoth? . . .*

“Hey, d’ye hear me? I tell ye *I know what them things be—I seen ’em one night when . . . EH—AHHHH—AH! E’YAAHHHH. . . .*”

The hideous suddenness and inhuman frightfulness of the old man’s shriek almost made me faint. His eyes, looking past me toward the malodorous sea, were positively starting from his head; while his face was a mask of fear worthy of Greek tragedy. His bony claw dug monstrously into my shoulder, and he made no motion as I turned my head to look at whatever he had glimpsed.

There was nothing that I could see. Only the incoming tide, with perhaps one set of ripples more local than the long-flung line of breakers. But now Zadok was shaking me, and I turned back to watch the melting of that fear-frozen face into a chaos of twitching eyelids and mumbling gums. Presently his voice came back—albeit as a trembling whisper.

“Git aout o’ here! Git aout o’ here! They seen us—git aout fer your life! Dun’t wait fer nothin’—they know naow—Run fer it—quick—aout o’ this taown—”

Another heavy wave dashed against the loosening masonry of the bygone wharf, and changed the mad ancient’s whisper to another inhuman and blood-curdling scream.

“E—YAAHHHH! . . . YHAAAAAAA! . . .”

Before I could recover my scattered wits he had relaxed his clutch on my shoulder and dashed wildly inland toward the street, reeling northward around the ruined warehouse wall.

I glanced back at the sea, but there was nothing there. And when I reached Water Street and looked along it toward the north there was no remaining trace of Zadok Allen.

IV.

I can hardly describe the mood in which I was left by this harrowing episode—an episode at once mad and pitiful, grotesque and terrifying. The grocery boy had prepared me for it, yet the reality left me none the less bewildered and disturbed. Puerile though the story was, old Zadok’s

insane earnestness and horror had communicated to me a mounting unrest which joined with my earlier sense of loathing for the town and its blight of intangible shadow.

Later I might sift the tale and extract some nucleus of historic allegory; just now I wished to put it out of my head. The hour had grown perilously late—my watch said 7:15, and the Arkham bus left Town Square at eight—so I tried to give my thoughts as neutral and practical a cast as possible, meanwhile walking rapidly through the deserted streets of gaping roofs and leaning houses toward the hotel where I had checked my valise and would find my bus.

Though the golden light of late afternoon gave the ancient roofs and decrepit chimneys an air of mystic loveliness and peace, I could not help glancing over my shoulder now and then. I would surely be very glad to get out of malodorous and fear-shadowed Innsmouth, and wished there were some other vehicle than the bus driven by that sinister-looking fellow Sargent. Yet I did not hurry too precipitately, for there were architectural details worth viewing at every silent corner; and I could easily, I calculated, cover the necessary distance in a half-hour.

Studying the grocery youth's map and seeking a route I had not traversed before, I chose Marsh Street instead of State for my approach to Town Square. Near the corner of Fall Street I began to see scattered groups of furtive whisperers, and when I finally reached the Square I saw that almost all the loiterers were congregated around the door of the Gilman House. It seemed as if many bulging, watery, unwinking eyes looked oddly at me as I claimed

my valise in the lobby, and I hoped that none of these unpleasant creatures would be my fellow-passengers on the coach.

The bus, rather early, rattled in with three passengers somewhat before eight, and an evil-looking fellow on the sidewalk muttered a few indistinguishable words to the driver. Sargent threw out a mail-bag and a roll of newspapers, and entered the hotel; while the passengers—the same men whom I had seen arriving in Newburyport that morning—shambled to the sidewalk and exchanged some faint guttural words with a loafer in a language I could have sworn was not English. I boarded the empty coach and took the same seat I had taken before, but was hardly settled before Sargent reappeared and began mumbling in a throaty voice of peculiar repulsiveness.

I was, it appeared, in very bad luck. There had been something wrong with the engine, despite the excellent time made from Newburyport, and the bus could not complete the journey to Arkham. No, it could not possibly be repaired that night, nor was there any other way of getting transportation out of Innsmouth, either to Arkham or elsewhere. Sargent was sorry, but I would have to stop over at the Gilman. Probably the clerk would make the price easy for me, but there was nothing else to do. Almost dazed by this sudden obstacle, and violently dreading the fall of night in this decaying and half-unlighted town, I left the bus and reentered the hotel lobby; where the sullen, queer-looking night clerk told me I could have Room 428 on next the top floor—large, but without running water—for a dollar.

Despite what I had heard of this hotel in Newburyport, I signed the register, paid my dollar, let the clerk take my valise, and followed that sour, solitary attendant up three creaking flights of stairs past dusty corridors which seemed wholly devoid of life. My room, a dismal rear one with two windows and bare, cheap furnishings, overlooked a dingy courtyard otherwise hemmed in by low, deserted brick blocks, and commanded a view of decrepit westward-stretching roofs with a marshy countryside beyond. At the end of the corridor was a bathroom—a discouraging relique with ancient marble bowl, tin tub, faint electric light, and musty wooden panelling around all the plumbing fixtures.

It being still daylight, I descended to the Square and looked around for a dinner of some sort; noticing as I did so the strange glances I received from the unwholesome loafers. Since the grocery was closed, I was forced to patronise the restaurant I had shunned before; a stooped, narrow-headed man with staring, unwinking eyes, and a flat-nosed wench with unbelievably thick, clumsy hands being in attendance. The service was of the counter type, and it relieved me to find that much was evidently served from cans and packages. A bowl of vegetable soup with crackers was enough for me, and I soon headed back for my cheerless room at the Gilman; getting an evening paper and a flyspecked magazine from the evil-visaged clerk at the rickety stand beside his desk.

As twilight deepened I turned on the one feeble electric bulb over the cheap, iron-framed bed, and tried as best I could to continue the reading I had begun. I felt

it advisable to keep my mind wholesomely occupied, for it would not do to brood over the abnormalities of this ancient, blight-shadowed town while I was still within its borders. The insane yarn I had heard from the aged drunkard did not promise very pleasant dreams, and I felt I must keep the image of his wild, watery eyes as far as possible from my imagination.

Also, I must not dwell on what that factory inspector had told the Newburyport ticket-agent about the Gilman House and the voices of its nocturnal tenants—not on that, nor on the face beneath the tiara in the black church doorway; the face for whose horror my conscious mind could not account. It would perhaps have been easier to keep my thoughts from disturbing topics had the room not been so gruesomely musty. As it was, the lethal mustiness blended hideously with the town's general fishy odour and persistently focussed one's fancy on death and decay.

Another thing that disturbed me was the absence of a bolt on the door of my room. One had been there, as marks clearly shewed, but there were signs of recent removal. No doubt it had become out of order, like so many other things in this decrepit edifice. In my nervousness I looked around and discovered a bolt on the clothes-press which seemed to be of the same size, judging from the marks, as the one formerly on the door. To gain a partial relief from the general tension I busied myself by transferring this hardware to the vacant place with the aid of a handy three-in-one device including a screw-driver which I kept on my key-ring. The bolt fitted perfectly, and I was somewhat relieved when I knew that I could shoot it firmly upon retiring. Not that I had any real

apprehension of its need, but that any symbol of security was welcome in an environment of this kind. There were adequate bolts on the two lateral doors to connecting rooms, and these I proceeded to fasten.

I did not undress, but decided to read till I was sleepy and then lie down with only my coat, collar, and shoes off. Taking a pocket flashlight from my valise, I placed it in my trousers, so that I could read my watch if I woke up later in the dark. Drowsiness, however, did not come; and when I stopped to analyse my thoughts I found to my disquiet that I was really unconsciously listening for something—listening for something which I dreaded but could not name. That inspector's story must have worked on my imagination more deeply than I had suspected. Again I tried to read, but found that I made no progress.

After a time I seemed to hear the stairs and corridors creak at intervals as if with footsteps, and wondered if the other rooms were beginning to fill up. There were no voices, however, and it struck me that there was something subtly furtive about the creaking. I did not like it, and debated whether I had better try to sleep at all. This town had some queer people, and there had undoubtedly been several disappearances. Was this one of those inns where travellers were slain for their money? Surely I had no look of excessive prosperity. Or were the townsfolk really so resentful about curious visitors? Had my obvious sightseeing, with its frequent map-consultations, aroused unfavourable notice? It occurred to me that I must be in a highly nervous state to let a few random creakings set me off speculating in this fashion—but I regretted none the less that I was unarmed.

At length, feeling a fatigue which had nothing of drowsiness in it, I bolted the newly outfitted hall door, turned off the light, and threw myself down on the hard, uneven bed—coat, collar, shoes, and all. In the darkness every faint noise of the night seemed magnified, and a flood of doubly unpleasant thoughts swept over me. I was sorry I had put out the light, yet was too tired to rise and turn it on again. Then, after a long, dreary interval, and prefaced by a fresh creaking of stairs and corridor, there came that soft, damnably unmistakable sound which seemed like a malign fulfilment of all my apprehensions. Without the least shadow of a doubt, the lock on my hall door was being tried—cautiously, furtively, tentatively—with a key.

My sensations upon recognising this sign of actual peril were perhaps less rather than more tumultuous because of my previous vague fears. I had been, albeit without definite reason, instinctively on my guard—and that was to my advantage in the new and real crisis, whatever it might turn out to be. Nevertheless the change in the menace from vague premonition to immediate reality was a profound shock, and fell upon me with the force of a genuine blow. It never once occurred to me that the fumbling might be a mere mistake. Malign purpose was all I could think of, and I kept deathly quiet, awaiting the would-be intruder's next move.

After a time the cautious rattling ceased, and I heard the room to the north entered with a pass-key. Then the lock of the connecting door to my room was softly tried. The bolt held, of course, and I heard the floor creak as the prowler left the room. After a moment there came

another soft rattling, and I knew that the room to the south of me was being entered. Again a furtive trying of a bolted connecting door, and again a receding creaking. This time the creaking went along the hall and down the stairs, so I knew that the prowler had realised the bolted condition of my doors and was giving up his attempt for a greater or lesser time, as the future would shew.

The readiness with which I fell into a plan of action proves that I must have been subconsciously fearing some menace and considering possible avenues of escape for hours. From the first I felt that the unseen fumbler meant a danger not to be met or dealt with, but only to be fled from as precipitately as possible. The one thing to do was to get out of that hotel alive as quickly as I could, and through some channel other than the front stairs and lobby.

Rising softly and throwing my flashlight on the switch, I sought to light the bulb over my bed in order to choose and pocket some belongings for a swift, valiseless flight. Nothing, however, happened; and I saw that the power had been cut off. Clearly, some cryptic, evil movement was afoot on a large scale—just what, I could not say. As I stood pondering with my hand on the now useless switch I heard a muffled creaking on the floor below, and thought I could barely distinguish voices in conversation. A moment later I felt less sure that the deeper sounds were voices, since the apparent hoarse barkings and loose-syllabled croakings bore so little resemblance to recognised human speech. Then I thought with renewed force of what the factory inspector had heard in the night in this mouldering and pestilential building.

Having filled my pockets with the flashlight's aid, I put on my hat and tiptoed to the windows to consider chances of descent. Despite the state's safety regulations there was no fire escape on this side of the hotel, and I saw that my windows commanded only a sheer three-story drop to the cobbled courtyard. On the right and left, however, some ancient brick business blocks abutted on the hotel; their slant roofs coming up to a reasonable jumping distance from my fourth-story level. To reach either of these lines of buildings I would have to be in a room two doors from my own—in one case on the north and in the other case on the south—and my mind instantly set to work calculating what chances I had of making the transfer.

I could not, I decided, risk an emergence into the corridor; where my footsteps would surely be heard, and where the difficulties of entering the desired room would be insuperable. My progress, if it was to be made at all, would have to be through the less solidly built connecting doors of the rooms; the locks and bolts of which I would have to force violently, using my shoulder as a battering-ram whenever they were set against me. This, I thought, would be possible owing to the rickety nature of the house and its fixtures; but I realised I could not do it noiselessly. I would have to count on sheer speed, and the chance of getting to a window before any hostile forces became coördinated enough to open the right door toward me with a pass-key. My own outer door I reinforced by pushing the bureau against it—little by little, in order to make a minimum of sound.

I perceived that my chances were very slender, and

was fully prepared for any calamity. Even getting to another roof would not solve the problem, for there would then remain the task of reaching the ground and escaping from the town. One thing in my favour was the deserted and ruinous state of the abutting buildings, and the number of skylights gaping blackly open in each row.

Gathering from the grocery boy's map that the best route out of town was southward, I glanced first at the connecting door on the south side of the room. It was designed to open in my direction, hence I saw—after drawing the bolt and finding other fastenings in place—it was not a favourable one for forcing. Accordingly abandoning it as a route, I cautiously moved the bedstead against it to hamper any attack which might be made on it later from the next room. The door on the north was hung to open away from me, and this—though a test proved it to be locked or bolted from the other side—I knew must be my route. If I could gain the roofs of the buildings in Paine Street and descend successfully to the ground level, I might perhaps dart through the courtyard and the adjacent or opposite buildings to Washington or Bates—or else emerge in Paine and edge around southward into Washington. In any case, I would aim to strike Washington somehow and get quickly out of the Town Square region. My preference would be to avoid Paine, since the fire station there might be open all night.

As I thought of these things I looked out over the squalid sea of decaying roofs below me, now brightened by the beams of a moon not much past full. On the right the black gash of the river-gorge clove the panorama; abandoned factories and railway station clinging barnacle-like to its sides. Beyond it the rusted railway and

the Rowley road led off through a flat, marshy terrain dotted with islets of higher and dryer scrub-grown land. On the left the creek-threaded countryside was nearer, the narrow road to Ipswich gleaming white in the moonlight. I could not see from my side of the hotel the southward route toward Arkham which I had determined to take.

I was irresolutely speculating on when I had better attack the northward door, and on how I could least audibly manage it, when I noticed that the vague noises underfoot had given place to a fresh and heavier creaking of the stairs. A wavering flicker of light shewed through my transom, and the boards of the corridor began to groan with a ponderous load. Muffled sounds of possible vocal origin approached, and at length a firm knock came at my outer door.

For a moment I simply held my breath and waited. Eternities seemed to elapse, and the nauseous fishy odour of my environment seemed to mount suddenly and spectacularly. Then the knocking was repeated—continuously, and with growing insistence. I knew that the time for action had come, and forthwith drew the bolt of the northward connecting door, bracing myself for the task of battering it open. The knocking waxed louder, and I hoped that its volume would cover the sound of my efforts. At last beginning my attempt, I lunged again and again at the thin panelling with my left shoulder, heedless of shock or pain. The door resisted even more than I had expected, but I did not give in. And all the while the clamour at the outer door increased.

Finally the connecting door gave, but with such a

crash that I knew those outside must have heard. Instantly the outside knocking became a violent battering, while keys sounded ominously in the hall doors of the rooms on both sides of me. Rushing through the newly opened connexion, I succeeded in bolting the northerly hall door before the lock could be turned; but even as I did so I heard the hall door of the third room—the one from whose window I had hoped to reach the roof below—being tried with a pass-key.

For an instant I felt absolute despair, since my trapping in a chamber with no window egress seemed complete. A wave of almost abnormal horror swept over me, and invested with a terrible but unexplainable singularity the flashlight-glimpsed dust prints made by the intruder who had lately tried my door from this room. Then, with a dazed automatism which persisted despite hopelessness, I made for the next connecting door and performed the blind motion of pushing at it in an effort to get through and—granting that fastenings might be as providentially intact as in this second room—bolt the hall door beyond before the lock could be turned from outside.

Sheer fortunate chance gave me my reprieve—for the connecting door before me was not only unlocked but actually ajar. In a second I was through, and had my right knee and shoulder against a hall door which was visibly opening inward. My pressure took the opener off guard, for the thing shut as I pushed, so that I could slip the well-conditioned bolt as I had done with the other door. As I gained this respite I heard the battering at the two other doors abate, while a confused clatter came from the connecting door I had shielded with the bedstead.

Evidently the bulk of my assailants had entered the southerly room and were massing in a lateral attack. But at the same moment a pass-key sounded in the next door to the north, and I knew that a nearer peril was at hand.

The northward connecting door was wide open, but there was no time to think about checking the already turning lock in the hall. All I could do was to shut and bolt the open connecting door, as well as its mate on the opposite side—pushing a bedstead against the one and a bureau against the other, and moving a washstand in front of the hall door. I must, I saw, trust to such makeshift barriers to shield me till I could get out the window and on the roof of the Paine Street block. But even in this acute moment my chief horror was something apart from the immediate weakness of my defences. I was shuddering because not one of my pursuers, despite some hideous pantings, gruntings, and subdued barkings at odd intervals, was uttering an unmuffled or intelligible vocal sound.

As I moved the furniture and rushed toward the windows I heard a frightful scurrying along the corridor toward the room north of me, and perceived that the southward battering had ceased. Plainly, most of my opponents were about to concentrate against the feeble connecting door which they knew must open directly on me. Outside, the moon played on the ridgepole of the block below, and I saw that the jump would be desperately hazardous because of the steep surface on which I must land.

Surveying the conditions, I chose the more southerly of the two windows as my avenue of escape; planning

to land on the inner slope of the roof and make for the nearest skylight. Once inside one of the decrepit brick structures I would have to reckon with pursuit; but I hoped to descend and dodge in and out of yawning doorways along the shadowed courtyard, eventually getting to Washington Street and slipping out of town toward the south.

The clatter at the northerly connecting door was now terrific, and I saw that the weak panelling was beginning to splinter. Obviously, the besiegers had brought some ponderous object into play as a battering-ram. The bedstead, however, still held firm; so that I had at least a faint chance of making good my escape. As I opened the window I noticed that it was flanked by heavy velour draperies suspended from a pole by brass rings, and also that there was a large projecting catch for the shutters on the exterior. Seeing a possible means of avoiding the dangerous jump, I yanked at the hangings and brought them down, pole and all; then quickly hooking two of the rings in the shutter catch and flinging the drapery outside. The heavy folds reached fully to the abutting roof, and I saw that the rings and catch would be likely to bear my weight. So, climbing out of the window and down the improvised rope ladder, I left behind me forever the morbid and horror-infested fabric of the Gilman House.

I landed safely on the loose slates of the steep roof, and succeeded in gaining the gaping black skylight without a slip. Glancing up at the window I had left, I observed it was still dark, though far across the crumbling chimneys to the north I could see lights ominously blazing in the Order of Dagon Hall, the Baptist church,

and the Congregational church which I recalled so shiveringly. There had seemed to be no one in the courtyard below, and I hoped there would be a chance to get away before the spreading of a general alarm. Flashing my pocket lamp into the skylight, I saw that there were no steps down. The distance was slight, however, so I clambered over the brink and dropped; striking a dusty floor littered with crumbling boxes and barrels.

The place was ghoulish-looking, but I was past minding such impressions and made at once for the staircase revealed by my flashlight—after a hasty glance at my watch, which shewed the hour to be 2 a.m. The steps creaked, but seemed tolerably sound; and I raced down past a barn-like second story to the ground floor. The desolation was complete, and only echoes answered my footfalls. At length I reached the lower hall, at one end of which I saw a faint luminous rectangle marking the ruined Paine Street doorway. Heading the other way, I found the back door also open; and darted out and down five stone steps to the grass-grown cobblestones of the courtyard.

The moonbeams did not reach down here, but I could just see my way about without using the flashlight. Some of the windows on the Gilman House side were faintly glowing, and I thought I heard confused sounds within. Walking softly over to the Washington Street side I perceived several open doorways, and chose the nearest as my route out. The hallway inside was black, and when I reached the opposite end I saw that the street door was wedged immovably shut. Resolved to try another building, I groped my way back toward the courtyard, but stopped short when close to the doorway.

For out of an opened door in the Gilman House a large crowd of doubtful shapes was pouring—lanterns bobbing in the darkness, and horrible croaking voices exchanging low cries in what was certainly not English. The figures moved uncertainly, and I realised to my relief that they did not know where I had gone; but for all that they sent a shiver of horror through my frame. Their features were indistinguishable, but their crouching, shambling gait was abominably repellent. And worst of all, I perceived that one figure was strangely robed, and unmistakably surmounted by a tall tiara of a design altogether too familiar. As the figures spread throughout the courtyard, I felt my fears increase. Suppose I could find no egress from this building on the street side? The fishy odour was detestable, and I wondered I could stand it without fainting. Again groping toward the street, I opened a door off the hall and came upon an empty room with closely shuttered but sashless windows. Fumbling in the rays of my flashlight, I found I could open the shutters; and in another moment had climbed outside and was carefully closing the aperture in its original manner.

I was now in Washington Street, and for the moment saw no living thing nor any light save that of the moon. From several directions in the distance, however, I could hear the sound of hoarse voices, of footsteps, and of a curious kind of pattering which did not sound quite like footsteps. Plainly I had no time to lose. The points of the compass were clear to me, and I was glad that all the street-lights were turned off, as is often the custom on strongly moonlit nights in unprosperous rural regions. Some of the sounds came from the south, yet I retained my design of escaping in that direction. There would, I

knew, be plenty of deserted doorways to shelter me in case I met any person or group who looked like pursuers.

I walked rapidly, softly, and close to the ruined houses. While hatless and dishevelled after my arduous climb, I did not look especially noticeable; and stood a good chance of passing unheeded if forced to encounter any casual wayfarer. At Bates Street I drew into a yawning vestibule while two shambling figures crossed in front of me, but was soon on my way again and approaching the open space where Eliot Street obliquely crosses Washington at the intersection of South. Though I had never seen this space, it had looked dangerous to me on the grocery youth's map; since the moonlight would have free play there. There was no use trying to evade it, for any alternative course would involve detours of possibly disastrous visibility and delaying effect. The only thing to do was to cross it boldly and openly; imitating the typical shamble of the Innsmouth folk as best I could, and trusting that no one—or at least no pursuer of mine—would be there.

Just how fully the pursuit was organised—and indeed, just what its purpose might be—I could form no idea. There seemed to be unusual activity in the town, but I judged that the news of my escape from the Gilman had not yet spread. I would, of course, soon have to shift from Washington to some other southward street; for that party from the hotel would doubtless be after me. I must have left dust prints in that last old building, revealing how I had gained the street.

The open space was, as I had expected, strongly moonlit; and I saw the remains of a park-like, iron-railed

green in its centre. Fortunately no one was about, though a curious sort of buzz or roar seemed to be increasing in the direction of Town Square. South Street was very wide, leading directly down a slight declivity to the waterfront and commanding a long view out at sea; and I hoped that no one would be glancing up it from afar as I crossed in the bright moonlight.

My progress was unimpeded, and no fresh sound arose to hint that I had been spied. Glancing about me, I involuntarily let my pace slacken for a second to take in the sight of the sea, gorgeous in the burning moonlight at the street's end. Far out beyond the breakwater was the dim, dark line of Devil Reef, and as I glimpsed it I could not help thinking of all the hideous legends I had heard in the last thirty-four hours—legends which portrayed this ragged rock as a veritable gateway to realms of unfathomed horror and inconceivable abnormality.

Then, without warning, I saw the intermittent flashes of light on the distant reef. They were definite and unmistakable, and awaked in my mind a blind horror beyond all rational proportion. My muscles tightened for panic flight, held in only by a certain unconscious caution and half-hypnotic fascination. And to make matters worse, there now flashed forth from the lofty cupola of the Gilman House, which loomed up to the northeast behind me, a series of analogous though differently spaced gleams which could be nothing less than an answering signal.

Controlling my muscles, and realising afresh how plainly visible I was, I resumed my brisker and feignedly shambling pace; though keeping my eyes on that hellish

and ominous reef as long as the opening of South Street gave me a seaward view. What the whole proceeding meant, I could not imagine; unless it involved some strange rite connected with Devil Reef, or unless some party had landed from a ship on that sinister rock. I now bent to the left around the ruinous green; still gazing toward the ocean as it blazed in the spectral summer moonlight, and watching the cryptical flashing of those nameless, unexplainable beacons.

It was then that the most horrible impression of all was borne in upon me—the impression which destroyed my last vestige of self-control and set me running frantically southward past the yawning black doorways and fishily staring windows of that deserted nightmare street. For at a closer glance I saw that the moonlit waters between the reef and the shore were far from empty. They were alive with a teeming horde of shapes swimming inward toward the town; and even at my vast distance and in my single moment of perception I could tell that the bobbing heads and flailing arms were alien and aberrant in a way scarcely to be expressed or consciously formulated.

My frantic running ceased before I had covered a block, for at my left I began to hear something like the hue and cry of organised pursuit. There were footsteps and guttural sounds, and a rattling motor wheezed south along Federal Street. In a second all my plans were utterly changed—for if the southward highway were blocked ahead of me, I must clearly find another egress from Innsmouth. I paused and drew into a gaping doorway, reflecting how lucky I was to have left the moonlit open space before these pursuers came down the parallel street.

A second reflection was less comforting. Since the pursuit was down another street, it was plain that the party was not following me directly. It had not seen me, but was simply obeying a general plan of cutting off my escape. This, however, implied that all roads leading out of Innsmouth were similarly patrolled; for the denizens could not have known what route I intended to take. If this were so, I would have to make my retreat across country away from any road; but how could I do that in view of the marshy and creek-riddled nature of all the surrounding region? For a moment my brain reeled—both from sheer hopelessness and from a rapid increase in the omnipresent fishy odour.

Then I thought of the abandoned railway to Rowley, whose solid line of ballasted, weed-grown earth still stretched off to the northwest from the crumbling station on the edge of the river-gorge. There was just a chance that the townsfolk would not think of that; since its brier-choked desertion made it half-impassable, and the unlikeliest of all avenues for a fugitive to choose. I had seen it clearly from my hotel window, and knew about how it lay. Most of its earlier length was uncomfortably visible from the Rowley road, and from high places in the town itself; but one could perhaps crawl inconspicuously through the undergrowth. At any rate, it would form my only chance of deliverance, and there was nothing to do but try it.

Drawing inside the hall of my deserted shelter, I once more consulted the grocery boy's map with the aid of the flashlight. The immediate problem was how to reach the ancient railway; and I now saw that the safest course

was ahead to Babson Street, then west to Lafayette—there edging around but not crossing an open space homologous to the one I had traversed—and subsequently back northward and westward in a zigzagging line through Lafayette, Bates, Adams, and Bank Streets—the latter skirting the river-gorge—to the abandoned and dilapidated station I had seen from my window. My reason for going ahead to Babson was that I wished neither to re-cross the earlier open space nor to begin my westward course along a cross street as broad as South.

Starting once more, I crossed the street to the right-hand side in order to edge around into Babson as inconspicuously as possible. Noises still continued in Federal Street, and as I glanced behind me I thought I saw a gleam of light near the building through which I had escaped. Anxious to leave Washington Street, I broke into a quiet dog-trot, trusting to luck not to encounter any observing eye. Next the corner of Babson Street I saw to my alarm that one of the houses was still inhabited, as attested by curtains at the window; but there were no lights within, and I passed it without disaster.

In Babson Street, which crossed Federal and might thus reveal me to the searchers, I clung as closely as possible to the sagging, uneven buildings; twice pausing in a doorway as the noises behind me momentarily increased. The open space ahead shone wide and desolate under the moon, but my route would not force me to cross it. During my second pause I began to detect a fresh distribution of the vague sounds; and upon looking cautiously out from cover beheld a motor-car darting across the open space, bound outward along Eliot Street,

which there intersects both Babson and Lafayette.

As I watched—choked by a sudden rise in the fishy odour after a short abatement—I saw a band of uncouth, crouching shapes loping and shambling in the same direction; and knew that this must be the party guarding the Ipswich road, since that highway forms an extension of Eliot Street. Two of the figures I glimpsed were in voluminous robes, and one wore a peaked diadem which glistened whitely in the moonlight. The gait of this figure was so odd that it sent a chill through me—for it seemed to me the creature was almost *hopping*.

When the last of the band was out of sight I resumed my progress; darting around the corner into Lafayette Street, and crossing Eliot very hurriedly lest stragglers of the party be still advancing along that thoroughfare. I did hear some croaking and clattering sounds far off toward Town Square, but accomplished the passage without disaster. My greatest dread was in re-crossing broad and moonlit South Street—with its seaward view—and I had to nerve myself for the ordeal. Someone might easily be looking, and possible Eliot Street stragglers could not fail to glimpse me from either of two points. At the last moment I decided I had better slacken my trot and make the crossing as before in the shambling gait of an average Innsmouth native.

When the view of the water again opened out—this time on my right—I was half-determined not to look at it at all. I could not, however, resist; but cast a sidelong glance as I carefully and imitatively shambled toward the protecting shadows ahead. There was no ship visible, as I had half expected there would be. Instead, the first thing

which caught my eye was a small rowboat pulling in toward the abandoned wharves and laden with some bulky, tarpaulin-covered object. Its rowers, though distantly and indistinctly seen, were of an especially repellent aspect. Several swimmers were still discernible; while on the far black reef I could see a faint, steady glow unlike the winking beacon visible before, and of a curious colour which I could not precisely identify. Above the slant roofs ahead and to the right there loomed the tall cupola of the Gilman House, but it was completely dark. The fishy odour, dispelled for a moment by some merciful breeze, now closed in again with maddening intensity.

I had not quite crossed the street when I heard a muttering band advancing along Washington from the north. As they reached the broad open space where I had had my first disquieting glimpse of the moonlit water I could see them plainly only a block away—and was horrified by the bestial abnormality of their faces and the dog-like sub-humanness of their crouching gait. One man moved in a positively simian way, with long arms frequently touching the ground; while another figure—robed and tiaraed—seemed to progress in an almost hopping fashion. I judged this party to be the one I had seen in the Gilman's courtyard—the one, therefore, most closely on my trail. As some of the figures turned to look in my direction I was transfixed with fright, yet managed to preserve the casual, shambling gait I had assumed. To this day I do not know whether they saw me or not. If they did, my stratagem must have deceived them, for they passed on across the moonlit space without varying their course—meanwhile croaking and jabbering

in some hateful guttural patois I could not identify.

Once more in shadow, I resumed my former dog-trot past the leaning and decrepit houses that stared blankly into the night. Having crossed to the western sidewalk I rounded the nearest corner into Bates Street, where I kept close to the buildings on the southern side. I passed two houses shewing signs of habitation, one of which had faint lights in upper rooms, yet met with no obstacle. As I turned into Adams Street I felt measurably safer, but received a shock when a man reeled out of a black doorway directly in front of me. He proved, however, too hopelessly drunk to be a menace; so that I reached the dismal ruins of the Bank Street warehouses in safety.

No one was stirring in that dead street beside the river-gorge, and the roar of the waterfalls quite drowned my footsteps. It was a long dog-trot to the ruined station, and the great brick warehouse walls around me seemed somehow more terrifying than the fronts of private houses. At last I saw the ancient arcaded station—or what was left of it—and made directly for the tracks that started from its farther end.

The rails were rusty but mainly intact, and not more than half the ties had rotted away. Walking or running on such a surface was very difficult; but I did my best, and on the whole made very fair time. For some distance the line kept on along the gorge's brink, but at length I reached the long covered bridge where it crossed the chasm at a dizzy height. The condition of this bridge would determine my next step. If humanly possible, I would use it; if not, I would have to risk more street wandering and take the nearest intact highway bridge.

The vast, barn-like length of the old bridge gleamed spectrally in the moonlight, and I saw that the ties were safe for at least a few feet within. Entering, I began to use my flashlight, and was almost knocked down by the cloud of bats that flapped past me. About half way across there was a perilous gap in the ties which I feared for a moment would halt me; but in the end I risked a desperate jump which fortunately succeeded.

I was glad to see the moonlight again when I emerged from that macabre tunnel. The old tracks crossed River Street at grade, and at once veered off into a region increasingly rural and with less and less of Innsmouth's abhorrent fishy odour. Here the dense growth of weeds and briars hindered me and cruelly tore my clothes, but I was none the less glad that they were there to give me concealment in case of peril. I knew that much of my route must be visible from the Rowley road.

The marshy region began very shortly, with the single track on a low, grassy embankment where the weedy growth was somewhat thinner. Then came a sort of island of higher ground, where the line passed through a shallow open cut choked with bushes and brambles. I was very glad of this partial shelter, since at this point the Rowley road was uncomfortably near according to my window view. At the end of the cut it would cross the track and swerve off to a safer distance; but meanwhile I must be exceedingly careful. I was by this time thankfully certain that the railway itself was not patrolled.

Just before entering the cut I glanced behind me, but saw no pursuer. The ancient spires and roofs of decaying Innsmouth gleamed lovely and ethereal in the magic

yellow moonlight, and I thought of how they must have looked in the old days before the shadow fell. Then, as my gaze circled inland from the town, something less tranquil arrested my notice and held me immobile for a second.

What I saw—or fancied I saw—was a disturbing suggestion of undulant motion far to the south; a suggestion which made me conclude that a very large horde must be pouring out of the city along the level Ipswich road. The distance was great, and I could distinguish nothing in detail; but I did not at all like the look of that moving column. It undulated too much, and glistened too brightly in the rays of the now westering moon. There was a suggestion of sound, too, though the wind was blowing the other way—a suggestion of bestial scraping and bellowing even worse than the muttering of the parties I had lately overheard.

All sorts of unpleasant conjectures crossed my mind. I thought of those very extreme Innsmouth types said to be hidden in crumbling, centuried warrens near the waterfront. I thought, too, of those nameless swimmers I had seen. Counting the parties so far glimpsed, as well as those presumably covering other roads, the number of my pursuers must be strangely large for a town as depopulated as Innsmouth.

Whence could come the dense personnel of such a column as I now beheld? Did those ancient, unplumbed warrens teem with a twisted, uncatalogued, and unsuspected life? Or had some unseen ship indeed landed a legion of unknown outsiders on that hellish reef? Who were they? Why were they there? And if such a column of

them was scouring the Ipswich road, would the patrols on the other roads be likewise augmented?

I had entered the brush-grown cut and was struggling along at a very slow pace when that damnable fishy odour again waxed dominant. Had the wind suddenly changed eastward, so that it blew in from the sea and over the town? It must have, I concluded, since I now began to hear shocking guttural murmurs from that hitherto silent direction. There was another sound, too—a kind of wholesale, colossal flopping or pattering which somehow called up images of the most detestable sort. It made me think illogically of that unpleasantly undulating column on the far-off Ipswich road.

And then both stench and sounds grew stronger, so that I paused shivering and grateful for the cut's protection. It was here, I recalled, that the Rowley road drew so close to the old railway before crossing westward and diverging. Something was coming along that road, and I must lie low till its passage and vanishment in the distance. Thank heaven these creatures employed no dogs for tracking—though perhaps that would have been impossible amidst the omnipresent regional odour. Crouched in the bushes of that sandy cleft I felt reasonably safe, even though I knew the searchers would have to cross the track in front of me not much more than a hundred yards away. I would be able to see them, but they could not, except by a malign miracle, see me.

All at once I began dreading to look at them as they passed. I saw the close moonlit space where they would surge by, and had curious thoughts about the irredeemable pollution of that space. They would perhaps

be the worst of all Innsmouth types—something one would not care to remember.

The stench waxed overpowering, and the noises swelled to a bestial babel of croaking, baying, and barking without the least suggestion of human speech. Were these indeed the voices of my pursuers? Did they have dogs after all? So far I had seen none of the lower animals in Innsmouth. That flopping or pattering was monstrous—I could not look upon the degenerate creatures responsible for it. I would keep my eyes shut till the sounds receded toward the west. The horde was very close now—the air foul with their hoarse snarlings, and the ground almost shaking with their alien-rhythmed footfalls. My breath nearly ceased to come, and I put every ounce of will power into the task of holding my eyelids down.

I am not even yet willing to say whether what followed was a hideous actuality or only a nightmare hallucination. The later action of the government, after my frantic appeals, would tend to confirm it as a monstrous truth; but could not an hallucination have been repeated under the quasi-hypnotic spell of that ancient, haunted, and shadowed town? Such places have strange properties, and the legacy of insane legend might well have acted on more than one human imagination amidst those dead, stench-cursed streets and huddles of rotting roofs and crumbling steeples. Is it not possible that the germ of an actual contagious madness lurks in the depths of that shadow over Innsmouth? Who can be sure of reality after hearing things like the tale of old Zadok Allen? The government men never found poor Zadok, and have no conjectures to make as to what became of him. Where does madness leave off and reality

begin? Is it possible that even my latest fear is sheer delusion?

But I must try to tell what I thought I saw that night under the mocking yellow moon—saw surging and hopping down the Rowley road in plain sight in front of me as I crouched among the wild brambles of that desolate railway cut. Of course my resolution to keep my eyes shut had failed. It was foredoomed to failure—for who could crouch blindly while a legion of croaking, baying entities of unknown source flopped noisomely past, scarcely more than a hundred yards away?

I thought I was prepared for the worst, and I really ought to have been prepared considering what I had seen before. My other pursuers had been accursedly abnormal—so should I not have been ready to face a *strengthening* of the abnormal element; to look upon forms in which there was no mixture of the normal at all? I did not open my eyes until the raucous clamour came loudly from a point obviously straight ahead. Then I knew that a long section of them must be plainly in sight where the sides of the cut flattened out and the road crossed the track—and I could no longer keep myself from sampling whatever horror that leering yellow moon might have to shew.

It was the end, for whatever remains to me of life on the surface of this earth, of every vestige of mental peace and confidence in the integrity of Nature and of the human mind. Nothing that I could have imagined—nothing, even, that I could have gathered had I credited old Zadok's crazy tale in the most literal way—would be in any way comparable to the daemoniac,

blasphemous reality that I saw—or believe I saw. I have tried to hint what it was in order to postpone the horror of writing it down baldly. Can it be possible that this planet has actually spawned such things; that human eyes have truly seen, as objective flesh, what man has hitherto known only in febrile phantasy and tenuous legend?

And yet I saw them in a limitless stream—flopping, hopping, croaking, bleating—surging inhumanly through the spectral moonlight in a grotesque, malignant saraband of fantastic nightmare. And some of them had tall tiaras of that nameless whitish-gold metal . . . and some were strangely robed . . . and one, who led the way, was clad in a ghoulishly humped black coat and striped trousers, and had a man's felt hat perched on the shapeless thing that answered for a head. . . .

I think their predominant colour was a greyish-green, though they had white bellies. They were mostly shiny and slippery, but the ridges of their backs were scaly. Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads were the heads of fish, with prodigious bulging eyes that never closed. At the sides of their necks were palpitating gills, and their long paws were webbed. They hopped irregularly, sometimes on two legs and sometimes on four. I was somehow glad that they had no more than four limbs. Their croaking, baying voices, clearly used for articulate speech, held all the dark shades of expression which their staring faces lacked.

But for all of their monstrosity they were not unfamiliar to me. I knew too well what they must be—for was not the memory of that evil tiara at Newburyport still fresh? They were the blasphemous fish-frogs of the

nameless design—living and horrible—and as I saw them I knew also of what that humped, tiaraed priest in the black church basement had so fearsomely reminded me. Their number was past guessing. It seemed to me that there were limitless swarms of them—and certainly my momentary glimpse could have shewn only the least fraction. In another instant everything was blotted out by a merciful fit of fainting; the first I had ever had.

V.

It was a gentle daylight rain that awaked me from my stupor in the brush-grown railway cut, and when I staggered out to the roadway ahead I saw no trace of any prints in the fresh mud. The fishy odour, too, was gone. Innsmouth's ruined roofs and toppling steeples loomed up greyly toward the southeast, but not a living creature did I spy in all the desolate salt marshes around. My watch was still going, and told me that the hour was past noon.

The reality of what I had been through was highly uncertain in my mind, but I felt that something hideous lay in the background. I must get away from evil-shadowed Innsmouth—and accordingly I began to test my cramped, wearied powers of locomotion. Despite weakness, hunger, horror, and bewilderment I found myself after a long time able to walk; so started slowly along the muddy road to Rowley. Before evening I was in the village, getting a meal and providing myself with presentable clothes. I caught the night train to Arkham, and the next day talked long and earnestly with government officials there; a process I later repeated in Boston. With the main result of these colloquies the public is now familiar—and I wish, for normality's sake,

there were nothing more to tell. Perhaps it is madness that is overtaking me—yet perhaps a greater horror—or a greater marvel—is reaching out.

As may well be imagined, I gave up most of the foreplanned features of the rest of my tour—the scenic, architectural, and antiquarian diversions on which I had counted so heavily. Nor did I dare look for that piece of strange jewellery said to be in the Miskatonic University Museum. I did, however, improve my stay in Arkham by collecting some genealogical notes I had long wished to possess; very rough and hasty data, it is true, but capable of good use later on when I might have time to collate and codify them. The curator of the historical society there—Mr. E. Lapham Peabody—was very courteous about assisting me, and expressed unusual interest when I told him I was a grandson of Eliza Orne of Arkham, who was born in 1867 and had married James Williamson of Ohio at the age of seventeen.

It seemed that a maternal uncle of mine had been there many years before on a quest much like my own; and that my grandmother's family was a topic of some local curiosity. There had, Mr. Peabody said, been considerable discussion about the marriage of her father, Benjamin Orne, just after the Civil War; since the ancestry of the bride was peculiarly puzzling. That bride was understood to have been an orphaned Marsh of New Hampshire—a cousin of the Essex County Marshes—but her education had been in France and she knew very little of her family. A guardian had deposited funds in a Boston bank to maintain her and her French governess; but that guardian's name was unfamiliar to Arkham people, and in time he dropped out of sight, so that the governess

assumed his role by court appointment. The Frenchwoman—now long dead—was very taciturn, and there were those who said she could have told more than she did.

But the most baffling thing was the inability of anyone to place the recorded parents of the young woman—Enoch and Lydia (Meserve) Marsh—among the known families of New Hampshire. Possibly, many suggested, she was the natural daughter of some Marsh of prominence—she certainly had the true Marsh eyes. Most of the puzzling was done after her early death, which took place at the birth of my grandmother—her only child. Having formed some disagreeable impressions connected with the name of Marsh, I did not welcome the news that it belonged on my own ancestral tree; nor was I pleased by Mr. Peabody's suggestion that I had the true Marsh eyes myself. However, I was grateful for data which I knew would prove valuable; and took copious notes and lists of book references regarding the well-documented Orne family.

I went directly home to Toledo from Boston, and later spent a month at Maumee recuperating from my ordeal. In September I entered Oberlin for my final year, and from then till the next June was busy with studies and other wholesome activities—reminded of the bygone terror only by occasional official visits from government men in connexion with the campaign which my pleas and evidence had started. Around the middle of July—just a year after the Innsmouth experience—I spent a week with my late mother's family in Cleveland; checking some of my new genealogical data with the various notes, traditions, and bits of heirloom material in existence

there, and seeing what kind of connected chart I could construct.

I did not exactly relish the task, for the atmosphere of the Williamson home had always depressed me. There was a strain of morbidity there, and my mother had never encouraged my visiting her parents as a child, although she always welcomed her father when he came to Toledo. My Arkham-born grandmother had seemed strange and almost terrifying to me, and I do not think I grieved when she disappeared. I was eight years old then, and it was said that she had wandered off in grief after the suicide of my uncle Douglas, her eldest son. He had shot himself after a trip to New England—the same trip, no doubt, which had caused him to be recalled at the Arkham Historical Society.

This uncle had resembled her, and I had never liked him either. Something about the staring, unwinking expression of both of them had given me a vague, unaccountable uneasiness. My mother and uncle Walter had not looked like that. They were like their father, though poor little cousin Lawrence—Walter's son—had been an almost perfect duplicate of his grandmother before his condition took him to the permanent seclusion of a sanitarium at Canton. I had not seen him in four years, but my uncle once implied that his state, both mental and physical, was very bad. This worry had probably been a major cause of his mother's death two years before.

My grandfather and his widowed son Walter now comprised the Cleveland household, but the memory of older times hung thickly over it. I still disliked the place,

and tried to get my researches done as quickly as possible. Williamson records and traditions were supplied in abundance by my grandfather; though for Orne material I had to depend on my uncle Walter, who put at my disposal the contents of all his files, including notes, letters, cuttings, heirlooms, photographs, and miniatures.

It was in going over the letters and pictures on the Orne side that I began to acquire a kind of terror of my own ancestry. As I have said, my grandmother and uncle Douglas had always disturbed me. Now, years after their passing, I gazed at their pictured faces with a measurably heightened feeling of repulsion and alienation. I could not at first understand the change, but gradually a horrible sort of *comparison* began to obtrude itself on my unconscious mind despite the steady refusal of my consciousness to admit even the least suspicion of it. It was clear that the typical expression of these faces now suggested something it had not suggested before—something which would bring stark panic if too openly thought of.

But the worst shock came when my uncle shewed me the Orne jewellery in a downtown safe-deposit vault. Some of the items were delicate and inspiring enough, but there was one box of strange old pieces descended from my mysterious great-grandmother which my uncle was almost reluctant to produce. They were, he said, of very grotesque and almost repulsive design, and had never to his knowledge been publicly worn; though my grandmother used to enjoy looking at them. Vague legends of bad luck clustered around them, and my great-grandmother's French governess had said they ought not to be worn in New England, though it would be quite safe

to wear them in Europe.

As my uncle began slowly and grudgingly to unwrap the things he urged me not to be shocked by the strangeness and frequent hideousness of the designs. Artists and archaeologists who had seen them pronounced the workmanship superlatively and exotically exquisite, though no one seemed able to define their exact material or assign them to any specific art tradition. There were two armlets, a tiara, and a kind of pectoral; the latter having in high relief certain figures of almost unbearable extravagance.

During this description I had kept a tight rein on my emotions, but my face must have betrayed my mounting fears. My uncle looked concerned, and paused in his unwrapping to study my countenance. I motioned to him to continue, which he did with renewed signs of reluctance. He seemed to expect some demonstration when the first piece—the tiara—became visible, but I doubt if he expected quite what actually happened. I did not expect it, either, for I thought I was thoroughly forewarned regarding what the jewellery would turn out to be. What I did was to faint silently away, just as I had done in that brier-choked railway cut a year before.

From that day on my life has been a nightmare of brooding and apprehension, nor do I know how much is hideous truth and how much madness. My great-grandmother had been a Marsh of unknown source whose husband lived in Arkham—and did not old Zadok say that the daughter of Obed Marsh by a monstrous mother was married to an Arkham man through a trick? What was it the ancient toper had muttered about the

likeness of my eyes to Captain Obed's? In Arkham, too, the curator had told me I had the true Marsh eyes. Was Obed Marsh my own great-great-grandfather? Who—or *what*—then, was my great-great-grandmother? But perhaps this was all madness. Those whitish-gold ornaments might easily have been bought from some Insmouth sailor by the father of my great-grandmother, whoever he was. And that look in the staring-eyed faces of my grandmother and self-slain uncle might be sheer fancy on my part—sheer fancy, bolstered up by the Insmouth shadow which had so darkly coloured my imagination. But why had my uncle killed himself after an ancestral quest in New England?

For more than two years I fought off these reflections with partial success. My father secured me a place in an insurance office, and I buried myself in routine as deeply as possible. In the winter of 1930–31, however, the dreams began. They were very sparse and insidious at first, but increased in frequency and vividness as the weeks went by. Great watery spaces opened out before me, and I seemed to wander through titanic sunken porticos and labyrinths of weedy Cyclopean walls with grotesque fishes as my companions. Then the *other shapes* began to appear, filling me with nameless horror the moment I awoke. But during the dreams they did not horrify me at all—I was one with them; wearing their unhuman trappings, treading their aqueous ways, and praying monstrously at their evil sea-bottom temples.

There was much more than I could remember, but even what I did remember each morning would be enough to stamp me as a madman or a genius if ever I dared write it down. Some frightful influence, I felt,

was seeking gradually to drag me out of the sane world of wholesome life into unnamable abysses of blackness and alienage; and the process told heavily on me. My health and appearance grew steadily worse, till finally I was forced to give up my position and adopt the static, secluded life of an invalid. Some odd nervous affliction had me in its grip, and I found myself at times almost unable to shut my eyes.

It was then that I began to study the mirror with mounting alarm. The slow ravages of disease are not pleasant to watch, but in my case there was something subtler and more puzzling in the background. My father seemed to notice it, too, for he began looking at me curiously and almost affrightedly. What was taking place in me? Could it be that I was coming to resemble my grandmother and uncle Douglas?

One night I had a frightful dream in which I met my grandmother under the sea. She lived in a phosphorescent palace of many terraces, with gardens of strange leprous corals and grotesque brachiata efflorescences, and welcomed me with a warmth that may have been sardonic. She had changed—as those who take to the water change—and told me she had never died. Instead, she had gone to a spot her dead son had learned about, and had leaped to a realm whose wonders—destined for him as well—he had spurned with a smoking pistol. This was to be my realm, too—I could not escape it. I would never die, but would live with those who had lived since before man ever walked the earth.

I met also that which had been her grandmother. For eighty thousand years Pth'thya-l'yi had lived in Y'hanthlei, and thither she had gone back after Obed Marsh

was dead. Y'ha-nthlei was not destroyed when the upper-earth men shot death into the sea. It was hurt, but not destroyed. The Deep Ones could never be destroyed, even though the palaeogean magic of the forgotten Old Ones might sometimes check them. For the present they would rest; but some day, if they remembered, they would rise again for the tribute Great Cthulhu craved. It would be a city greater than Innsmouth next time. They had planned to spread, and had brought up that which would help them, but now they must wait once more. For bringing the upper-earth men's death I must do a penance, but that would not be heavy. This was the dream in which I saw a *shoggoth* for the first time, and the sight set me awake in a frenzy of screaming. That morning the mirror definitely told me I had acquired *the Innsmouth look*.

So far I have not shot myself as my uncle Douglas did. I bought an automatic and almost took the step, but certain dreams deterred me. The tense extremes of horror are lessening, and I feel queerly drawn toward the unknown sea-deeps instead of fearing them. I hear and do strange things in sleep, and awake with a kind of exaltation instead of terror. I do not believe I need to wait for the full change as most have waited. If I did, my father would probably shut me up in a sanitarium as my poor little cousin is shut up. Stupendous and unheard-of splendours await me below, and I shall seek them soon. *Iä-R'lyeh! Cthulhu fhtagn! Iä! Iä!* No, I shall not shoot myself—I cannot be made to shoot myself!

I shall plan my cousin's escape from that Canton madhouse, and together we shall go to marvel-shadowed Innsmouth. We shall swim out to that brooding reef in the sea and dive down through black abysses to Cyclopean

and many-columned Y'ha-nthlei, and in that lair of the Deep Ones we shall dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever.

CHAPTER 6.

JOHNNY MNEUMONIC

from Burning Chrome by William Gibson

I put the shotgun in an Adidas bag and padded it out with four pairs of tennis socks, not my style at all. but that was what I was aiming for: If they think ymfre crude, go technical; if they think you ,re technical, go crude. I'm a very technical boy. So I decided to get as crude as possible. These days. though, you have to be pretty technical before you can even aspire to crudeness. Pd had to turn both these twelve-gauge shells from brass stock9 on a lathe, and then load them myself; I'd had to dig up an old microfiche with instructions for hand-loading cartridges; I'd had to build a lever◇action press to seat the primers-an very tricky. But I knew they'd work. The meet was set for the Drome at 2300J but I rode the tube three stops past the closest platform and walked back. Immaculate procedure. I checked myself out in the chrome siding of a cof fee kiosk, your basic sharp-faced Caucasoid with a ruff of stiff, dark hair. The girls at Under the Knife were big . on Sony Mao, and it was getting harder to keep them from adding the chic suggestion of epicanthic folds. It probably wouldn't fool Ralfi Face, but it might get me next to his table.

The Drome is a single narrow space with a bar down one side and ta\;iles along the other, thick with pimps and handlers and an arcane array of dealers. The Magnetic

Dog Sisters were on the door that night, and I didn't relish trying to get out past them if things didn't work out. They were two meters tall and thin as greyhounds. One was black and the other white, but aside from that they were as nearly identical as cosmetic surgery could make them. They'd been lovers for years and were bad news in a tussle. I was never quite sure which one had originally been male. Ralfi was sitting at his usual table. Owing me a lot of money. I had hundreds of megabytes stashed in my head on an idiot/ savant basis. Information I had no conscious access to. Ralfi had left it there. He hadn't, however, come back for it. Only Ralfi could retrieve the data, with a code phrase of his own invention. I'm not cheap to begin with, but my overtime on storage is astronomical. And Ralfi had been very scarce. Then I'd heard that Ralfi Face wanted to put out a contract on me. So I'd arranged to meet him in the Drome, but I'd arranged it as Edward Bax, clandestine importer, late of Rio and Peking. The Drome stank of biz, a metallic tang of nervous tension. Muscle-boys scattered through the crowd were flexing stock parts at one another and trying on thin, cold grins, some of them so lost under superstructures of muscle graft that their outlines weren't really human. Pardon me. Pardon me, friends. Just Eddie Bax here, Fast Eddie the Importer, with his professionally nondescript gym bag, and please ignore this slit, just wide enough to admit his right hand. Ralfi wasn't alone. Eighty kilos of blond California beef perched alertly in the chair next to his, martial arts written all over him. Fast Eddie Bax was in the chair opposite them before the beef's hands were off the table. "You black belt?" I asked eagerly. He nodded, blue eyes running an automatic scanning pattern between my eyes and my hands. "Me, too," I said.

“Got mine here in the bag.” And I shoved my hand through the slit and thumbed the safety off. Click. “Double twelve-gauge with the triggers wired together.”

“That’s a gun,” Ralfi said, putting a plump, restraining hand on his boy’s taut blue nylon chest. “Johnny has an antique firearm in his bag.” So much for Edward Bax. I guess he’d always been Ralfi Something or Other but he owed his acquired surname to a singular vanity. Built something like an overripe pear, he’d worn the once-famous face of Christian White for twenty years—Christian White of the Aryan Reggae Band, Sony Mao to his generation, and final champion of race rock. From a whiz at trivia. Christian White: classic pop face with a singer’s high-definition muscles, chiseled cheekbones. Angelic in one light, handsomely depraved in another. But Ralfi’s eyes lived behind that face, and they were small and cold and black. “Please,” he said, “let’s work this out like businessmen.” His voice was marked by a horrible prehensile sincerity, and the corners of his beautiful Christian White mouth were always wet. H Lewis here, H nodding in the beefboy’s direction, His a meatball. Vi Lewis took this impassively, looking like something built from a kit. “You aren’t a meatball, Johnny. H 6’ Sure I am, Ralfi, a nice meatball chock-full of implants where you can store your dirty laundry while you go off shopping for people to kill me. From my end of this bag, Ralfi, it looks like you’ve got some explaining to do.” “It’s this last batch of product, Johnny,” He sighed deeply. “In my role as broker—” “Fence,” I corrected.

“As broker, I’m usually very careful as to sources.

·You buy only from those who steal the best, Got it.”

He sighed again. “I try,” he said wearily, “not to buy

from fools. This time, I'm afraid, I've done that. The third sigh was the cue for Lewis to trigger the neural disruptor they'd taped under my side of the table. I put everything I had into curling the index finger of my right hand, but I no longer seemed to be connected to it. I could feel the metal of the gun and the foam-pad tape I'd wrapped around the stubby grip, but my hands were cool wax, distant and inert. I was hoping Lewis was a true meatball, thick enough to go for the gym bag and snag my rigid trigger finger, but he wasn't. We've been very worried about you, Johnny. Very worried. You see, that's Yakuza property you have there. A fool took it from them, Johnny. A dead fool. Lewis giggled.

It all made sense then, an ugly kind of sense, like bags of wet sand settling around my head. Killing wasn't Ralfi's style. Lewis wasn't even Ralfi's style. But he'd got himself stuck between the Sons of the Neon Chrysanthemum and something that belonged to them-or, more likely, something of theirs that belonged to someone else. Ralfi, of course, could use the code phrase to throw me into idiot/savant, and I'd spill their hot program without remembering a single quarter tone. For a fence like Ralfi, that would ordinarily have been enough. But not for the Yakuza. The Yakuza would know about Squids, for one thing, and they wouldn't want to worry about one lifting those dim and permanent traces of their program out of my head. I didn't know very much about Squids, but I'd heard stories, and I made it a point never to repeat them to my clients. No, the Yakuza wouldn't like that; it looked too much like evidence. They hadn't got where they were by leaving evidence around. Or alive. Lewis was grinning. I think he was visualizing a point just behind my forehead and imagining how he could get there the hard way.

"Hey," said a low voice, feminine, from someP,where behind my right shoulder, "you cowbo,,) sure aren't having too lively a time. H "Pack it, bitch/s Lewis said, his tanned face very still. Ralfi looked blank. HLighten up. You want to buy some good free base'l" She pulled up a chair and quickly sat before either of them could stop her. She was barely inside my fixed field of vision, a thin girl with mirrored glasses, her dark hair cut in a rough shag. She wore black leather, open over a T-shirt slashed diagondly with stripes of red and black. "Eight thou a gram weight. H Lewis snorted his exasperation and tried to slap her out of the chair. Somehow he didn't quite connect: and her hand came up and seemed to brush his wrist as it passed. Bright blood sprayed the table. He was clutching his wrist white-knuckle tight, blood trkklng from between his fingers. But hadn't her hand been empty?

He was going to need a tendon stapler. He stood up carefully, without bothering to push his chair back. The chair toppled backwardi and he stepped out of my line of sight without a word.

HHe better get a medic to look atthat/r she said. uThat's a nasty cut." "You have no idea, H said. Ralfi, suddenly sounding very tired, "the depths of shit you have just gotten yourself into. H '◇No kidding? Mystery. I get real excited by mysteries. Like why your friend here's so quiet. Frozen, like. Or what this thing here is for." and she held up the little control unit that she'd somehow taken from Lewis. Ralfi looked m. Hy ou, ah, want maybe a quarter-million to give me that and take a walk?" A fat hand came up to stroke his pale, lean face nervously. "What I want," she said, snapping her fingers so that the

unit spun amtglittered, “is work. A job. Your boy hurt his wrist. But a quarter’U do for a retainer. H

Ralfi let his breath out explosively and began to laugh, exposing teeth that hadn’t been kept up to the Christian White standard. Then she turned the disruptor off. “Two million/’ I said.

“My kind of man,” she said, and laughed. “What’s in the bag?”

A shotgun/’
ucrude.” It might have been a compliment.
Ralfi said nothing at all.

”Name’s Millions. Molly Millions. You want to get out of here, boss? People are starting to stare. H She stood up. She was wearing leather jeans the color of dried blood. And I saw for the first time that the mirrored lenses were surgical inlays, the silver rising smoothly from her high cheekbones, sealing her eyes in their sockets. I saw my new face twinned there. urm Johnny/’ I said. uwe’re taking Mr. Face with us.” He was outside, waiting. Looking like your standard tourist tech, in plastic zoris and a silly Hawaiian shirt printed with blowups of his firm9s most popular microprocessor; a mild Utt.le guy, the kind most likely to wind up drunk on sake in a bar that puts out miniature rice crackers with seaweed garnish. He looked like the kind who sing the corporate anthem and cry, who shake hands endlessly with the bartender. And the pimps and the dealers would leave him alone, pegging him as innately conservative. Not up for much, and careful with his credit when he was. The way I figured it later, they must have am◇ putated part of his left thumb, somewhere behind the first joint, replacing it with a prosthetic tipll and cored the stump, fitting it with a spool and socket molded from one of

the Ono◊Sendai diamond analogs, Then they'd carefully wound the spool with three meters of monomolecular filament.

Molly got into some kind of exchange with the Magnetic Dog Sisters, giving me a chance to usher Ralfi through the door with the gym bag pressed lightly against the base of his spine. She seemed to know them. I heard the black one laugh. I glanced up, out of some passing reflex, maybe because rve never got used to it, to the soaring arcs of light and the shadows of the geodesics above them. Maybe that saved me. Ralfi kept walkingt but I don't think he was trying to escape. I think he'd already given up. Probably he already had an idea of what we were up against. I looked back down in time to see him explode. Playback on full recall shows Ralfi stepping forward as the little tech sidles out of nowhere, smiling. Just a suggestion of a bow, and his left thumb falls off. It's a conjuring trick. The thumb hangs suspended, Mirrors? Wires? And Ralfi stops, his back to us, dark crescents of sweat under the armpits of his pale summer suit. He knows. He must have known. And then the joke-shop thumbtip, heavy as lead, arcs out in a Hghtning ·yo-yo trick, and the invisible thread connecting it to the killer's hand passes laterally through Ralfi's skull, just above his eyebrows, whips up, and descends, slicing the pear-shaped torso diagonally from shoulder to rib cage. Cuts so fine that no blood flows until synapses misfire and the first tremors surrender the body to gravity. Ralfi tumbled apart in a pink cloud of fluids, the three mismatched sections rolling forward onto the tiled pavement. In total silence. I brought the gym bag up, and my hand convulsed. The recoil nearly broke my wri&t. It must have been raining; ribbons of water cascaded from a

ruptured geodesic and spattered on the tile behind us. We crouched in the narrow gap between a surgical boutique and an antique shop. She'd just edged one mirrored eye around the corner to report a single Volks module in front of the Drome◇ red lights flashing, They were sweeping Ralfi up. Asking questions, I was covered in scorched white fluff. The tennis socks, The gym bag was a ragged plastic cuff around my wrist. "I do:n◇t see how the hell I missed him.

◇cause he's fast, so fast." She hugged her knees and rocked back and forth on her booth eels. "His nervous system's jacked up. He's factory custom." She grinned and gave a little squeal of delight. "I'm gonna get that boy. Tonight. He's the best, number one, top dollar 1 state of the art.,, HWhat you're going to get, for this boy◇s two million, is my ass out of here. Your boyfriend back there was mostly grown in a vat in Chiba City, He's a Yakuza assassin, "" "Chiba. Yeah. See, Molly's been Chiba, too. H And she showed me her hands, fingers slightly spread. Her fingers were slender, tapered, very white against the polished burgundy nails. Ten blades snicked straight out from their recesses beneath her nails, each one a narrow, double-edged scalpel in pale blue steel. Pd never spent much time in Nighttown. Nobody there had anything to pay me to remember t and most of them had a lot they paid regularly to forget. Generations of sharpshooters had chipped away at the neon until the maintenance crews gave up. Even at noon the arcs were soot-black against faintest pearl. Where do you go when the world's wealthiest criminal order is feeling for you with calm, distant fingers? Where do you hide from the Yakuza, so powerful that it owns comsats and at least three shuttles? The Yakuza is a true multinational, like ITT and Ono◇

Sendai. Fifty years before I was born the Yakuza had already absorbed the Triads, the Mafia, the Union Corse. – Molly had an answer: you hide in the Pit, in the lowest circle, where any outside influence generates swift, concentric ripples of raw menace. You hide in Nighttown. Better yet, you hide above Nighttown, because the Pit's inverted, and the bottom of its bowl touches the sky, the sky that Nighttown never sees, sweating under its own firmament of acrylic resin, up where the Lo Tekes crouch in the dark like gargoyles¹ black-market cigarettes dangling from their lips.

She had another answer, too.

“So you're locked up good and tight, Johnny-san? No way to get that program without the password?” She led me into the shadows that waited beyond the bright tube platform. The concrete walls were overlaid with graffiti, years of them twisting into a single metascrawl of rage and frustration. uThe stored data are fed in through a modified series of mkrosurgical contra.autism prostheses.” I reeled off a numb version of my standard sales pitch. uclient's code is stored in a special chip; barring Squids, which we in the trade don't like to talk about◇ there's no way to recover your phrase. Can't drug it out, cut it out, torture it. I don't know it, never did.” “Squids? Crawly things with arms?” We emerged into a deserted street market. Shadowy figures watched. us from across a makeshift square littered with fish heads and rotting fruit. HSuperconducting quantum interference detectors, Used them in the war to find submarines, suss out enemy cyber systems.” uYeah? Navy stuff? From the war? Squid'll read that chip of yours?” She'd stopped walking, and I felt her eyes o:n me behind those twin mirrors. “Even the primitive m◇dels could

measure a magnetic field a billionth the strength of geomagnetic force; it's like pulling a whisper out of a cheering stadium." "Cops can do that already, with parabolic microphones and lasers."

"But your data's still secure." Pride in profession. "No government'll let their cops have Squids, not even the security heavies. Too much chance of interdepartmental funnies; they're too likely to watergate you. u "Navy stuff," she said⁹ and her grin gleamed in the shadows. "Navy stuff. I got a friend down here who was in the navy, name's Jones. I think you'd better meet him. He's a junkie, though. So we'll have to take him something."

"A junkie'?"

"A dolphin."

He was more than a dolphin, but from another dolphin's point of view he might have seemed like something less. I watched him swirling sluggishly in his galvanized tank. Water slopped over the side, wetting my shoes. He was surplus from the last war. A cyborg,, He rose out of the water, showing us the crusted plates along his sides, a kind of visual pun, his grace nearly lost under articulated armor, clumsy and prehistoric. Twin deformities on either side of his skull had been engineered to house sensor units. Silver lesions gleamed on exposed sections of his gray-white hide. Molly whistled. Jones thrashed his tail, and more water cascaded down the side of the tank. "What is this place?" I peered at vague shapes in the dark, rusting chain link and things under tarps. Above the tank hung a clumsy wooden framework, crossed and recrossed by rows of dusty Christmas lights.

"Funland. Zoo and carnival rides. 'Talk with the War Whale.' All that. Some whale Jones is"

Jones reared again and fixed me with a sad and ancient eye.

“How’s he talk?H Suddenly I was anxious to go. “That’s the catch. Say ‘hi,’ Jones.”

And all the bulbs lit simultaneously. They were flashing red, white, and blue.

RWBRWBRWB

RWBRWBRWB

RWBRWBRWB

RWBRWBRWB

RWBRWBRWB

“Good with symbols, see, but the code’s restricted. In the navy they had him wired into an audiovisual display.” She drew the narrow package from a jacket pocket. “Pure shit, Jones. Want it?” He froze in the water and started to sink. I felt a strange panic, remembering that he wasn’t a fish, that he could drown. “We want the key to Johnny’s bank, Jones. We want it fast.”

The lights flickered, died. “Go for it, Jones!”

B

BBBBBBBBB B

B

B

Blue bulbs, cruciform.

Darkness.

“Pure! It’s clean. Come on, Jones.”

wwwwwwwww

wwwwwwwww

wwwwwwwww

White sodium glare washed her f ea.tures, stark monochrome, shadows cleaving from her cheekbones.

The arms of the red swastika were twisted in her silver glasses. "Give it to him," I said. "We've got it."

Ralfi Face. No imagination.

Jones heaved half his armored bulk over the edge of his tank, and I thought the metal would give way. Molly stabbed him overhand with the Syrette, driving the needle between two plates. Propellant hissed. Patterns of light exploded, spasming across the frame and then fading to black. We left him drifting, rolling languorously in the dark water. Maybe he was dreaming of his war in the Pacific, of the cyber mines he'd swept, nosing gently into their circuitry with the Squid he'd used to pick Ralfi's pathetic password from the chip buried in my head. "I can see them slipping up when he was demobbed, letting him out of the navy with that gear intact, but how does a cybernetic dolphin get wired to smack?" "The war," she said, "They all were, Navy did it. How else you get 'em working for you?" "I'm not sure this profiles as good business," the pirate said, angling for better money. "Target specs on a comsat that isn't in the book-n "Waste my time and you won't profile at all," said Molly, leaning across his scarred plastic desk to prod him with her fore finger. "So maybe you want to buy your microwaves somewhere else?" He was a tough kid, behind his Maojob. A Nighttownner by birth, probably.

Her hand blurred down the front of his jacket, completely severing a lapel without even rumpling the fabric. "So we got a deal or not?"

"Deal," he said; staring at his ruined lapel with what he must have hoped was only polite interest. "Deal." While I checked the two recorders we'd bought, she extracted the slip of paper I'd given her from the zippered wrist pocket of her jacket. She unfolded it and read silently,

moving her lips. She shrugged. "This is it?" "Shoot, j' I said, punching the RECORD studs of the two decks simultaneously. "Christian White," she recited ♦ "and his Aryan Reggae Band. H.

Faithful Ralfi, a fan to his dying day.

Transition to idiot/savant mode is always less abrupt than I expect it to be. The pirate broadcaster's front was a failing travel agency in a pastel cube that boasted a desk, three chairs, and a faded poster of a Swiss orbital spa. A pair of toy birds with blown-glass bodies and tin legs were sipping monotonously from a Styrofoam cup of water on a ledge beside Molly's shoulder. As I phased into mode, they accelerated gradually until their Day-Glo-feathered crowns became solid arcs of color. The LEDs that told seconds on the plastic wall clock had become meaningless pulsing grids, and Molly and the Mao-faced boy grew hazy, their arms blurring occasionally in insect ♦ quick ghosts of gesture. And then it all faded to cool gray static and an endless tone poem in an artificial language. I sat and sang dead Ralfi's stolen program for three hours. The mall runs forty kilometers from end to end, a ragged overlap of Fuller domes roofing what was once a suburban artery. If they turn off the arcs on a clear day, a gray approximation of sunlight filters through layers of acrylic, a view like the prison sketches of Giovanni Piranesi. The three southernmost kilometers roof Nighttown. Nighttown pays no taxes, no utilities. The neon arcs are dead, and the geodesics have been smoked black by decades of cooking fires. In the nearly total darkness of a Nighttown noon, who notices a few dozen mad children lost in the rafters? We'd been climbing for two hours, up concrete stairs and steel ladders with perforated rungs, past abandoned gantries

and dust-covered tools. We'd started in what looked like a disused maintenance yard, stacked with triangular roofing segments. Everything there had been covered with that same uniform layer of spraybomb graffiti: gang names, initials, dates back to the turn of the century. The graffiti followed us up, gradually thinning until a single name was repeated at intervals. LO TEK. In dripping black capitals. "Who's Lo Tek?"

"Not us, boss." She climbed a shivering aluminum ladder and vanished through a hole in a sheet of corrugated plastic. "Low technique, low technology," The plastic muffled her voice. I followed her up, nursing my aching wrist. "Lo Tek, they'd think that shotgun trick of yours was effete." An hour later I dragged myself up through another hole, this one sawed crookedly in a sagging sheet of plywood, and met my first Lo Tek. "Molly said, her hand bmsing my shoulder. "It's just Dog. Hey, Dog." In the narrow beam of her taped flash, he regarded us with his one eye and slowly extruded a thick length of grayish tongue, licking huge canines. I wondered how they wrote off tooth-bud transplants from Dobermans as low technology. Immunosuppressives don't exactly grow on trees. "Moll." Dental augmentation impeded his speech.

A string of saliva dangled from his twisted lower lip.

"Heard ya comin'. Long time." He might have been fifteen, but the fangs and a bright mosaic of scars combined with the gaping socket to present a mask of total bestiality. It had taken time and a certain kind of creativity to assemble that face, and his posture told me he enjoyed living behind it. He wore a pair of decaying jeans, black with grime and shiny along the creases. His chest and feet were bare. He did something with his

mouth that approximated a grin. HBein' followed, YO'I.L
" Far off, down in Nighttown, a water vendor cried his
trade. "Strings jumping, Dog?H She swung her flash to the
side, and I saw thin cords tied to eyebolts, cords that ran
to the edge and vanished.

"Kill the fuckin' light!"

She snapped it off.

"How come the one who's followin' you's got no light?"
"Doesn't need it. That one's bad news, Dog, Your sentries
give him a tumble, they'll come home in easyto-carry
sections." "This a friend friend, Moll?" He sounded
uneasy. I heard his feet shift on the worn plywood. "No.
But he's mine. And this one/' slapping my shoulder, uhe's
a friend. Got that?" "Sure/' he said, without much
enthusiasm, padding to the platform's edge, where the
eyebolts were. He began to pluck out some kind of
message on the taut cords. Nighttown spread beneath
us like a toy village for rats; tiny windows showed
candlelight, with only a few harsh, bright squares lit by
battery lanterns and carbide lamps. I imagined the old
men at their endless games of dominoes, under warm, fat
drops of water that fell from wet wash hung out on poles
between the plywood shanties. Then I tried to imagine
him climbing patiently up through the darkness in his
zoris and ugly tourist shirt bland and unhurried. How
was he tracking us?

"Good/' said Molly. "He sme ll s us.

"Smoke?" Dog dragged a crumpled pack from his
pocket and prized out a fla!te◇ed cigarette: I squi◇ted at
the trademark while he ht lt for me with a kitchen match.
Yiheymm filters. Beijing Cigarette Factory. I decided that
the Lo Tekes were black marketeers. Dog and Molly went
back to their argument, which seemed to revolve around

Molly's desire to use some particular piece of Lo Tek real estate. "I've done you a lot of favors, man. I want that floor. And I want the music."

"You're not Lo Tek "

This must have been going on for the better part of a twisted kilometer, Dog leading us along swaying catwalks and up rope ladders. The Lo Tek leech their webs and huddling places to the city's fabric with thick gobs of epoxy and sleep above the abyss in mesh hammocks. Their country is so attenuated that in places it consists of little more than holds for hands and feet, sawed into geodesic struts. The Killing Floor, she called it. Scrambling after her, my new Eddie Bax shoes slipping on worn metal and damp plywood, I wondered how it could be any more lethal than the rest of the territory. At the same time I sensed that Dog's protests were ritual and that she already expected to get whatever it was she wanted. Somewhere beneath us, Jones would be circling his tank, feeling the first twinges of junk sickn7ss. The police would be boring the Drome regulars with questions about Ralfi. What did he do? Who was he with before he stepped outside? And the Yakuza would be settling its ghostly bulk over the city's data banks, probing for faint images of me reflected in numbered accounts securities transactions, bills for utilities.

We're an information economy. They teach you that in school. What they don't tell you is that it's impossible to move, to live, to operate at any level without leaving traces, bitss seemingly meaningless fragments of persomd informa.tkm. Fragments that can be retrieved?amplified But by now the pirate would have shuttled our message into line for black.box transmission to the

Yakuza comsat. A simple message: Call off the dogs or we wideband your program.

The program. I had no idea what it contained. I still don't. I only sing the song, with zero comprehension. It was probably research data, the Yakuza being given to advanced forms of industrial espionage. A genteel business, stealing from Ono-Sendai as a matter of course and politely holding their data for ransom⁹ threatening to blunt the conglomerate's research edge by making the product public. But why couldn't any number play? Wouldn't they be happier with something to sell back to Ono-Sendai, happier than they'd be with one dead Johnny from Memory Lane? Their program was on its way to an address in Sydney, to a place that held letters for clients and didn't ask questions once you'd paid a small retainer. Fourthclass surface mail. I'd erased most of the other copy and recorded our message in the resulting gap, leaving just enough of the program to identify it as the real thing. My wrist hurt. I wanted to stop, to lie down, to sleep. I knew that I'd lose my grip and fall soon, knew that the sharp black shoes I'd bought for my evening as Eddie Bax would lose their purchase and carry me down to Nighttown. But he rose in my mind like a cheap religious hologram, glowing, the enlarged chip on his Hawaiian shirt looming like a reconnaissance shot of some doomed urban nucleus. So I followed Dog and Molly through Lo Tek heaven, jury-rigged and jerry-built from scraps that even Nighttown didn't want.

The Killing Floor was eight meters on a side. A giant had threaded steel cable back and forth through a junkyard and drawn it all taut. It creaked when it moved, and it moved constantly, swaying — and bucking. As the gathering Lo Tekes arranged themselves on the shelf of

plywood surrounding it. The wood was silver with age, polished with long use and deeply etched with initials, threats, declarations of passion. This was suspended from a separate set of cables, which lost themselves in darkness beyond the raw white glare of the two ancient floods suspended above the Floor. A girl with teeth like Dog's hit the Floor on all fours. Her breasts were tattooed with indigo spirals. Then she was across the Floor, laughing, grappling with a boy who was drinking dark liquid from a liter flask. Lo Tek fashion ran to scars and tattoos. And teeth. The electricity they were tapping to light the Killing Floor seemed to be an exception to their overall aesthetic, made in the name of ... ritual, sport, art? I didn't know, but I could see that the Floor was something special. It had the look of having been assembled over generations. I held the useless shotgun under my jacket. Its hardness and heft were comforting, even though I had no more shells. And it came to me that I had no idea at all of what was really happening, or of what was supposed to happen. And that was the nature of my game, because I'd spent most of my life as a blind receptacle to be filled with other people's knowledge and then drained, spouting synthetic languages I'd never understand. A very technical boy. Sure. And then I noticed just how quiet the Lo Tek had become. He was there, at the edge of the light, taking in the Killing Floor and the gallery of silent Lo Tekes with a tourist's calm. And as our eyes met for the first time with mutual recognition, a memory kicked into place for me, of Paris, and the long Mercedes electric gliding through the rain to Notre Dame; mobile greenhouses, Japanese faces behind the glass, and a hundred Nikons rising in blind phototropism, flowers of steel and crystal. Behind his eyes, as they found me, those same shutters whirring.

I looked for Molly Millions, but she was gone. The Lo Tekes parted to let him step up onto the bench. He bowed, smiling, and stepped smoothly out of his sandals, leaving them side by side, perfectly aligned, and then he stepped down onto the Killing Floor. He came for me, across that shifting trampoline of scrap, as easily as any tourist padding across synthetic pile in any featureless hotel.

Molly hit the Floor, moving.

The Floor screamed.

It was miked and amplified with pickups riding the four fat coil springs at the corners and contact mikes taped at random to rusting machine fragments. Some where the Lo Tekes had an amp and a synthesizer, and now I made out the shapes of speakers overhead, above the cruel white floods. A drumbeat began, electronic, like an amplified heart, steady as a metronome. She'd removed her leather jacket and boots; her T-shirt was sleeveless, faint telltales of Chiba City circuitry traced along her thin arms. Her leather jeans gleamed under the floods. She began to dance. She flexed her knees, white feet tensed on a flattened gas tank, and the Killing Floor began to heave in response. The sound it made was like a world ending, like the wires that hold heaven snapping and coiling across the sky. He rode with it, for a few heartbeats, and then he moved, judging the movement of the Floor perfectly, like a man stepping from one flat stone to another in an ornamental garden. He pulled the tip from his thumb with the grace of

a man at ease with social gesture and flung it at her.

Under the floods, the filament was a refracting thread of rainbow. She threw herself flat and rolled, jackknifing up as the molecule whipped past, steel claws snapping into the light in what must have been an automatic

rictus of defense. The drum pulse quickened. and she bounced with it, her dark hair wild around the blank silver lenses, her mouth thin, lips taut with concentration. The Killing Floor boomed and roared, and the Lo Tekes were screaming their excitement. He retracted the filament to a whirling meter-wide circle of ghostly polychrome and spun it in front of him, thumbless hand held level with his sternum. A shield. And Molly seemed to let something go, something inside, and that was the real start of her mad-dog dance. She jumped, twisting, lunging sideways, landing with both feet on an alloy engine block wired directly to one of the coil springs. I cupped my hands over my ears and knelt in a vertigo of sound, thinking Floor and benches were on their way down, down to Nighttown◊ and I saw us tearing through the shanties, the wet wash, exploding on the tiles like rotten fruit. But the cables held and the Killing Floor rose and fell like a crazy metal sea. And Molly danced on it. And at the end, just before he made his final cast with the filament. I saw something in his face, an expression that didn't seem to belong there. It wasn't fear and it wasn't anger. I think it was disbelief, stunned in◊ comprehension mingled with pure aesthetic revulsion at what he was seeing, hearing-at what was happening to him. He retracted the whirling filament, the ghost disk shrinking to the size of a dinner plate as he whipped his arm above his head and brought it downv the thumbtip curving out for Molly like a live thing. The Floor carried her down, the molecule passing just above her head; the Floor whiplashed, lifting him into the path of the taut molecule. It should have passed harmlessly over his head and been withdrawn into its diamond◊hard sockeL It took his hand off just behind the wrist. There was a gap

in the Floor in front of him. and he went through it like a diver, with a strange deliberate grace, a defeated kamikaze on his way down to Nighttown. Partly, I think, he took the dive to buy himself a few seconds of the dignity of silence. She'd killed him with culture shock. The Lo Teks roared, but someone shut the amplifier off, and Molly rode the Killing Floor into silence hanging on now. her face white and blank, until the pitching slowed and there was only a faint pinging of tortured metal and the grating of rust on rust. We searched the Floor for the severed hand, but we never found it. AH we found was a graceful curve in one piece of rusted steel where the molecule went through. Its edge was bright as new chrome. We never learned whether the Yakuza had accepted our terms, or even whether they got our message. As far as I know, their program is still waiting for Eddie Bax on a shelf in the back room of a gift shop on the third level of Sydney Central-5. Probably they sold the original back to Ono-Sendai months ago. But maybe they did get the pirates broadcast, because nobodys come looking for me yeti and it's been nearly a year. If they do come they'll have a long climb up through the dark, past Dog's sentries and I don't look much like Eddie Brue these days. I let Molly take care of that; with a local anesthetic. And my new teeth have almost grown in. I decided to stay up here. When I looked out across the Killing Floor, before he came, I saw how hollow I was. And I knew I was sick of being a bucket. So now I climb down and visit Jones, almost every night. We're partners now, Jones and I, and Molly Millions too. Molly handles our business in the Drome. Jones is still in Funland, but he has a bigger tank, with fresh seawater trucked in once a week. And he has his junk, when he needs it. He still talks

to the kids with his frame of lights, but he talks to me on a new display unit in a shed that I rent there, a better unit than the one he used in the navy. And we're all making good money, better money than I made before, because Jones's Squid can read the traces of anything that anyone ever stored in me, and he gives it to me on the display unit in languages I can understand. So we're learning a lot about all my former clients. And one day I'll have a surgeon dig all the silicon out of my amygdalae, and I'll live with my own memories and nobody else's, the way other people do. But not for a while. In the meantime it's really okay up here, way up in the dark, smoking a Chinese filtertip and listening to the condensation that drips from the geodesics. Real quiet up here-unless a pair of Lo Teks decide to dance on the Killing Floor. It's educational, too. With Jones to help me figure things out◇ I'm getting to be the most technical boy in town.

CHAPTER 7.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE.

The story and celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe are not so familiar to Catholics, or so well appreciated by others, as to render useless or uninteresting, especially in this month of Mary, an account of her veneration in Mexico. What this actually, veritably is, no writer, so far as we are aware, has yet undertaken to show—at least, from such literary evidences of popular conviction as best illustrate the subject. How anything supernatural could shine or blossom in a land of wars, robbers, Indians, is an old doubt, notwithstanding that revelations have taken place in countries which needed them less than did the once idolatrous Aztecs. Let us now endeavor to make clear what the true nature of the miracle of Guadalupe is; to exhibit its real veneration by means of testimonies borrowed from the worthiest Mexicans; and to prove that the faith of Guadalupe is not shallow, but long and well-established, widespread, and sincere.

Here follows a brief history of the renowned miracle of Tepeyac. In 1531, ten years after the conquest, the pious and simple Indian, Juan Diego, was on his way to the village of Guadalupe, near the city of Mexico, there to receive the instructions of some reverend fathers. Suddenly, at the hill of Tepeyac appeared to him the

Blessed Virgin, who commanded her amazed client to go forthwith to the bishop, and make known that she wished a church to be built in her honor upon that spot. Next day the Blessed Virgin returned to hear the regret of Juan Diego that he could not obtain the ear of the bishop. "Go back," said the Holy Lady, "and announce that I, Mary, Mother of God, send thee." The Indian again sought his bishop, who this time required that he should bring some token of the presence and command of his patroness. On the 12th of December, Juan Diego again saw Our Lady, who ordered him to climb to the top of the barren rock of Tepeyac and there gather roses for her. To his great astonishment,[190] he found the roses flourishing on the rock, and brought them to his patroness, who threw them into his tilma or apron, and said: "Go back to the bishop and show him these credentials." Again came the Indian before the bishop, and, opening his tilma to show the roses, lo! there appeared impressed upon it a marvellous image of the Blessed Virgin. The bishop was awestruck and overcome. The miraculous occurrence was made known and proved. Processions and Masses celebrated it, and its fame spread far and wide. A large new cathedral was erected on the hill of Guadalupe, and multitudes from all parts flocked thither. Specially noteworthy is the fact that the new shrine to Our Lady was erected in the place where once the Indians worshipped their goddess Totantzin, mother of other deities, and protectress of fruits and fields. The marvellous picture was found impressed upon the rudest cloth, that of a poor Indian's apron, the last upon which to attempt a painter's artifice—and hence the greater wonder, the artistic testimony regarding which is something formidable and wonderful in itself.

What is known in Mexico as the Day of Guadalupe is extraordinary as a popular manifestation. On the 12th of December every year, fifteen or twenty thousand Indians congregate in the village of that name to celebrate the anniversary of the Marvellous Apparition. The whole way to the famous suburb is crowded with cabs, riders, and pedestrians of the poorest sort, a great number of them bare-footed. All day there is an ever-moving multitude to and from the village, and, indeed, the majority of the inhabitants of the city of Mexico seem to be included in the parties, families, and caravans of strangely contrasted people that wend their way to the shrines on the hill. The most numerous class of pilgrims are the saddest and the most wretched—we mean the ill-clad, ill-featured, simple, devoted Indians. On them the luxuries of the rich, the passions of the fighters, the intrigues of politicians, have borne with ruinous effect. Drudging men and women; hewers of wood and drawers of water; bare-breasted peasants, with faces dusky and dusty, the same who any day may be seen on Mexican roads carrying burdens of all sorts strapped to their backs; children in plenty, bare, unkempt, untidy, and sometimes swaddled about their mothers' shoulders; numerous babes at the breast, half-nude—these are some of the features in a not overdrawn picture of the primitive poverty which assembles at Guadalupe, and, in fact, in every Mexican multitude whatsoever. Perhaps nowhere outside of Mexico and the race of Indians can such a problem of multitudinous poverty be seen. Its victims are those over whom the desert-storms of wars and feuds innumerable have passed, and, spite of all their wanderings as a race, they yet wear the guise and character of tribes who are still trying to find their way

out of a wilderness or a barren waste. Let enthusiasts for self-willed liberty say what they will, wars of fifty years are anything but conservative of happiness, cleanliness, good morals, and that true liberty which should always accompany them. However fondly we cherish our ideals of freedom, we must yet bear in mind the wholesome, wholesale truth of history, that no actual liberty is reached by the dagger and guillotine, or by massacre, or is founded on bad blood or bad faith. Those who lately celebrated the execution of Louis XVI. and the intellectual system of murder established by Robespierre, and not totally disapproved[191] by Mr. Carlyle, have good reason to be cautious as to how they offend this menacing truth.

A cathedral and four chapels are the principal structures of the picturesque hillside village of Guadalupe. By a winding ascent among steep, herbless rocks, tufted here and there with the thorny green slabs of the cactus, is reached at some distance from the cathedral the highest of the chapels, which contains the original imprint of the figure of Our Lady. Looking up to the chapel from the crowd at the cathedral may be seen a striking picture, not unlike what Northern travellers have been taught to fancy of the middle ages, but the elements of which are still abundant in the civilization of Europe. It is simply the curious crowd of pilgrims going up and down the hill, to and from the quaint old chapel, built perhaps centuries ago. The scene from the height itself is charming and impressive. The widespread valley of Mexico—including lakes, woods, villages, and a rich and substantial city, with towers and domes that take enchantment from distance—is all before the eye in one serene view of landscape. In the village there is a

multitude like another Israel, sitting in the dust or standing near the pulquerias, or moving about near the church door. As Guadalupe is for the most part composed of adobe houses, and as its mass of humble visitors have little finery to distinguish their brown personages from the dust out of which man was originally created, the complexion of the general scene which they constitute can only be described as earth-like and earth-worn. Elsewhere than in a superficial glance at the poverty of Guadalupe we must seek for the meaning of its spectacle. Is this swarming, dull-colored scene but an animated fiction? No—it is the natural seeking the supernatural. And the supernatural—what is it? It is redemption and immortality, our Lord and Our Lady, the angels and saints.

The cathedral is a building of picturesque angles, but, except that it is spacious, as so many of the Mexican churches are, makes no particular boast of architecture. A copy of the marvellous *tilma*, over the altar, poetically represents Our Lady in a blue cloak covered with stars, and a robe said to be of crimson and gold, her hands clasped, and her foot on a crescent supported by a cherub. This is the substance of a description of it given by a traveller who had better opportunities for seeing it closely than had the present writer during the fiesta of Guadalupe in 1867. Whether the original picture is rude or not, from being impressed upon a blanket, he has not personal knowledge, though aware that it has been described as rude. Nevertheless, its idea and design are beautiful and tender. Everywhere in Mexico it is the favorite and, indeed, the most lovely presentment of Our Lady. Like a compassionate angel of the twilight, it looks out of many a shrine, and, among all the images for which

the Mexican Church is noted, none is perhaps more essentially ideal, and, in that point of view, *real*. Where it appears wrought in a sculpture of 1686, by Francisco Alberto, on the side of San Agustin's at the capital, it is, though quaint, very admirable for its purity and gentleness. Time respects it, and the birds have built their nests near it. The various chapels in and about the city dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe are recognized by the star-mantled figure. The Baths of the Peñon, the cathedral at the Plaza, the suburb of Tacubaya, have each their pictorial witnesses of the faith of Guadalupe; and to say that its manifestation[192] abounds in Mexico is but to state a fact of commonplace. Rich and poor venerate the tradition of the Marvellous Appearance, now for three centuries celebrated, and always, it seems, by multitudes.

What else is to be seen at Guadalupe besides its crowd and its altar is not worthy of extended remark. The organs of the cathedral are high and admirably carved; over the altar's porphyry columns are cherubim and seraphim, all too dazzling with paint and gold. Here, as in other places of Spanish worship, the figures of the crucifixion have been designed with a painful realism. Outside of the church a party of Indians, displaying gay feathers, danced in honor of the feast, as their sires must have done hundreds of years ago. Inside it was densely crowded with visitors or pilgrims, and far too uncomfortable at times to make possible the most accurate observation of its ornaments. But it may be well to repeat that the church is divided into three naves by eight columns, and is about two hundred feet long, one hundred and twenty feet broad, and one hundred high. The total cost of the building, and, we presume, its altars,

is reckoned as high as \$800,000, most of it, if not all, contributed by alms. The altar at which is placed the image of Our Lady is said to have cost \$381,000, its tabernacle containing 3,257 marks of silver, and the gold frame of the sacred picture 4,050 castellanos. The church's ornaments are calculated to be worth more than \$123,000. Two of its candlesticks alone weighed 2,213 castellanos in gold, and one lamp 750 marks of silver. To Cristobal de Aguirre, who, in 1660, built a hermitage on the summit of Tepeyac, we owe the foundation of the chapel there. It was not, however, until 1747 that Our Lady of Guadalupe was formally declared the patroness of the whole of Mexico.

Of the many celebrations of Mexico, none are altogether as significant as that of Guadalupe. It has become national, and, in a certain sense, religiously patriotic. Maximilian and Carlota, the writer was informed, washed the feet of the poor near the altar of Our Lady, according to a well-known religious custom. The best men and women of Mexico have venerated the Marvellous Appearance—which, however amusing it may be to those who are scarcely as radical in their belief in nature as conservative in their views of the supernatural, is but a circumstance to the older traditions which have entered into the mind of poetry and filled the heart of worship. What of the wonderful happenings to the great fathers of the church and the mediæval saints, all worshippers of unquestionable sublimation? Say what you please, doubt as you may, saints, angels, miracles, abide, and form the very testament of belief. There is not a Catholic in the world who does not believe in miracle, whose faith is not to unbelievers a standing miracle of belief in a miracle the most prodigious, the most

portentous; and yet to him it has only become natural to believe in the supernatural. The Mexicans venerate what three centuries and uncounted millions have affirmed, whence it appears that their veneration is not a conceit or humbug, but at root a faith.

CHAPTER 8.

**RIG VEDA AMERICANUS: SACRED SONGS
OF THE ANCIENT MEXICANS. HYMN TO
THE ALL-MOTHER**

*BRINTON'S LIBRARY OF ABORIGINAL AMERICAN LITERATURE.
NUMBER VIII.*

Hymn to the Mother of the Gods._

1. Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers
scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth

2. Hail to our mother, who poured forth flowers in
scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth

3. Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers
who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth

4. Hail to our mother, who poured forth white flowers
who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth

5. Hail to the goddess who shines in the thorn bush
butterfly.

6. Ho! she is our mother, goddess of the earth, she
the desert to the wild beasts, and causes them to live

7. Thus, thus, you see her to be an ever-fresh mother
toward all flesh.

8. And as you see the goddess of the earth do to the
also does she toward the green herbs and the fishes

CHAPTER 9.

HYMN TO CHIMALIPAN IN PARTURITION

Hymn to Chimalipan in Parturition._

1. Chimalipan was a virgin when she brought forth battles; Chimalipan was a virgin when she brought forth battles.

2. On the Coatepec was her labor; on the mountain as he became a man truly the earth was shaken, even

Notes.

The goddess Chimalipan is not mentioned by the author in command; but from the tenor of the hymn it is evident a synonym for the virgin mother of Huitzilopochtli, referred to by his title Yautlatoani (see ante, she dwelt upon the Coatepetl, the Serpent Mountain, Tulan. For a full discussion of this myth I refer to "The Toltecs an Historic Nationality?" in Proceedings Phil. Soc. for Sept. 1887, and American Hero-Myths (Phila., 1881).

The Gloss distinctly states that the mother of Huitzilopochtli referred to in the hymn. We must regard Chimalipan to be identical with Chimalman, who, according to another myth, was a virgin, and was divinely impregnated by the descent of the All-father in the shape of a bunch of feathers.

In other myths she is mentioned as also the mother of the enemies and the brothers of Huitzilopochtli, referred to in the second of this collection of chants.

PART III.

YELLOW FEVER

CHAPTER 10.

DÉSIRÉE'S BABY

by Kate Chopin

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmondé drove over to L'Abri to see Désirée and the baby. It made her laugh to think of Désirée with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Désirée was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmondé had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar. The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Maïs kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmondé abandoned every speculation but the one that Désirée had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,—the idol of Valmondé. It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for

he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles. Monsieur Valmondé grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the corbeille from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married. Madame Valmondé had not seen Désirée and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easygoing and indulgent lifetime. The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself. Madame Valmondé bent her portly figure over Désirée and kissed her,

holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child. "This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmondé in those days. "I knew you would be astonished," laughed Désirée, "at the way he has grown. The little cochon de lait! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and finger-nails,—real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning Is n't it true, Zandrine?" The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, "Mais si, Madame." "And the way he cries," went on Désirée, "is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin." Madame Valmondé had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields. "Yes, the child has grown, has changed;" said Madame Valmondé, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. "What does Armand say?" Désirée's face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself. "Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not,—that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it is n't true I know he says that to please me. And mamma," she added, drawing Madame Valmondé's head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, "he has n't punished one of them—not one of them—since baby is born. Even Négrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work—he only laughed, and said Négrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, I'm so happy; it frightens me." What Désirée said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny's imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what

made the gentle Désirée so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand's dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her. When the baby was about three months old, Désirée awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband's manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Désirée was miserable enough to die. She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her peignoir, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys—half naked too— stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Désirée's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood

turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face. She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes. She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright. Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it. "Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. "Armand," she panted once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? tell me." He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly. "It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white." A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically. "As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child. When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmondé. "My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live." The

answer that came was as brief: "My own Désirée: Come home to Valmondé; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child." When the letter reached Désirée she went with it to her husband's study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there. In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words. He said nothing. "Shall I go, Armand?" she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense. "Yes, go." "Do you want me to go?" "Yes, I want you to go." He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife's soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name. She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back. "Good-by, Armand," she moaned. He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate. Désirée went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches. It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton. Desiree had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmondé. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds. She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick

along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again. Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze. A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette . Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the corbeille had been of rare quality. The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribblings that Désirée had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Désirée's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love:— "But, above all," she wrote, "night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery."

CHAPTER 11.

THE YELLOW WALLPAPER



It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see, he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co-heirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid; but I don't care—there is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself,—before him, at least,—and that makes me very tired.

don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery, at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playground and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off—the paper—in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate, and provoke study, and when you follow the lame, uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard-of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering, unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able—to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I *cannot* be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wallpaper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would

be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

“You know the place is doing you good,” he said, “and really, dear, I don’t care to renovate the house just for a three months’ rental.”

“Then do let us go downstairs,” I said, “there are such pretty rooms there.”

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down cellar if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is as airy and comfortable a room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I’m really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deep-shaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So

I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to

write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fire-works in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside-down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy-store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from

downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wallpaper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother—they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed, which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit—only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect, and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely, shaded, winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wallpaper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded, and where the sun is just so, I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to sulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to

see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps *because* of the wallpaper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down, I believe—and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of “debased Romanesque” with *delirium tremens*—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the cross-lights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,—the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap, I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod-liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness, I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wallpaper.

If we had not used it that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all. I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more,—I am too wise,—but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around, just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper *did* move, and when I came back

John was awake.

"What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold."

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

"Why darling!" said he, "our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

“The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better. I feel really much easier about you.”

“I don’t weigh a bit more,” said I, “nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening, when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away.”

“Bless her little heart!” said he with a big hug; “she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let’s improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!”

“And you won’t go away?” I asked gloomily.

“Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really, dear, you are better!”

“Better in body perhaps”—I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

“My darling,” said he, “I beg of you, for my sake and for our child’s sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?”

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I didn’t realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind,—that dim sub-pattern,—but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the

pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed, he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit, I am convinced, for, you see, I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake,—oh, no!

The fact is, I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis, that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times *looking at the paper!* And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry—asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wallpaper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was *because* of the wallpaper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful. I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern *does* move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them

off and turns them upside-down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me—the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight, and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not *alive!*

She tried to get me out of the room—it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner—I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If

that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will *not* move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get *me* out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my

shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why, there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said—very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it, of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

CHAPTER 12.

IN THE LAND OF THE FREE

See, Little One—the hills in the morning sun. There is thy home for years to come. It is very beautiful and thou wilt be very happy there.”

The Little One looked up into his mother’s face in perfect faith. He was engaged in the pleasant occupation of sucking a sweetmeat; but that did not prevent him from gurgling responsively.

“Yes, my olive bud; there is where thy father is making a fortune for thee. Thy father! Oh, wilt thou not be glad to behold his dear face. ’Twas for thee I left him.”

The Little One ducked his chin sympathetically against his mother’s knee. She lifted him on to her lap. He was two years old, a round, dimple-cheeked boy with bright brown eyes and a sturdy little frame.

“Ah! Ah! Ah! Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!” puffed he, mocking a tugboat steaming by.

San Francisco’s waterfront was lined with ships and steamers, while other craft, large and small, including a couple of white transports from the Philippines, lay at anchor here and there off shore. It was some time before the *Eastern Queen* could get docked, and even after that was accomplished, a lone Chinaman who had been waiting on the wharf for an hour was detained that much longer by men with the initials U. S. C. on their caps,

before he could board the steamer and welcome his wife and child.

“This is thy son,” announced the happy Lae Choo.

Hom Hing lifted the child, felt of his little body and limbs, gazed into his face with proud and joyous eyes; then turned inquiringly to a customs officer at his elbow.

“That’s a fine boy you have there,” said the man. “Where was he born?”

“In China,” answered Hom Hing, swinging the Little One on his right shoulder, preparatory to leading his wife off the steamer.

“Ever been to America before?”

“No, not he,” answered the father with a happy laugh.

The customs officer beckoned to another.

“This little fellow,” said he, “is visiting America for the first time.”

The other customs officer stroked his chin reflectively.

“Good day,” said Hom Hing.

“Wait!” commanded one of the officers. “You cannot go just yet.”

“What more now?” asked Hom Hing.

“I’m afraid,” said the first customs officer, “that we cannot allow the boy to go ashore. There is nothing in the papers that you have shown us—your wife’s papers and your own—having any bearing upon the child.”

“There was no child when the papers were made out,” returned Hom Hing. He spoke calmly; but there was apprehension in his eyes and in his tightening grip on his son.

164“What is it? What is it?” quavered Lae Choo, who understood a little English.

The second customs officer regarded her pityingly.

“I don’t like this part of the business,” he muttered.

The first officer turned to Hom Hing and in an official tone of voice, said:

“Seeing that the boy has no certificate entitling him to admission to this country you will have to leave him with us.”

“Leave my boy!” exclaimed Hom Hing.

“Yes; he will be well taken care of, and just as soon as we can hear from Washington he will be handed over to you.”

“But,” protested Hom Hing, “he is my son.”

“We have no proof,” answered the man with a shrug of his shoulders; “and even if so we cannot let him pass without orders from the Government.”

“He is my son,” reiterated Hom Hing, slowly and solemnly. “I am a Chinese merchant and have been in business in San Francisco for many years. When my wife told to me one morning that she dreamed of a green tree with spreading branches and one beautiful red flower growing thereon, I answered her that I wished my son to be born in our country, and for her to prepare to go to China. My wife complied with my wish. After my son was born my mother fell sick and my wife nursed and cared for her; then my father, too, fell sick, and my wife also nursed and cared for him. For twenty moons my wife care for and nurse the old people, and when they die they bless her and my son, and I send for her to return to me. I had no fear of trouble. I was a Chinese merchant and my son was my son.”

“Very good, Hom Hing,” replied the first officer. “Nevertheless, we take your son.”

“No, you not take him; he my son too.”

It was Lae Choo. Snatching the child from his father’s arms she held and covered him with her own.

The officers conferred together for a few moments; then one drew Hom Hing aside and spoke in his ear.

Resignedly Hom Hing bowed his head, then approached his wife. "Tis the law," said he, speaking in Chinese, "and 'twill be but for a little while—until tomorrow's sun arises."

"You, too," reproached Lae Choo in a voice eloquent with pain. But accustomed to obedience she yielded the boy to her husband, who in turn delivered him to the first officer. The Little One protested lustily against the transfer; but his mother covered her face with her sleeve and his father silently led her away. Thus was the law of the land complied with.

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ay was breaking. Lae Choo, who had been awake all night, dressed herself, then awoke her husband.

"Tis the morn," she cried. "Go, bring our son."

The man rubbed his eyes and arose upon his elbow so that he could see out of the window. A pale star was visible in the sky. The petals of a lily in a bowl on the window-sill were unfurled.

"Tis not yet time," said he, laying his head down again.

"Not yet time. Ah, all the time that I lived before yesterday is not so much as the time that has been since my little one was taken from me."

The mother threw herself down beside the bed and covered her face.

Hom Hing turned on the light, and touching his wife's bowed head with a sympathetic hand inquired if she had slept.

"Slept!" she echoed, weepingly. "Ah, how could I close my eyes with my arms empty 167 of the little body that has filled them every night for more than twenty moons! You do not know—man—what it is to miss the feel of the little fingers and the little toes and the soft round limbs of your little one. Even in the darkness his darling eyes used to shine up to mine, and often have I fallen into slumber with his pretty babble at my ear. And now, I see him not; I touch him not; I hear him not. My baby, my little fat one!"

"Now! Now! Now!" consoled Hom Hing, patting his wife's shoulder reassuringly; "there is no need to grieve so; he will soon gladden you again. There cannot be any law that would keep a child from its mother!"

Lae Choo dried her tears.

"You are right, my husband," she meekly murmured. She arose and stepped about the apartment, setting things to rights. The box of presents she had brought for her California friends had been opened the evening before; and silks, embroideries, carved ivories, ornamental lacquer-ware, brasses, camphorwood boxes, fans, and chinaware were scattered around in confused heaps. In the midst of unpacking the thought of her child in the hands of strangers had overpowered her, and she had left everything to crawl into bed and weep.

168 Having arranged her gifts in order she stepped out on to the deep balcony.

The star had faded from view and there were bright streaks in the western sky. Lae Choo looked down the street and around. Beneath the flat occupied by her and her husband were quarters for a number of bachelor Chinamen, and she could hear them from where she stood, taking their early morning breakfast. Below their dining-room was her husband's grocery store. Across the

way was a large restaurant. Last night it had been resplendent with gay colored lanterns and the sound of music. The rejoicings over “the completion of the moon,” by Quong Sum’s firstborn, had been long and loud, and had caused her to tie a handkerchief over her ears. She, a bereaved mother, had it not in her heart to rejoice with other parents. This morning the place was more in accord with her mood. It was still and quiet. The revellers had dispersed or were asleep.

A roly-poly woman in black sateen, with long pendant earrings in her ears, looked up from the street below and waved her a smiling greeting. It was her old neighbor, Kuie Hoe, the wife of the gold embosser, Mark Sing. With her was a little boy in yellow jacket and lavender pantaloons. Lae Choo remembered him as a baby. She used to like to play with him in those days when she had no child of her own. What a long time ago that seemed! She caught her breath in a sigh, and laughed instead.

“Why are you so merry?” called her husband from within.

“Because my Little One is coming home,” answered Lae Choo. “I am a happy mother—a happy mother.”

She pattered into the room with a smile on her face.

The noon hour had arrived. The rice was steaming in the bowls and a fragrant dish of chicken and bamboo shoots was awaiting Hom Hing. Not for one moment had Lae Choo paused to rest during the morning hours; her activity had been ceaseless. Every now and again, however, she had raised her eyes to the gilded clock on the curiously carved mantelpiece. Once, she had exclaimed:

“Why so long, oh! why so long?” Then apostrophizing

herself: "Lae Choo, be happy. The Little One is coming! The Little One is coming!" Several times she burst into tears and several times she laughed aloud.

Hom Hing entered the room; his arms hung down by his side.

"The Little One!" shrieked Lae Choo.

170 "They bid me call tomorrow."

With a moan the mother sank to the floor.

The noon hour passed. The dinner remained on the table.

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he winter rains were over: the spring had come to California, flushing the hills with green and causing an ever-changing pageant of flowers to pass over them. But there was no spring in Lae Choo's heart, for the Little One remained away from her arms. He was being kept in a mission. White women were caring for him, and though for one full moon he had pined for his mother and refused to be comforted he was now apparently happy and contented. Five moons or five months had gone by since the day he had passed with Lae Choo through the Golden Gate; but the great Government at Washington still delayed sending the answer which would return him to his parents.

Hom Hing was disconsolately rolling up and down the balls in his abacus box when a keen-faced young man stepped into his store.

"What news?" asked the Chinese merchant.

"This!" The young man brought forth 171 a typewritten letter. Hom Hing read the words:

“Re Chinese child, alleged to be the son of Hom Hing, Chinese merchant, doing business at 425 Clay street, San Francisco.

“Same will have attention as soon as possible.”

Hom Hing returned the letter, and without a word continued his manipulation of the counting machine.

“Have you anything to say?” asked the young man.

“Nothing. They have sent the same letter fifteen times before. Have you not yourself showed it to me?”

“True!” The young man eyed the Chinese merchant furtively. He had a proposition to make and he was pondering whether or not the time was opportune.

“How is your wife?” he inquired solicitously—and diplomatically.

Hom Hing shook his head mournfully.

“She seems less every day,” he replied. “Her food she takes only when I bid her and her tears fall continually. She finds no pleasure in dress or flowers and cares not to see her friends. Her eyes stare all night. I think before another moon she will pass into the land of spirits.”

172 “No!” exclaimed the young man, genuinely startled.

“If the boy not come home I lose my wife sure,” continued Hom Hing with bitter sadness.

“It’s not right,” cried the young man indignantly. Then he made his proposition.

The Chinese father’s eyes brightened exceedingly.

“Will I like you to go to Washington and make them give you the paper to restore my son?” cried he. “How can you ask when you know my heart’s desire?”

“Then,” said the young fellow, “I will start next week. I am anxious to see this thing through if only for the sake of your wife’s peace of mind.”

"I will call her. To hear what you think to do will make her glad," said Hom Hing.

He called a message to Lae Choo upstairs through a tube in the wall.

In a few moments she appeared, listless, wan, and hollow-eyed; but when her husband told her the young lawyer's suggestion she became as one electrified; her form straightened, her eyes glistened; the color flushed to her cheeks.

"Oh," she cried, turning to James Clancy, "You are a hundred man good!"

173The young man felt somewhat embarrassed; his eyes shifted a little under the intense gaze of the Chinese mother.

"Well, we must get your boy for you," he responded. "Of course"—turning to Hom Hing—"it will cost a little money. You can't get fellows to hurry the Government for you without gold in your pocket."

Hom Hing stared blankly for a moment. Then: "How much do you want, Mr. Clancy?" he asked quietly.

"Well, I will need at least five hundred to start with."

Hom Hing cleared his throat.

"I think I told to you the time I last paid you for writing letters for me and seeing the Custom boss here that nearly all I had was gone!"

"Oh, well then we won't talk about it, old fellow. It won't harm the boy to stay where he is, and your wife may get over it all right."

"What that you say?" quavered Lae Choo.

James Clancy looked out of the window.

"He says," explained Hom Hing in English, "that to get our boy we have to have much money."

174"Money! Oh, yes."

Lae Choo nodded her head.

"I have not got the money to give him."

For a moment Lae Choo gazed wonderingly from one face to the other; then, comprehension dawning upon her, with swift anger, pointing to the lawyer, she cried: "You not one hundred man good; you just common white man."

"Yes, ma'am," returned James Clancy, bowing and smiling ironically.

Hom Hing pushed his wife behind him and addressed the lawyer again: "I might try," said he, "to raise something; but five hundred—it is not possible."

"What about four?"

"I tell you I have next to nothing left and my friends are not rich."

"Very well!"

The lawyer moved leisurely toward the door, pausing on its threshold to light a cigarette.

"Stop, white man; white man, stop!"

Lae Choo, panting and terrified, had started forward and now stood beside him, clutching his sleeve excitedly.

"You say you can go to get paper to bring my Little One to me if Hom Hing give you five hundred dollars?"

175The lawyer nodded carelessly; his eyes were intent upon the cigarette which would not take the fire from the match.

"Then you go get paper. If Hom Hing not can give you five hundred dollars—I give you perhaps what more that much."

She slipped a heavy gold bracelet from her wrist and held it out to the man. Mechanically he took it.

"I go get more!"

She scurried away, disappearing behind the door through which she had come.

“Oh, look here, I can’t accept this,” said James Clancy, walking back to Hom Hing and laying down the bracelet before him.

“It’s all right,” said Hom Hing, seriously, “pure China gold. My wife’s parent give it to her when we married.”

“But I can’t take it anyway,” protested the young man.

“It is all same as money. And you want money to go to Washington,” replied Hom Hing in a matter of fact manner.

“See, my jade earrings—my gold buttons—my hairpins—my comb of pearl and my rings—one, two, three, four, five rings; very good—very good—all same much money. I give them all to you. You take and bring me paper for my Little One.”

176Lae Choo piled up her jewels before the lawyer.

Hom Hing laid a restraining hand upon her shoulder. “Not all, my wife,” he said in Chinese. He selected a ring—his gift to Lae Choo when she dreamed of the tree with the red flower. The rest of the jewels he pushed toward the white man.

“Take them and sell them,” said he. “They will pay your fare to Washington and bring you back with the paper.”

For one moment James Clancy hesitated. He was not a sentimental man; but something within him arose against accepting such payment for his services.

“They are good, good,” pleadingly asserted Lae Choo, seeing his hesitation.

Whereupon he seized the jewels, thrust them into his coat pocket, and walked rapidly away from the store.

Lae Choo followed after the missionary woman through the mission nursery school. Her heart was beating so high with happiness that she could scarcely breathe. The paper had come at last—the precious paper which gave Hom Hing and his 177 wife the right to the possession of their own child. It was ten months now since he had been taken from them—ten months since the sun had ceased to shine for Lae Choo.

The room was filled with children—most of them wee tots, but none so wee as her own. The mission woman talked as she walked. She told Lae Choo that little Kim, as he had been named by the school, was the pet of the place, and that his little tricks and ways amused and delighted every one. He had been rather difficult to manage at first and had cried much for his mother; “but children so soon forget, and after a month he seemed quite at home and played around as bright and happy as a bird.”

“Yes,” responded Lae Choo. “Oh, yes, yes!”

But she did not hear what was said to her. She was walking in a maze of anticipatory joy.

“Wait here, please,” said the mission woman, placing Lae Choo in a chair. “The very youngest ones are having their breakfast.”

She withdrew for a moment—it seemed like an hour to the mother—then she reappeared leading by the hand a little boy dressed in blue cotton overalls and white-soled shoes. The little boy’s face was round and dimpled and his eyes were very bright.

178 “Little One, ah, my Little One!” cried Lae Choo.

She fell on her knees and stretched her hungry arms toward her son.

But the Little One shrunk from her and tried to hide himself in the folds of the white woman's skirt.

"Go'way, go'way!" he bade his mother.

CHAPTER 13.

THE KING IN YELLOW

Along the shore the cloud waves break,
The twin suns sink behind the lake,
The shadows lengthen
In Carcosa.
Strange is the night where black stars rise,
And strange moons circle through the skies
But stranger still is
Lost Carcosa.
Songs that the Hyades shall sing,
Where flap the tatters of the King,
Must die unheard in
Dim Carcosa.
Song of my soul, my voice is dead;
Die thou, unsung, as tears unshed
Shall dry and die in
Lost Carcosa.

Cassilda's Song in "The King in Yellow," Act i, Scene 2.

THE REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS

I

"Ne raillons pas les fous; leur folie dure plus longtemps que la nôtre.... Voilà toute la différence."

Toward the end of the year 1920 the Government of the United States had practically completed the programme,

adopted during the last months of President Winthrop's administration. The country was apparently tranquil. Everybody knows how the Tariff and Labour questions were settled. The war with Germany, incident on that country's seizure of the Samoan Islands, had left no visible scars upon the republic, and the temporary occupation of Norfolk by the invading army had been forgotten in the joy over repeated naval victories, and the subsequent ridiculous plight of General Von Gartenlaube's forces in the State of New Jersey. The Cuban and Hawaiian investments had paid one hundred per cent and the territory of Samoa was well worth its cost as a coaling station. The country was in a superb state of defence. Every coast city had been well supplied with land fortifications; the army under the parental eye of the General Staff, organized according to the Prussian system, had been increased to 300,000 men, with a territorial reserve of a million; and six magnificent squadrons of cruisers and battle-ships patrolled the six stations of the navigable seas, leaving a steam reserve amply fitted to control home waters. The gentlemen from the West had at last been constrained to acknowledge that a college for the training of diplomats was as necessary as law schools are for the training of barristers; consequently we were no longer represented abroad by incompetent patriots. The nation was prosperous; Chicago, for a moment paralyzed after a second great fire, had risen from its ruins, white and imperial, and more beautiful than the white city which had been built for its plaything in 1893. Everywhere good architecture was replacing bad, and even in New York, a sudden craving for decency had swept away a great portion of the existing horrors. Streets had been widened, properly

paved and lighted, trees had been planted, squares laid out, elevated structures demolished and underground roads built to replace them. The new government buildings and barracks were fine bits of architecture, and the long system of stone quays which completely surrounded the island had been turned into parks which proved a god-send to the population. The subsidizing of the state theatre and state opera brought its own reward. The United States National Academy of Design was much like European institutions of the same kind. Nobody envied the Secretary of Fine Arts, either his cabinet position or his portfolio. The Secretary of Forestry and Game Preservation had a much easier time, thanks to the new system of National Mounted Police. We had profited well by the latest treaties with France and England; the exclusion of foreign-born Jews as a measure of self-preservation, the settlement of the new independent negro state of Suanee, the checking of immigration, the new laws concerning naturalization, and the gradual centralization of power in the executive all contributed to national calm and prosperity. When the Government solved the Indian problem and squadrons of Indian cavalry scouts in native costume were substituted for the pitiable organizations tacked on to the tail of skeletonized regiments by a former Secretary of War, the nation drew a long sigh of relief. When, after the colossal Congress of Religions, bigotry and intolerance were laid in their graves and kindness and charity began to draw warring sects together, many thought the millennium had arrived, at least in the new world which after all is a world by itself.

But self-preservation is the first law, and the United States had to look on in helpless sorrow as Germany,

Italy, Spain and Belgium writhed in the throes of Anarchy, while Russia, watching from the Caucasus, stooped and bound them one by one.

In the city of New York the summer of 1899 was signalized by the dismantling of the Elevated Railroads. The summer of 1900 will live in the memories of New York people for many a cycle; the Dodge Statue was removed in that year. In the following winter began that agitation for the repeal of the laws prohibiting suicide which bore its final fruit in the month of April, 1920, when the first Government Lethal Chamber was opened on Washington Square.

I had walked down that day from Dr. Archer's house on Madison Avenue, where I had been as a mere formality. Ever since that fall from my horse, four years before, I had been troubled at times with pains in the back of my head and neck, but now for months they had been absent, and the doctor sent me away that day saying there was nothing more to be cured in me. It was hardly worth his fee to be told that; I knew it myself. Still I did not grudge him the money. What I minded was the mistake which he made at first. When they picked me up from the pavement where I lay unconscious, and somebody had mercifully sent a bullet through my horse's head, I was carried to Dr. Archer, and he, pronouncing my brain affected, placed me in his private asylum where I was obliged to endure treatment for insanity. At last he decided that I was well, and I, knowing that my mind had always been as sound as his, if not sounder, "paid my tuition" as he jokingly called it, and left. I told him, smiling, that I would get even with him for his mistake, and he laughed heartily, and asked me to call once in a while. I did so, hoping for a chance to

even up accounts, but he gave me none, and I told him I would wait.

The fall from my horse had fortunately left no evil results; on the contrary it had changed my whole character for the better. From a lazy young man about town, I had become active, energetic, temperate, and above all—oh, above all else—ambitious. There was only one thing which troubled me, I laughed at my own uneasiness, and yet it troubled me.

During my convalescence I had bought and read for the first time, *The King in Yellow*. I remember after finishing the first act that it occurred to me that I had better stop. I started up and flung the book into the fireplace; the volume struck the barred grate and fell open on the hearth in the firelight. If I had not caught a glimpse of the opening words in the second act I should never have finished it, but as I stooped to pick it up, my eyes became riveted to the open page, and with a cry of terror, or perhaps it was of joy so poignant that I suffered in every nerve, I snatched the thing out of the coals and crept shaking to my bedroom, where I read it and reread it, and wept and laughed and trembled with a horror which at times assails me yet. This is the thing that troubles me, for I cannot forget Carcosa where black stars hang in the heavens; where the shadows of men's thoughts lengthen in the afternoon, when the twin suns sink into the lake of Hali; and my mind will bear for ever the memory of the Pallid Mask. I pray God will curse the writer, as the writer has cursed the world with this beautiful, stupendous creation, terrible in its simplicity, irresistible in its truth—a world which now trembles before the King in Yellow. When the French Government seized the translated copies which had just arrived in Paris, London,

of course, became eager to read it. It is well known how the book spread like an infectious disease, from city to city, from continent to continent, barred out here, confiscated there, denounced by Press and pulpit, censured even by the most advanced of literary anarchists. No definite principles had been violated in those wicked pages, no doctrine promulgated, no convictions outraged. It could not be judged by any known standard, yet, although it was acknowledged that the supreme note of art had been struck in *The King in Yellow*, all felt that human nature could not bear the strain, nor thrive on words in which the essence of purest poison lurked. The very banality and innocence of the first act only allowed the blow to fall afterward with more awful effect.

It was, I remember, the 13th day of April, 1920, that the first Government Lethal Chamber was established on the south side of Washington Square, between Wooster Street and South Fifth Avenue. The block which had formerly consisted of a lot of shabby old buildings, used as cafés and restaurants for foreigners, had been acquired by the Government in the winter of 1898. The French and Italian cafés and restaurants were torn down; the whole block was enclosed by a gilded iron railing, and converted into a lovely garden with lawns, flowers and fountains. In the centre of the garden stood a small, white building, severely classical in architecture, and surrounded by thickets of flowers. Six Ionic columns supported the roof, and the single door was of bronze. A splendid marble group of the "Fates" stood before the door, the work of a young American sculptor, Boris Yvain, who had died in Paris when only twenty-three years old.

The inauguration ceremonies were in progress as I

crossed University Place and entered the square. I threaded my way through the silent throng of spectators, but was stopped at Fourth Street by a cordon of police. A regiment of United States lancers were drawn up in a hollow square round the Lethal Chamber. On a raised tribune facing Washington Park stood the Governor of New York, and behind him were grouped the Mayor of New York and Brooklyn, the Inspector-General of Police, the Commandant of the state troops, Colonel Livingston, military aid to the President of the United States, General Blount, commanding at Governor's Island, Major-General Hamilton, commanding the garrison of New York and Brooklyn, Admiral Buffby of the fleet in the North River, Surgeon-General Lanceford, the staff of the National Free Hospital, Senators Wyse and Franklin of New York, and the Commissioner of Public Works. The tribune was surrounded by a squadron of hussars of the National Guard.

The Governor was finishing his reply to the short speech of the Surgeon-General. I heard him say: "The laws prohibiting suicide and providing punishment for any attempt at self-destruction have been repealed. The Government has seen fit to acknowledge the right of man to end an existence which may have become intolerable to him, through physical suffering or mental despair. It is believed that the community will be benefited by the removal of such people from their midst. Since the passage of this law, the number of suicides in the United States has not increased. Now the Government has determined to establish a Lethal Chamber in every city, town and village in the country, it remains to be seen whether or not that class of human creatures from whose desponding ranks new victims of self-destruction fall

daily will accept the relief thus provided." He paused, and turned to the white Lethal Chamber. The silence in the street was absolute. "There a painless death awaits him who can no longer bear the sorrows of this life. If death is welcome let him seek it there." Then quickly turning to the military aid of the President's household, he said, "I declare the Lethal Chamber open," and again facing the vast crowd he cried in a clear voice: "Citizens of New York and of the United States of America, through me the Government declares the Lethal Chamber to be open."

The solemn hush was broken by a sharp cry of command, the squadron of hussars filed after the Governor's carriage, the lancers wheeled and formed along Fifth Avenue to wait for the commandant of the garrison, and the mounted police followed them. I left the crowd to gape and stare at the white marble Death Chamber, and, crossing South Fifth Avenue, walked along the western side of that thoroughfare to Bleeker Street. Then I turned to the right and stopped before a dingy shop which bore the sign:

HAWBERK, ARMOURER.

I glanced in at the doorway and saw Hawberk busy in his little shop at the end of the hall. He looked up, and catching sight of me cried in his deep, hearty voice, "Come in, Mr. Castaigne!" Constance, his daughter, rose to meet me as I crossed the threshold, and held out her pretty hand, but I saw the blush of disappointment on her cheeks, and knew that it was another Castaigne she had expected, my cousin Louis. I smiled at her confusion and complimented her on the banner she was embroidering from a coloured plate. Old Hawberk sat riveting the worn greaves of some ancient suit of armour, and the ting! ting! ting! of his little hammer sounded pleasantly in the quaint

shop. Presently he dropped his hammer, and fussed about for a moment with a tiny wrench. The soft clash of the mail sent a thrill of pleasure through me. I loved to hear the music of steel brushing against steel, the mellow shock of the mallet on thigh pieces, and the jingle of chain armour. That was the only reason I went to see Hawberk. He had never interested me personally, nor did Constance, except for the fact of her being in love with Louis. This did occupy my attention, and sometimes even kept me awake at night. But I knew in my heart that all would come right, and that I should arrange their future as I expected to arrange that of my kind doctor, John Archer. However, I should never have troubled myself about visiting them just then, had it not been, as I say, that the music of the tinkling hammer had for me this strong fascination. I would sit for hours, listening and listening, and when a stray sunbeam struck the inlaid steel, the sensation it gave me was almost too keen to endure. My eyes would become fixed, dilating with a pleasure that stretched every nerve almost to breaking, until some movement of the old armourer cut off the ray of sunlight, then, still thrilling secretly, I leaned back and listened again to the sound of the polishing rag, swish! swish! rubbing rust from the rivets.

Constance worked with the embroidery over her knees, now and then pausing to examine more closely the pattern in the coloured plate from the Metropolitan Museum.

“Who is this for?” I asked.

Hawberk explained, that in addition to the treasures of armour in the Metropolitan Museum of which he had been appointed armourer, he also had charge of several collections belonging to rich amateurs. This was the

missing greave of a famous suit which a client of his had traced to a little shop in Paris on the Quai d'Orsay. He, Hawberk, had negotiated for and secured the greave, and now the suit was complete. He laid down his hammer and read me the history of the suit, traced since 1450 from owner to owner until it was acquired by Thomas Stainbridge. When his superb collection was sold, this client of Hawberk's bought the suit, and since then the search for the missing greave had been pushed until it was, almost by accident, located in Paris.

"Did you continue the search so persistently without any certainty of the greave being still in existence?" I demanded.

"Of course," he replied coolly.

Then for the first time I took a personal interest in Hawberk.

"It was worth something to you," I ventured.

"No," he replied, laughing, "my pleasure in finding it was my reward."

"Have you no ambition to be rich?" I asked, smiling.

"My one ambition is to be the best armourer in the world," he answered gravely.

Constance asked me if I had seen the ceremonies at the Lethal Chamber. She herself had noticed cavalry passing up Broadway that morning, and had wished to see the inauguration, but her father wanted the banner finished, and she had stayed at his request.

"Did you see your cousin, Mr. Castaigne, there?" she asked, with the slightest tremor of her soft eyelashes.

"No," I replied carelessly. "Louis' regiment is manœuvring out in Westchester County." I rose and picked up my hat and cane.

"Are you going upstairs to see the lunatic again?"

laughed old Hawberk. If Hawberk knew how I loathe that word "lunatic," he would never use it in my presence. It rouses certain feelings within me which I do not care to explain. However, I answered him quietly: "I think I shall drop in and see Mr. Wilde for a moment or two."

"Poor fellow," said Constance, with a shake of the head, "it must be hard to live alone year after year poor, crippled and almost demented. It is very good of you, Mr. Castaigne, to visit him as often as you do."

"I think he is vicious," observed Hawberk, beginning again with his hammer. I listened to the golden tinkle on the greave plates; when he had finished I replied:

"No, he is not vicious, nor is he in the least demented. His mind is a wonder chamber, from which he can extract treasures that you and I would give years of our life to acquire."

Hawberk laughed.

I continued a little impatiently: "He knows history as no one else could know it. Nothing, however trivial, escapes his search, and his memory is so absolute, so precise in details, that were it known in New York that such a man existed, the people could not honour him enough."

"Nonsense," muttered Hawberk, searching on the floor for a fallen rivet.

"Is it nonsense," I asked, managing to suppress what I felt, "is it nonsense when he says that the tassets and cuissards of the enamelled suit of armour commonly known as the 'Prince's Emblazoned' can be found among a mass of rusty theatrical properties, broken stoves and ragpicker's refuse in a garret in Pell Street?"

Hawberk's hammer fell to the ground, but he picked it up and asked, with a great deal of calm, how I knew

that the tassets and left cuissard were missing from the "Prince's Emblazoned."

"I did not know until Mr. Wilde mentioned it to me the other day. He said they were in the garret of 998 Pell Street."

"Nonsense," he cried, but I noticed his hand trembling under his leathern apron.

"Is this nonsense too?" I asked pleasantly, "is it nonsense when Mr. Wilde continually speaks of you as the Marquis of Avonshire and of Miss Constance—"

I did not finish, for Constance had started to her feet with terror written on every feature. Hawberk looked at me and slowly smoothed his leathern apron.

"That is impossible," he observed, "Mr. Wilde may know a great many things—"

"About armour, for instance, and the 'Prince's Emblazoned,'" I interposed, smiling.

"Yes," he continued, slowly, "about armour also—may be—but he is wrong in regard to the Marquis of Avonshire, who, as you know, killed his wife's traducer years ago, and went to Australia where he did not long survive his wife."

"Mr. Wilde is wrong," murmured Constance. Her lips were blanched, but her voice was sweet and calm.

"Let us agree, if you please, that in this one circumstance Mr. Wilde is wrong," I said.

II

I climbed the three dilapidated flights of stairs, which I had so often climbed before, and knocked at a small door at the end of the corridor. Mr. Wilde opened the door and I walked in.

When he had double-locked the door and pushed a

heavy chest against it, he came and sat down beside me, peering up into my face with his little light-coloured eyes. Half a dozen new scratches covered his nose and cheeks, and the silver wires which supported his artificial ears had become displaced. I thought I had never seen him so hideously fascinating. He had no ears. The artificial ones, which now stood out at an angle from the fine wire, were his one weakness. They were made of wax and painted a shell pink, but the rest of his face was yellow. He might better have revelled in the luxury of some artificial fingers for his left hand, which was absolutely fingerless, but it seemed to cause him no inconvenience, and he was satisfied with his wax ears. He was very small, scarcely higher than a child of ten, but his arms were magnificently developed, and his thighs as thick as any athlete's. Still, the most remarkable thing about Mr. Wilde was that a man of his marvellous intelligence and knowledge should have such a head. It was flat and pointed, like the heads of many of those unfortunates whom people imprison in asylums for the weak-minded. Many called him insane, but I knew him to be as sane as I was.

I do not deny that he was eccentric; the mania he had for keeping that cat and teasing her until she flew at his face like a demon, was certainly eccentric. I never could understand why he kept the creature, nor what pleasure he found in shutting himself up in his room with this surly, vicious beast. I remember once, glancing up from the manuscript I was studying by the light of some tallow dips, and seeing Mr. Wilde squatting motionless on his high chair, his eyes fairly blazing with excitement, while the cat, which had risen from her place before the stove, came creeping across the floor right at him. Before I could

move she flattened her belly to the ground, crouched, trembled, and sprang into his face. Howling and foaming they rolled over and over on the floor, scratching and clawing, until the cat screamed and fled under the cabinet, and Mr. Wilde turned over on his back, his limbs contracting and curling up like the legs of a dying spider. He *was* eccentric.

Mr. Wilde had climbed into his high chair, and, after studying my face, picked up a dog's-eared ledger and opened it.

"Henry B. Matthews," he read, "book-keeper with Whysot Whysot and Company, dealers in church ornaments. Called April 3rd. Reputation damaged on the race-track. Known as a welcher. Reputation to be repaired by August 1st. Retainer Five Dollars." He turned the page and ran his fingerless knuckles down the closely-written columns.

"P. Greene Dusenberry, Minister of the Gospel, Fairbeach, New Jersey. Reputation damaged in the Bowery. To be repaired as soon as possible. Retainer \$100."

He coughed and added, "Called, April 6th."

"Then you are not in need of money, Mr. Wilde," I inquired.

"Listen," he coughed again.

"Mrs. C. Hamilton Chester, of Chester Park, New York City. Called April 7th. Reputation damaged at Dieppe, France. To be repaired by October 1st Retainer \$500.

"Note.—C. Hamilton Chester, Captain U.S.S. 'Avalanche', ordered home from South Sea Squadron October 1st."

"Well," I said, "the profession of a Repairer of Reputations is lucrative."

His colourless eyes sought mine, "I only wanted to demonstrate that I was correct. You said it was impossible to succeed as a Repairer of Reputations; that even if I did succeed in certain cases it would cost me more than I would gain by it. To-day I have five hundred men in my employ, who are poorly paid, but who pursue the work with an enthusiasm which possibly may be born of fear. These men enter every shade and grade of society; some even are pillars of the most exclusive social temples; others are the prop and pride of the financial world; still others, hold undisputed sway among the 'Fancy and the Talent.' I choose them at my leisure from those who reply to my advertisements. It is easy enough, they are all cowards. I could treble the number in twenty days if I wished. So you see, those who have in their keeping the reputations of their fellow-citizens, I have in my pay."

"They may turn on you," I suggested.

He rubbed his thumb over his cropped ears, and adjusted the wax substitutes. "I think not," he murmured thoughtfully, "I seldom have to apply the whip, and then only once. Besides they like their wages."

"How do you apply the whip?" I demanded.

His face for a moment was awful to look upon. His eyes dwindled to a pair of green sparks.

"I invite them to come and have a little chat with me," he said in a soft voice.

A knock at the door interrupted him, and his face resumed its amiable expression.

"Who is it?" he inquired.

"Mr. Steylette," was the answer.

"Come to-morrow," replied Mr. Wilde.

"Impossible," began the other, but was silenced by a sort of bark from Mr. Wilde.

“Come to-morrow,” he repeated.

We heard somebody move away from the door and turn the corner by the stairway.

“Who is that?” I asked.

“Arnold Steylette, Owner and Editor in Chief of the great New York daily.”

He drummed on the ledger with his fingerless hand adding: “I pay him very badly, but he thinks it a good bargain.”

“Arnold Steylette!” I repeated amazed.

“Yes,” said Mr. Wilde, with a self-satisfied cough.

The cat, which had entered the room as he spoke, hesitated, looked up at him and snarled. He climbed down from the chair and squatting on the floor, took the creature into his arms and caressed her. The cat ceased snarling and presently began a loud purring which seemed to increase in timbre as he stroked her. “Where are the notes?” I asked. He pointed to the table, and for the hundredth time I picked up the bundle of manuscript entitled—

“THE IMPERIAL DYNASTY OF AMERICA.”

One by one I studied the well-worn pages, worn only by my own handling, and although I knew all by heart, from the beginning, “When from Carcosa, the Hyades, Hastur, and Aldebaran,” to “Castaigne, Louis de Calvados, born December 19th, 1877,” I read it with an eager, rapt attention, pausing to repeat parts of it aloud, and dwelling especially on “Hildred de Calvados, only son of Hildred Castaigne and Edythe Landes Castaigne, first in succession,” etc., etc.

When I finished, Mr. Wilde nodded and coughed.

“Speaking of your legitimate ambition,” he said, “how do Constance and Louis get along?”

"She loves him," I replied simply.

The cat on his knee suddenly turned and struck at his eyes, and he flung her off and climbed on to the chair opposite me.

"And Dr. Archer! But that's a matter you can settle any time you wish," he added.

"Yes," I replied, "Dr. Archer can wait, but it is time I saw my cousin Louis."

"It is time," he repeated. Then he took another ledger from the table and ran over the leaves rapidly. "We are now in communication with ten thousand men," he muttered. "We can count on one hundred thousand within the first twenty-eight hours, and in forty-eight hours the state will rise *en masse*. The country follows the state, and the portion that will not, I mean California and the Northwest, might better never have been inhabited. I shall not send them the Yellow Sign."

The blood rushed to my head, but I only answered, "A new broom sweeps clean."

"The ambition of Caesar and of Napoleon pales before that which could not rest until it had seized the minds of men and controlled even their unborn thoughts," said Mr. Wilde.

"You are speaking of the King in Yellow," I groaned, with a shudder.

"He is a king whom emperors have served."

"I am content to serve him," I replied.

Mr. Wilde sat rubbing his ears with his crippled hand. "Perhaps Constance does not love him," he suggested.

I started to reply, but a sudden burst of military music from the street below drowned my voice. The twentieth dragoon regiment, formerly in garrison at Mount St. Vincent, was returning from the manœuvres in

Westchester County, to its new barracks on East Washington Square. It was my cousin's regiment. They were a fine lot of fellows, in their pale blue, tight-fitting jackets, jaunty busbys and white riding breeches with the double yellow stripe, into which their limbs seemed moulded. Every other squadron was armed with lances, from the metal points of which fluttered yellow and white pennons. The band passed, playing the regimental march, then came the colonel and staff, the horses crowding and trampling, while their heads bobbed in unison, and the pennons fluttered from their lance points. The troopers, who rode with the beautiful English seat, looked brown as berries from their bloodless campaign among the farms of Westchester, and the music of their sabres against the stirrups, and the jingle of spurs and carbines was delightful to me. I saw Louis riding with his squadron. He was as handsome an officer as I have ever seen. Mr. Wilde, who had mounted a chair by the window, saw him too, but said nothing. Louis turned and looked straight at Hawberk's shop as he passed, and I could see the flush on his brown cheeks. I think Constance must have been at the window. When the last troopers had clattered by, and the last pennons vanished into South Fifth Avenue, Mr. Wilde clambered out of his chair and dragged the chest away from the door.

"Yes," he said, "it is time that you saw your cousin Louis."

He unlocked the door and I picked up my hat and stick and stepped into the corridor. The stairs were dark. Groping about, I set my foot on something soft, which snarled and spit, and I aimed a murderous blow at the cat, but my cane shivered to splinters against the balustrade, and the beast scurried back into Mr. Wilde's room.

Passing Hawberk's door again I saw him still at work on the armour, but I did not stop, and stepping out into Bleeker Street, I followed it to Wooster, skirted the grounds of the Lethal Chamber, and crossing Washington Park went straight to my rooms in the Benedick. Here I lunched comfortably, read the *Herald* and the *Meteor*, and finally went to the steel safe in my bedroom and set the time combination. The three and three-quarter minutes which it is necessary to wait, while the time lock is opening, are to me golden moments. From the instant I set the combination to the moment when I grasp the knobs and swing back the solid steel doors, I live in an ecstasy of expectation. Those moments must be like moments passed in Paradise. I know what I am to find at the end of the time limit. I know what the massive safe holds secure for me, for me alone, and the exquisite pleasure of waiting is hardly enhanced when the safe opens and I lift, from its velvet crown, a diadem of purest gold, blazing with diamonds. I do this every day, and yet the joy of waiting and at last touching again the diadem, only seems to increase as the days pass. It is a diadem fit for a King among kings, an Emperor among emperors. The King in Yellow might scorn it, but it shall be worn by his royal servant.

I held it in my arms until the alarm in the safe rang harshly, and then tenderly, proudly, I replaced it and shut the steel doors. I walked slowly back into my study, which faces Washington Square, and leaned on the window sill. The afternoon sun poured into my windows, and a gentle breeze stirred the branches of the elms and maples in the park, now covered with buds and tender foliage. A flock of pigeons circled about the tower of the Memorial Church; sometimes alighting on the purple tiled roof,

sometimes wheeling downward to the lotos fountain in front of the marble arch. The gardeners were busy with the flower beds around the fountain, and the freshly turned earth smelled sweet and spicy. A lawn mower, drawn by a fat white horse, clinked across the green sward, and watering-carts poured showers of spray over the asphalt drives. Around the statue of Peter Stuyvesant, which in 1897 had replaced the monstrosity supposed to represent Garibaldi, children played in the spring sunshine, and nurse girls wheeled elaborate baby carriages with a reckless disregard for the pasty-faced occupants, which could probably be explained by the presence of half a dozen trim dragoon troopers languidly lolling on the benches. Through the trees, the Washington Memorial Arch glistened like silver in the sunshine, and beyond, on the eastern extremity of the square the grey stone barracks of the dragoons, and the white granite artillery stables were alive with colour and motion.

I looked at the Lethal Chamber on the corner of the square opposite. A few curious people still lingered about the gilded iron railing, but inside the grounds the paths were deserted. I watched the fountains ripple and sparkle; the sparrows had already found this new bathing nook, and the basins were covered with the dusty-feathered little things. Two or three white peacocks picked their way across the lawns, and a drab coloured pigeon sat so motionless on the arm of one of the "Fates," that it seemed to be a part of the sculptured stone.

As I was turning carelessly away, a slight commotion in the group of curious loiterers around the gates attracted my attention. A young man had entered, and was advancing with nervous strides along the gravel path which leads to the bronze doors of the Lethal Chamber.

He paused a moment before the "Fates," and as he raised his head to those three mysterious faces, the pigeon rose from its sculptured perch, circled about for a moment and wheeled to the east. The young man pressed his hand to his face, and then with an undefinable gesture sprang up the marble steps, the bronze doors closed behind him, and half an hour later the loiterers slouched away, and the frightened pigeon returned to its perch in the arms of Fate.

I put on my hat and went out into the park for a little walk before dinner. As I crossed the central driveway a group of officers passed, and one of them called out, "Hello, Hildred," and came back to shake hands with me. It was my cousin Louis, who stood smiling and tapping his spurred heels with his riding-whip.

"Just back from Westchester," he said; "been doing the bucolic; milk and curds, you know, dairy-maids in sunbonnets, who say 'haeow' and 'I don't think' when you tell them they are pretty. I'm nearly dead for a square meal at Delmonico's. What's the news?"

"There is none," I replied pleasantly. "I saw your regiment coming in this morning."

"Did you? I didn't see you. Where were you?"

"In Mr. Wilde's window."

"Oh, hell!" he began impatiently, "that man is stark mad! I don't understand why you—"

He saw how annoyed I felt by this outburst, and begged my pardon.

"Really, old chap," he said, "I don't mean to run down a man you like, but for the life of me I can't see what the deuce you find in common with Mr. Wilde. He's not well bred, to put it generously; he is hideously deformed; his

head is the head of a criminally insane person. You know yourself he's been in an asylum—”

“So have I,” I interrupted calmly.

Louis looked startled and confused for a moment, but recovered and slapped me heartily on the shoulder. “You were completely cured,” he began; but I stopped him again.

“I suppose you mean that I was simply acknowledged never to have been insane.”

“Of course that—that’s what I meant,” he laughed.

I disliked his laugh because I knew it was forced, but I nodded gaily and asked him where he was going. Louis looked after his brother officers who had now almost reached Broadway.

“We had intended to sample a Brunswick cocktail, but to tell you the truth I was anxious for an excuse to go and see Hawberk instead. Come along, I’ll make you my excuse.”

We found old Hawberk, neatly attired in a fresh spring suit, standing at the door of his shop and sniffing the air.

“I had just decided to take Constance for a little stroll before dinner,” he replied to the impetuous volley of questions from Louis. “We thought of walking on the park terrace along the North River.”

At that moment Constance appeared and grew pale and rosy by turns as Louis bent over her small gloved fingers. I tried to excuse myself, alleging an engagement uptown, but Louis and Constance would not listen, and I saw I was expected to remain and engage old Hawberk’s attention. After all it would be just as well if I kept my eye on Louis, I thought, and when they hailed a Spring Street horse-car, I got in after them and took my seat beside the armourer.

The beautiful line of parks and granite terraces

overlooking the wharves along the North River, which were built in 1910 and finished in the autumn of 1917, had become one of the most popular promenades in the metropolis. They extended from the battery to 190th Street, overlooking the noble river and affording a fine view of the Jersey shore and the Highlands opposite. Cafés and restaurants were scattered here and there among the trees, and twice a week military bands from the garrison played in the kiosques on the parapets.

We sat down in the sunshine on the bench at the foot of the equestrian statue of General Sheridan. Constance tipped her sunshade to shield her eyes, and she and Louis began a murmuring conversation which was impossible to catch. Old Hawberk, leaning on his ivory headed cane, lighted an excellent cigar, the mate to which I politely refused, and smiled at vacancy. The sun hung low above the Staten Island woods, and the bay was dyed with golden hues reflected from the sun-warmed sails of the shipping in the harbour.

Brigs, schooners, yachts, clumsy ferry-boats, their decks swarming with people, railroad transports carrying lines of brown, blue and white freight cars, stately sound steamers, déclassé tramp steamers, coasters, dredgers, scows, and everywhere pervading the entire bay impudent little tugs puffing and whistling officiously;—these were the craft which churned the sunlight waters as far as the eye could reach. In calm contrast to the hurry of sailing vessel and steamer a silent fleet of white warships lay motionless in midstream.

Constance's merry laugh aroused me from my reverie.

"What *are* you staring at?" she inquired.

"Nothing—the fleet," I smiled.

Then Louis told us what the vessels were, pointing out

each by its relative position to the old Red Fort on Governor's Island.

"That little cigar shaped thing is a torpedo boat," he explained; "there are four more lying close together. They are the *Tarpon*, the *Falcon*, the *Sea Fox*, and the *Octopus*. The gun-boats just above are the *Princeton*, the *Champlain*, the *Still Water* and the *Erie*. Next to them lie the cruisers *Faragut* and *Los Angeles*, and above them the battle ships *California*, and *Dakota*, and the *Washington* which is the flag ship. Those two squatty looking chunks of metal which are anchored there off Castle William are the double turreted monitors *Terrible* and *Magnificent*; behind them lies the ram, *Osceola*."

Constance looked at him with deep approval in her beautiful eyes. "What loads of things you know for a soldier," she said, and we all joined in the laugh which followed.

Presently Louis rose with a nod to us and offered his arm to Constance, and they strolled away along the river wall. Hawberk watched them for a moment and then turned to me.

"Mr. Wilde was right," he said. "I have found the missing tassets and left cuissard of the 'Prince's Emblazoned,' in a vile old junk garret in Pell Street."

"998?" I inquired, with a smile.

"Yes."

"Mr. Wilde is a very intelligent man," I observed.

"I want to give him the credit of this most important discovery," continued Hawberk. "And I intend it shall be known that he is entitled to the fame of it."

"He won't thank you for that," I answered sharply; "please say nothing about it."

“Do you know what it is worth?” said Hawberk.

“No, fifty dollars, perhaps.”

“It is valued at five hundred, but the owner of the ‘Prince’s Emblazoned’ will give two thousand dollars to the person who completes his suit; that reward also belongs to Mr. Wilde.”

“He doesn’t want it! He refuses it!” I answered angrily. “What do you know about Mr. Wilde? He doesn’t need the money. He is rich—or will be—richer than any living man except myself. What will we care for money then—what will we care, he and I, when—when—”

“When what?” demanded Hawberk, astonished.

“You will see,” I replied, on my guard again.

He looked at me narrowly, much as Doctor Archer used to, and I knew he thought I was mentally unsound. Perhaps it was fortunate for him that he did not use the word lunatic just then.

“No,” I replied to his unspoken thought, “I am not mentally weak; my mind is as healthy as Mr. Wilde’s. I do not care to explain just yet what I have on hand, but it is an investment which will pay more than mere gold, silver and precious stones. It will secure the happiness and prosperity of a continent—yes, a hemisphere!”

“Oh,” said Hawberk.

“And eventually,” I continued more quietly, “it will secure the happiness of the whole world.”

“And incidentally your own happiness and prosperity as well as Mr. Wilde’s?”

“Exactly,” I smiled. But I could have throttled him for taking that tone.

He looked at me in silence for a while and then said very gently, “Why don’t you give up your books and studies, Mr. Castaigne, and take a tramp among the

mountains somewhere or other? You used to be fond of fishing. Take a cast or two at the trout in the Rangelys."

"I don't care for fishing any more," I answered, without a shade of annoyance in my voice.

"You used to be fond of everything," he continued; "athletics, yachting, shooting, riding—"

"I have never cared to ride since my fall," I said quietly.

"Ah, yes, your fall," he repeated, looking away from me.

I thought this nonsense had gone far enough, so I brought the conversation back to Mr. Wilde; but he was scanning my face again in a manner highly offensive to me.

"Mr. Wilde," he repeated, "do you know what he did this afternoon? He came downstairs and nailed a sign over the hall door next to mine; it read:

MR. WILDE,

REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS.

Third Bell.

"Do you know what a Repairer of Reputations can be?"

"I do," I replied, suppressing the rage within.

"Oh," he said again.

Louis and Constance came strolling by and stopped to ask if we would join them. Hawberk looked at his watch. At the same moment a puff of smoke shot from the casemates of Castle William, and the boom of the sunset gun rolled across the water and was re-echoed from the Highlands opposite. The flag came running down from the flag-pole, the bugles sounded on the white decks of the warships, and the first electric light sparkled out from the Jersey shore.

As I turned into the city with Hawberk I heard Constance murmur something to Louis which I did not understand; but Louis whispered "My darling," in reply;

and again, walking ahead with Hawberk through the square I heard a murmur of “sweetheart,” and “my own Constance,” and I knew the time had nearly arrived when I should speak of important matters with my cousin Louis.

III

One morning early in May I stood before the steel safe in my bedroom, trying on the golden jewelled crown. The diamonds flashed fire as I turned to the mirror, and the heavy beaten gold burned like a halo about my head. I remembered Camilla’s agonized scream and the awful words echoing through the dim streets of Carcosa. They were the last lines in the first act, and I dared not think of what followed—dared not, even in the spring sunshine, there in my own room, surrounded with familiar objects, reassured by the bustle from the street and the voices of the servants in the hallway outside. For those poisoned words had dropped slowly into my heart, as death-sweat drops upon a bed-sheet and is absorbed. Trembling, I put the diadem from my head and wiped my forehead, but I thought of Hastur and of my own rightful ambition, and I remembered Mr. Wilde as I had last left him, his face all torn and bloody from the claws of that devil’s creature, and what he said—ah, what he said. The alarm bell in the safe began to whirr harshly, and I knew my time was up; but I would not heed it, and replacing the flashing circlet upon my head I turned defiantly to the mirror. I stood for a long time absorbed in the changing expression of my own eyes. The mirror reflected a face which was like my own, but whiter, and so thin that I hardly recognized it. And all the time I kept repeating between my clenched teeth, “The day has come! the day has come!” while the

alarm in the safe whirred and clamoured, and the diamonds sparkled and flamed above my brow. I heard a door open but did not heed it. It was only when I saw two faces in the mirror:—it was only when another face rose over my shoulder, and two other eyes met mine. I wheeled like a flash and seized a long knife from my dressing-table, and my cousin sprang back very pale, crying: “Hildred! for God’s sake!” then as my hand fell, he said: “It is I, Louis, don’t you know me?” I stood silent. I could not have spoken for my life. He walked up to me and took the knife from my hand.

“What is all this?” he inquired, in a gentle voice. “Are you ill?”

“No,” I replied. But I doubt if he heard me.

“Come, come, old fellow,” he cried, “take off that brass crown and toddle into the study. Are you going to a masquerade? What’s all this theatrical tinsel anyway?”

I was glad he thought the crown was made of brass and paste, yet I didn’t like him any the better for thinking so. I let him take it from my hand, knowing it was best to humour him. He tossed the splendid diadem in the air, and catching it, turned to me smiling.

“It’s dear at fifty cents,” he said. “What’s it for?”

I did not answer, but took the circlet from his hands, and placing it in the safe shut the massive steel door. The alarm ceased its infernal din at once. He watched me curiously, but did not seem to notice the sudden ceasing of the alarm. He did, however, speak of the safe as a biscuit box. Fearing lest he might examine the combination I led the way into my study. Louis threw himself on the sofa and flicked at flies with his eternal riding-whip. He wore his fatigue uniform with the

braided jacket and jaunty cap, and I noticed that his riding-boots were all splashed with red mud.

"Where have you been?" I inquired.

"Jumping mud creeks in Jersey," he said. "I haven't had time to change yet; I was rather in a hurry to see you. Haven't you got a glass of something? I'm dead tired; been in the saddle twenty-four hours."

I gave him some brandy from my medicinal store, which he drank with a grimace.

"Damned bad stuff," he observed. "I'll give you an address where they sell brandy that is brandy."

"It's good enough for my needs," I said indifferently. "I use it to rub my chest with." He stared and flicked at another fly.

"See here, old fellow," he began, "I've got something to suggest to you. It's four years now that you've shut yourself up here like an owl, never going anywhere, never taking any healthy exercise, never doing a damn thing but poring over those books up there on the mantelpiece."

He glanced along the row of shelves. "Napoleon, Napoleon, Napoleon!" he read. "For heaven's sake, have you nothing but Napoleons there?"

"I wish they were bound in gold," I said. "But wait, yes, there is another book, *The King in Yellow*." I looked him steadily in the eye.

"Have you never read it?" I asked.

"I? No, thank God! I don't want to be driven crazy."

I saw he regretted his speech as soon as he had uttered it. There is only one word which I loathe more than I do lunatic and that word is crazy. But I controlled myself and asked him why he thought *The King in Yellow* dangerous.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, hastily. "I only remember the excitement it created and the denunciations from

pulpit and Press. I believe the author shot himself after bringing forth this monstrosity, didn't he?"

"I understand he is still alive," I answered.

"That's probably true," he muttered; "bullets couldn't kill a fiend like that."

"It is a book of great truths," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "of 'truths' which send men frantic and blast their lives. I don't care if the thing is, as they say, the very supreme essence of art. It's a crime to have written it, and I for one shall never open its pages."

"Is that what you have come to tell me?" I asked.

"No," he said, "I came to tell you that I am going to be married."

I believe for a moment my heart ceased to beat, but I kept my eyes on his face.

"Yes," he continued, smiling happily, "married to the sweetest girl on earth."

"Constance Hawberk," I said mechanically.

"How did you know?" he cried, astonished. "I didn't know it myself until that evening last April, when we strolled down to the embankment before dinner."

"When is it to be?" I asked.

"It was to have been next September, but an hour ago a despatch came ordering our regiment to the Presidio, San Francisco. We leave at noon to-morrow. To-morrow," he repeated. "Just think, Hildred, to-morrow I shall be the happiest fellow that ever drew breath in this jolly world, for Constance will go with me."

I offered him my hand in congratulation, and he seized and shook it like the good-natured fool he was—or pretended to be.

"I am going to get my squadron as a wedding present,"

he rattled on. "Captain and Mrs. Louis Castaigne, eh, Hildred?"

Then he told me where it was to be and who were to be there, and made me promise to come and be best man. I set my teeth and listened to his boyish chatter without showing what I felt, but—

I was getting to the limit of my endurance, and when he jumped up, and, switching his spurs till they jingled, said he must go, I did not detain him.

"There's one thing I want to ask of you," I said quietly.

"Out with it, it's promised," he laughed.

"I want you to meet me for a quarter of an hour's talk to-night."

"Of course, if you wish," he said, somewhat puzzled. "Where?"

"Anywhere, in the park there."

"What time, Hildred?"

"Midnight."

"What in the name of—" he began, but checked himself and laughingly assented. I watched him go down the stairs and hurry away, his sabre banging at every stride. He turned into Bleeker Street, and I knew he was going to see Constance. I gave him ten minutes to disappear and then followed in his footsteps, taking with me the jewelled crown and the silken robe embroidered with the Yellow Sign. When I turned into Bleeker Street, and entered the doorway which bore the sign—

MR. WILDE,

REPAIRER OF REPUTATIONS.

Third Bell.

I saw old Hawberk moving about in his shop, and imagined I heard Constance's voice in the parlour; but I avoided them both and hurried up the trembling

stairways to Mr. Wilde's apartment. I knocked and entered without ceremony. Mr. Wilde lay groaning on the floor, his face covered with blood, his clothes torn to shreds. Drops of blood were scattered about over the carpet, which had also been ripped and frayed in the evidently recent struggle.

"It's that cursed cat," he said, ceasing his groans, and turning his colourless eyes to me; "she attacked me while I was asleep. I believe she will kill me yet."

This was too much, so I went into the kitchen, and, seizing a hatchet from the pantry, started to find the infernal beast and settle her then and there. My search was fruitless, and after a while I gave it up and came back to find Mr. Wilde squatting on his high chair by the table. He had washed his face and changed his clothes. The great furrows which the cat's claws had ploughed up in his face he had filled with collodion, and a rag hid the wound in his throat. I told him I should kill the cat when I came across her, but he only shook his head and turned to the open ledger before him. He read name after name of the people who had come to him in regard to their reputation, and the sums he had amassed were startling.

"I put on the screws now and then," he explained.

"One day or other some of these people will assassinate you," I insisted.

"Do you think so?" he said, rubbing his mutilated ears.

It was useless to argue with him, so I took down the manuscript entitled Imperial Dynasty of America, for the last time I should ever take it down in Mr. Wilde's study. I read it through, thrilling and trembling with pleasure. When I had finished Mr. Wilde took the manuscript and, turning to the dark passage which leads from his study to his bed-chamber, called out in a loud voice, "Vance." Then

for the first time, I noticed a man crouching there in the shadow. How I had overlooked him during my search for the cat, I cannot imagine.

“Vance, come in,” cried Mr. Wilde.

The figure rose and crept towards us, and I shall never forget the face that he raised to mine, as the light from the window illuminated it.

“Vance, this is Mr. Castaigne,” said Mr. Wilde. Before he had finished speaking, the man threw himself on the ground before the table, crying and grasping, “Oh, God! Oh, my God! Help me! Forgive me! Oh, Mr. Castaigne, keep that man away. You cannot, you cannot mean it! You are different—save me! I am broken down—I was in a madhouse and now—when all was coming right—when I had forgotten the King—the King in Yellow and—but I shall go mad again—I shall go mad—”

His voice died into a choking rattle, for Mr. Wilde had leapt on him and his right hand encircled the man’s throat. When Vance fell in a heap on the floor, Mr. Wilde clambered nimbly into his chair again, and rubbing his mangled ears with the stump of his hand, turned to me and asked me for the ledger. I reached it down from the shelf and he opened it. After a moment’s searching among the beautifully written pages, he coughed complacently, and pointed to the name Vance.

“Vance,” he read aloud, “Osgood Oswald Vance.” At the sound of his name, the man on the floor raised his head and turned a convulsed face to Mr. Wilde. His eyes were injected with blood, his lips tumefied. “Called April 28th,” continued Mr. Wilde. “Occupation, cashier in the Seaforth National Bank; has served a term of forgery at Sing Sing, from whence he was transferred to the Asylum for the Criminal Insane. Pardoned by the Governor of

New York, and discharged from the Asylum, January 19, 1918. Reputation damaged at Sheepshead Bay. Rumours that he lives beyond his income. Reputation to be repaired at once. Retainer \$1,500.

“Note.—Has embezzled sums amounting to \$30,000 since March 20, 1919, excellent family, and secured present position through uncle’s influence. Father, President of Seaforth Bank.”

I looked at the man on the floor.

“Get up, Vance,” said Mr. Wilde in a gentle voice. Vance rose as if hypnotized. “He will do as we suggest now,” observed Mr. Wilde, and opening the manuscript, he read the entire history of the Imperial Dynasty of America. Then in a kind and soothing murmur he ran over the important points with Vance, who stood like one stunned. His eyes were so blank and vacant that I imagined he had become half-witted, and remarked it to Mr. Wilde who replied that it was of no consequence anyway. Very patiently we pointed out to Vance what his share in the affair would be, and he seemed to understand after a while. Mr. Wilde explained the manuscript, using several volumes on Heraldry, to substantiate the result of his researches. He mentioned the establishment of the Dynasty in Carcosa, the lakes which connected Hastur, Aldebaran and the mystery of the Hyades. He spoke of Cassilda and Camilla, and sounded the cloudy depths of Demhe, and the Lake of Hali. “The scolloped tatters of the King in Yellow must hide Yhtill forever,” he muttered, but I do not believe Vance heard him. Then by degrees he led Vance along the ramifications of the Imperial family, to Uoht and Thale, from Naotalba and Phantom of Truth, to Aldones, and then tossing aside his manuscript and notes, he began the wonderful story of the Last King. Fascinated

and thrilled I watched him. He threw up his head, his long arms were stretched out in a magnificent gesture of pride and power, and his eyes blazed deep in their sockets like two emeralds. Vance listened stupefied. As for me, when at last Mr. Wilde had finished, and pointing to me, cried, "The cousin of the King!" my head swam with excitement.

Controlling myself with a superhuman effort, I explained to Vance why I alone was worthy of the crown and why my cousin must be exiled or die. I made him understand that my cousin must never marry, even after renouncing all his claims, and how that least of all he should marry the daughter of the Marquis of Avonshire and bring England into the question. I showed him a list of thousands of names which Mr. Wilde had drawn up; every man whose name was there had received the Yellow Sign which no living human being dared disregard. The city, the state, the whole land, were ready to rise and tremble before the Pallid Mask.

The time had come, the people should know the son of Hastur, and the whole world bow to the black stars which hang in the sky over Carcosa.

Vance leaned on the table, his head buried in his hands. Mr. Wilde drew a rough sketch on the margin of yesterday's *Herald* with a bit of lead pencil. It was a plan of Hawberk's rooms. Then he wrote out the order and affixed the seal, and shaking like a palsied man I signed my first writ of execution with my name Hildred-Rex.

Mr. Wilde clambered to the floor and unlocking the cabinet, took a long square box from the first shelf. This he brought to the table and opened. A new knife lay in the tissue paper inside and I picked it up and handed it to Vance, along with the order and the plan of Hawberk's

apartment. Then Mr. Wilde told Vance he could go; and he went, shambling like an outcast of the slums.

I sat for a while watching the daylight fade behind the square tower of the Judson Memorial Church, and finally, gathering up the manuscript and notes, took my hat and started for the door.

Mr. Wilde watched me in silence. When I had stepped into the hall I looked back. Mr. Wilde's small eyes were still fixed on me. Behind him, the shadows gathered in the fading light. Then I closed the door behind me and went out into the darkening streets.

I had eaten nothing since breakfast, but I was not hungry. A wretched, half-starved creature, who stood looking across the street at the Lethal Chamber, noticed me and came up to tell me a tale of misery. I gave him money, I don't know why, and he went away without thanking me. An hour later another outcast approached and whined his story. I had a blank bit of paper in my pocket, on which was traced the Yellow Sign, and I handed it to him. He looked at it stupidly for a moment, and then with an uncertain glance at me, folded it with what seemed to me exaggerated care and placed it in his bosom.

The electric lights were sparkling among the trees, and the new moon shone in the sky above the Lethal Chamber. It was tiresome waiting in the square; I wandered from the Marble Arch to the artillery stables and back again to the lotos fountain. The flowers and grass exhaled a fragrance which troubled me. The jet of the fountain played in the moonlight, and the musical splash of falling drops reminded me of the tinkle of chained mail in Hawberk's shop. But it was not so fascinating, and the dull sparkle of the moonlight on the

water brought no such sensations of exquisite pleasure, as when the sunshine played over the polished steel of a corselet on Hawberk's knee. I watched the bats darting and turning above the water plants in the fountain basin, but their rapid, jerky flight set my nerves on edge, and I went away again to walk aimlessly to and fro among the trees.

The artillery stables were dark, but in the cavalry barracks the officers' windows were brilliantly lighted, and the sallyport was constantly filled with troopers in fatigue, carrying straw and harness and baskets filled with tin dishes.

Twice the mounted sentry at the gates was changed while I wandered up and down the asphalt walk. I looked at my watch. It was nearly time. The lights in the barracks went out one by one, the barred gate was closed, and every minute or two an officer passed in through the side wicket, leaving a rattle of accoutrements and a jingle of spurs on the night air. The square had become very silent. The last homeless loiterer had been driven away by the grey-coated park policeman, the car tracks along Wooster Street were deserted, and the only sound which broke the stillness was the stamping of the sentry's horse and the ring of his sabre against the saddle pommel. In the barracks, the officers' quarters were still lighted, and military servants passed and repassed before the bay windows. Twelve o'clock sounded from the new spire of St. Francis Xavier, and at the last stroke of the sad-toned bell a figure passed through the wicket beside the portcullis, returned the salute of the sentry, and crossing the street entered the square and advanced toward the Benedick apartment house.

"Louis," I called.

The man pivoted on his spurred heels and came straight toward me.

“Is that you, Hildred?”

“Yes, you are on time.”

I took his offered hand, and we strolled toward the Lethal Chamber.

He rattled on about his wedding and the graces of Constance, and their future prospects, calling my attention to his captain’s shoulder-straps, and the triple gold arabesque on his sleeve and fatigue cap. I believe I listened as much to the music of his spurs and sabre as I did to his boyish babble, and at last we stood under the elms on the Fourth Street corner of the square opposite the Lethal Chamber. Then he laughed and asked me what I wanted with him. I motioned him to a seat on a bench under the electric light, and sat down beside him. He looked at me curiously, with that same searching glance which I hate and fear so in doctors. I felt the insult of his look, but he did not know it, and I carefully concealed my feelings.

“Well, old chap,” he inquired, “what can I do for you?”

I drew from my pocket the manuscript and notes of the Imperial Dynasty of America, and looking him in the eye said:

“I will tell you. On your word as a soldier, promise me to read this manuscript from beginning to end, without asking me a question. Promise me to read these notes in the same way, and promise me to listen to what I have to tell later.”

“I promise, if you wish it,” he said pleasantly. “Give me the paper, Hildred.”

He began to read, raising his eyebrows with a puzzled, whimsical air, which made me tremble with suppressed

anger. As he advanced his, eyebrows contracted, and his lips seemed to form the word "rubbish."

Then he looked slightly bored, but apparently for my sake read, with an attempt at interest, which presently ceased to be an effort. He started when in the closely written pages he came to his own name, and when he came to mine he lowered the paper, and looked sharply at me for a moment. But he kept his word, and resumed his reading, and I let the half-formed question die on his lips unanswered. When he came to the end and read the signature of Mr. Wilde, he folded the paper carefully and returned it to me. I handed him the notes, and he settled back, pushing his fatigue cap up to his forehead, with a boyish gesture, which I remembered so well in school. I watched his face as he read, and when he finished I took the notes with the manuscript, and placed them in my pocket. Then I unfolded a scroll marked with the Yellow Sign. He saw the sign, but he did not seem to recognize it, and I called his attention to it somewhat sharply.

"Well," he said, "I see it. What is it?"

"It is the Yellow Sign," I said angrily.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Louis, in that flattering voice, which Doctor Archer used to employ with me, and would probably have employed again, had I not settled his affair for him.

I kept my rage down and answered as steadily as possible, "Listen, you have engaged your word?"

"I am listening, old chap," he replied soothingly.

I began to speak very calmly.

"Dr. Archer, having by some means become possessed of the secret of the Imperial Succession, attempted to deprive me of my right, alleging that because of a fall from my horse four years ago, I had become mentally

deficient. He presumed to place me under restraint in his own house in hopes of either driving me insane or poisoning me. I have not forgotten it. I visited him last night and the interview was final."

Louis turned quite pale, but did not move. I resumed triumphantly, "There are yet three people to be interviewed in the interests of Mr. Wilde and myself. They are my cousin Louis, Mr. Hawberk, and his daughter Constance."

Louis sprang to his feet and I arose also, and flung the paper marked with the Yellow Sign to the ground.

"Oh, I don't need that to tell you what I have to say," I cried, with a laugh of triumph. "You must renounce the crown to me, do you hear, to *me*."

Louis looked at me with a startled air, but recovering himself said kindly, "Of course I renounce the—what is it I must renounce?"

"The crown," I said angrily.

"Of course," he answered, "I renounce it. Come, old chap, I'll walk back to your rooms with you."

"Don't try any of your doctor's tricks on me," I cried, trembling with fury. "Don't act as if you think I am insane."

"What nonsense," he replied. "Come, it's getting late, Hildred."

"No," I shouted, "you must listen. You cannot marry, I forbid it. Do you hear? I forbid it. You shall renounce the crown, and in reward I grant you exile, but if you refuse you shall die."

He tried to calm me, but I was roused at last, and drawing my long knife barred his way.

Then I told him how they would find Dr. Archer in the cellar with his throat open, and I laughed in his face when

I thought of Vance and his knife, and the order signed by me.

“Ah, you are the King,” I cried, “but I shall be King. Who are you to keep me from Empire over all the habitable earth! I was born the cousin of a king, but I shall be King!”

Louis stood white and rigid before me. Suddenly a man came running up Fourth Street, entered the gate of the Lethal Temple, traversed the path to the bronze doors at full speed, and plunged into the death chamber with the cry of one demented, and I laughed until I wept tears, for I had recognized Vance, and knew that Hawberk and his daughter were no longer in my way.

“Go,” I cried to Louis, “you have ceased to be a menace. You will never marry Constance now, and if you marry any one else in your exile, I will visit you as I did my doctor last night. Mr. Wilde takes charge of you tomorrow.” Then I turned and darted into South Fifth Avenue, and with a cry of terror Louis dropped his belt and sabre and followed me like the wind. I heard him close behind me at the corner of Bleecker Street, and I dashed into the doorway under Hawberk’s sign. He cried, “Halt, or I fire!” but when he saw that I flew up the stairs leaving Hawberk’s shop below, he left me, and I heard him hammering and shouting at their door as though it were possible to arouse the dead.

Mr. Wilde’s door was open, and I entered crying, “It is done, it is done! Let the nations rise and look upon their King!” but I could not find Mr. Wilde, so I went to the cabinet and took the splendid diadem from its case. Then I drew on the white silk robe, embroidered with the Yellow Sign, and placed the crown upon my head. At last I was King, King by my right in Hastur, King because I knew the mystery of the Hyades, and my mind

had sounded the depths of the Lake of Hali. I was King! The first grey pencillings of dawn would raise a tempest which would shake two hemispheres. Then as I stood, my every nerve pitched to the highest tension, faint with the joy and splendour of my thought, without, in the dark passage, a man groaned.

I seized the tallow dip and sprang to the door. The cat passed me like a demon, and the tallow dip went out, but my long knife flew swifter than she, and I heard her screech, and I knew that my knife had found her. For a moment I listened to her tumbling and thumping about in the darkness, and then when her frenzy ceased, I lighted a lamp and raised it over my head. Mr. Wilde lay on the floor with his throat torn open. At first I thought he was dead, but as I looked, a green sparkle came into his sunken eyes, his mutilated hand trembled, and then a spasm stretched his mouth from ear to ear. For a moment my terror and despair gave place to hope, but as I bent over him his eyeballs rolled clean around in his head, and he died. Then while I stood, transfixed with rage and despair, seeing my crown, my empire, every hope and every ambition, my very life, lying prostrate there with the dead master, *they* came, seized me from behind, and bound me until my veins stood out like cords, and my voice failed with the paroxysms of my frenzied screams. But I still raged, bleeding and infuriated among them, and more than one policeman felt my sharp teeth. Then when I could no longer move they came nearer; I saw old Hawberk, and behind him my cousin Louis' ghastly face, and farther away, in the corner, a woman, Constance, weeping softly.

"Ah! I see it now!" I shrieked. "You have seized the

throne and the empire. Woe! woe to you who are crowned with the crown of the King in Yellow!”

[EDITOR’S NOTE.—Mr. Castaigne died yesterday in the Asylum for Criminal Insane.]

THE MASK

Camilla: You, sir, should unmask.

Stranger: Indeed?

Cassilda: Indeed it’s time. We all have laid aside disguise but you.

Stranger: I wear no mask.

Camilla: (Terrified, aside to Cassilda.) No mask? No mask!

The King in Yellow, Act I, Scene 2.

I

Although I knew nothing of chemistry, I listened fascinated. He picked up an Easter lily which Geneviève had brought that morning from Notre Dame, and dropped it into the basin. Instantly the liquid lost its crystalline clearness. For a second the lily was enveloped in a milk-white foam, which disappeared, leaving the fluid opalescent. Changing tints of orange and crimson played over the surface, and then what seemed to be a ray of pure sunlight struck through from the bottom where the lily was resting. At the same instant he plunged his hand into the basin and drew out the flower. “There is no danger,” he explained, “if you choose the right moment. That golden ray is the signal.”

He held the lily toward me, and I took it in my hand. It had turned to stone, to the purest marble.

“You see,” he said, “it is without a flaw. What sculptor could reproduce it?”

The marble was white as snow, but in its depths the veins of the lily were tinged with palest azure, and a faint flush lingered deep in its heart.

“Don’t ask me the reason of that,” he smiled, noticing my wonder. “I have no idea why the veins and heart are tinted, but they always are. Yesterday I tried one of Geneviève’s gold-fish,—there it is.”

The fish looked as if sculptured in marble. But if you held it to the light the stone was beautifully veined with a faint blue, and from somewhere within came a rosy light like the tint which slumbers in an opal. I looked into the basin. Once more it seemed filled with clearest crystal.

“If I should touch it now?” I demanded.

“I don’t know,” he replied, “but you had better not try.”

“There is one thing I’m curious about,” I said, “and that is where the ray of sunlight came from.”

“It looked like a sunbeam true enough,” he said. “I don’t know, it always comes when I immerse any living thing. Perhaps,” he continued, smiling, “perhaps it is the vital spark of the creature escaping to the source from whence it came.”

I saw he was mocking, and threatened him with a mahlstick, but he only laughed and changed the subject.

“Stay to lunch. Geneviève will be here directly.”

“I saw her going to early mass,” I said, “and she looked as fresh and sweet as that lily—before you destroyed it.”

“Do you think I destroyed it?” said Boris gravely.

“Destroyed, preserved, how can we tell?”

We sat in the corner of a studio near his unfinished group of the “Fates.” He leaned back on the sofa, twirling a sculptor’s chisel and squinting at his work.

“By the way,” he said, “I have finished pointing up that old academic Ariadne, and I suppose it will have to go

to the Salon. It's all I have ready this year, but after the success the 'Madonna' brought me I feel ashamed to send a thing like that."

The "Madonna," an exquisite marble for which Geneviève had sat, had been the sensation of last year's Salon. I looked at the Ariadne. It was a magnificent piece of technical work, but I agreed with Boris that the world would expect something better of him than that. Still, it was impossible now to think of finishing in time for the Salon that splendid terrible group half shrouded in the marble behind me. The "Fates" would have to wait.

We were proud of Boris Yvain. We claimed him and he claimed us on the strength of his having been born in America, although his father was French and his mother was a Russian. Every one in the Beaux Arts called him Boris. And yet there were only two of us whom he addressed in the same familiar way—Jack Scott and myself.

Perhaps my being in love with Geneviève had something to do with his affection for me. Not that it had ever been acknowledged between us. But after all was settled, and she had told me with tears in her eyes that it was Boris whom she loved, I went over to his house and congratulated him. The perfect cordiality of that interview did not deceive either of us, I always believed, although to one at least it was a great comfort. I do not think he and Geneviève ever spoke of the matter together, but Boris knew.

Geneviève was lovely. The Madonna-like purity of her face might have been inspired by the Sanctus in Gounod's Mass. But I was always glad when she changed that mood for what we called her "April Manœuvres." She was often as variable as an April day. In the morning grave,

dignified and sweet, at noon laughing, capricious, at evening whatever one least expected. I preferred her so rather than in that Madonna-like tranquillity which stirred the depths of my heart. I was dreaming of Geneviève when he spoke again.

“What do you think of my discovery, Alec?”

“I think it wonderful.”

“I shall make no use of it, you know, beyond satisfying my own curiosity so far as may be, and the secret will die with me.”

“It would be rather a blow to sculpture, would it not? We painters lose more than we ever gain by photography.”

Boris nodded, playing with the edge of the chisel.

“This new vicious discovery would corrupt the world of art. No, I shall never confide the secret to any one,” he said slowly.

It would be hard to find any one less informed about such phenomena than myself; but of course I had heard of mineral springs so saturated with silica that the leaves and twigs which fell into them were turned to stone after a time. I dimly comprehended the process, how the silica replaced the vegetable matter, atom by atom, and the result was a duplicate of the object in stone. This, I confess, had never interested me greatly, and as for the ancient fossils thus produced, they disgusted me. Boris, it appeared, feeling curiosity instead of repugnance, had investigated the subject, and had accidentally stumbled on a solution which, attacking the immersed object with a ferocity unheard of, in a second did the work of years. This was all I could make out of the strange story he had just been telling me. He spoke again after a long silence.

“I am almost frightened when I think what I have found. Scientists would go mad over the discovery. It was

so simple too; it discovered itself. When I think of that formula, and that new element precipitated in metallic scales—

“What new element?”

“Oh, I haven’t thought of naming it, and I don’t believe I ever shall. There are enough precious metals now in the world to cut throats over.”

I pricked up my ears. “Have you struck gold, Boris?”

“No, better;—but see here, Alec!” he laughed, starting up. “You and I have all we need in this world. Ah! how sinister and covetous you look already!” I laughed too, and told him I was devoured by the desire for gold, and we had better talk of something else; so when Geneviève came in shortly after, we had turned our backs on alchemy.

Geneviève was dressed in silvery grey from head to foot. The light glinted along the soft curves of her fair hair as she turned her cheek to Boris; then she saw me and returned my greeting. She had never before failed to blow me a kiss from the tips of her white fingers, and I promptly complained of the omission. She smiled and held out her hand, which dropped almost before it had touched mine; then she said, looking at Boris—

“You must ask Alec to stay for luncheon.” This also was something new. She had always asked me herself until today.

“I did,” said Boris shortly.

“And you said yes, I hope?” She turned to me with a charming conventional smile. I might have been an acquaintance of the day before yesterday. I made her a low bow. “J’avais bien l’honneur, madame,” but refusing to take up our usual bantering tone, she murmured a

hospitable commonplace and disappeared. Boris and I looked at one another.

"I had better go home, don't you think?" I asked.

"Hanged if I know," he replied frankly.

While we were discussing the advisability of my departure Geneviève reappeared in the doorway without her bonnet. She was wonderfully beautiful, but her colour was too deep and her lovely eyes were too bright. She came straight up to me and took my arm.

"Luncheon is ready. Was I cross, Alec? I thought I had a headache, but I haven't. Come here, Boris;" and she slipped her other arm through his. "Alec knows that after you there is no one in the world whom I like as well as I like him, so if he sometimes feels snubbed it won't hurt him."

"À la bonheur!" I cried, "who says there are no thunderstorms in April?"

"Are you ready?" chanted Boris. "Aye ready;" and arm-in-arm we raced into the dining-room, scandalizing the servants. After all we were not so much to blame; Geneviève was eighteen, Boris was twenty-three, and I not quite twenty-one.

II

Some work that I was doing about this time on the decorations for Geneviève's boudoir kept me constantly at the quaint little hotel in the Rue Sainte-Cécile. Boris and I in those days laboured hard but as we pleased, which was fitfully, and we all three, with Jack Scott, idled a great deal together.

One quiet afternoon I had been wandering alone over the house examining curios, prying into odd corners, bringing out sweetmeats and cigars from strange hiding-

places, and at last I stopped in the bathing-room. Boris, all over clay, stood there washing his hands.

The room was built of rose-coloured marble excepting the floor, which was tessellated in rose and grey. In the centre was a square pool sunken below the surface of the floor; steps led down into it, sculptured pillars supported a frescoed ceiling. A delicious marble Cupid appeared to have just alighted on his pedestal at the upper end of the room. The whole interior was Boris' work and mine. Boris, in his working-clothes of white canvas, scraped the traces of clay and red modelling wax from his handsome hands, and coquetted over his shoulder with the Cupid.

"I see you," he insisted, "don't try to look the other way and pretend not to see me. You know who made you, little humbug!"

It was always my rôle to interpret Cupid's sentiments in these conversations, and when my turn came I responded in such a manner, that Boris seized my arm and dragged me toward the pool, declaring he would duck me. Next instant he dropped my arm and turned pale. "Good God!" he said, "I forgot the pool is full of the solution!"

I shivered a little, and dryly advised him to remember better where he had stored the precious liquid.

"In Heaven's name, why do you keep a small lake of that gruesome stuff here of all places?" I asked.

"I want to experiment on something large," he replied.

"On me, for instance?"

"Ah! that came too close for jesting; but I do want to watch the action of that solution on a more highly organized living body; there is that big white rabbit," he said, following me into the studio.

Jack Scott, wearing a paint-stained jacket, came wandering in, appropriated all the Oriental sweetmeats

he could lay his hands on, looted the cigarette case, and finally he and Boris disappeared together to visit the Luxembourg Gallery, where a new silver bronze by Rodin and a landscape of Monet's were claiming the exclusive attention of artistic France. I went back to the studio, and resumed my work. It was a Renaissance screen, which Boris wanted me to paint for Geneviève's boudoir. But the small boy who was unwillingly dawdling through a series of poses for it, to-day refused all bribes to be good. He never rested an instant in the same position, and inside of five minutes I had as many different outlines of the little beggar.

"Are you posing, or are you executing a song and dance, my friend?" I inquired.

"Whichever monsieur pleases," he replied, with an angelic smile.

Of course I dismissed him for the day, and of course I paid him for the full time, that being the way we spoil our models.

After the young imp had gone, I made a few perfunctory daubs at my work, but was so thoroughly out of humour, that it took me the rest of the afternoon to undo the damage I had done, so at last I scraped my palette, stuck my brushes in a bowl of black soap, and strolled into the smoking-room. I really believe that, excepting Geneviève's apartments, no room in the house was so free from the perfume of tobacco as this one. It was a queer chaos of odds and ends, hung with threadbare tapestry. A sweet-toned old spinet in good repair stood by the window. There were stands of weapons, some old and dull, others bright and modern, festoons of Indian and Turkish armour over the mantel, two or three good pictures, and a pipe-rack. It was here that we used to

come for new sensations in smoking. I doubt if any type of pipe ever existed which was not represented in that rack. When we had selected one, we immediately carried it somewhere else and smoked it; for the place was, on the whole, more gloomy and less inviting than any in the house. But this afternoon, the twilight was very soothing, the rugs and skins on the floor looked brown and soft and drowsy; the big couch was piled with cushions—I found my pipe and curled up there for an unaccustomed smoke in the smoking-room. I had chosen one with a long flexible stem, and lighting it fell to dreaming. After a while it went out, but I did not stir. I dreamed on and presently fell asleep.

I awoke to the saddest music I had ever heard. The room was quite dark, I had no idea what time it was. A ray of moonlight silvered one edge of the old spinet, and the polished wood seemed to exhale the sounds as perfume floats above a box of sandalwood. Some one rose in the darkness, and came away weeping quietly, and I was fool enough to cry out “Geneviève!”

She dropped at my voice, and, I had time to curse myself while I made a light and tried to raise her from the floor. She shrank away with a murmur of pain. She was very quiet, and asked for Boris. I carried her to the divan, and went to look for him, but he was not in the house, and the servants were gone to bed. Perplexed and anxious, I hurried back to Geneviève. She lay where I had left her, looking very white.

“I can’t find Boris nor any of the servants,” I said.

“I know,” she answered faintly, “Boris has gone to Ept with Mr. Scott. I did not remember when I sent you for him just now.”

“But he can’t get back in that case before to-morrow

afternoon, and—are you hurt? Did I frighten you into falling? What an awful fool I am, but I was only half awake.”

“Boris thought you had gone home before dinner. Do please excuse us for letting you stay here all this time.”

“I have had a long nap,” I laughed, “so sound that I did not know whether I was still asleep or not when I found myself staring at a figure that was moving toward me, and called out your name. Have you been trying the old spinet? You must have played very softly.”

I would tell a thousand more lies worse than that one to see the look of relief that came into her face. She smiled adorably, and said in her natural voice: “Alec, I tripped on that wolf’s head, and I think my ankle is sprained. Please call Marie, and then go home.”

I did as she bade me, and left her there when the maid came in.

III

At noon next day when I called, I found Boris walking restlessly about his studio.

“Geneviève is asleep just now,” he told me, “the sprain is nothing, but why should she have such a high fever? The doctor can’t account for it; or else he will not,” he muttered.

“Geneviève has a fever?” I asked.

“I should say so, and has actually been a little light-headed at intervals all night. The idea!—gay little Geneviève, without a care in the world,—and she keeps saying her heart’s broken, and she wants to die!”

My own heart stood still.

Boris leaned against the door of his studio, looking down, his hands in his pockets, his kind, keen eyes

clouded, a new line of trouble drawn “over the mouth’s good mark, that made the smile.” The maid had orders to summon him the instant Geneviève opened her eyes. We waited and waited, and Boris, growing restless, wandered about, fussing with modelling wax and red clay. Suddenly he started for the next room. “Come and see my rose-coloured bath full of death!” he cried.

“Is it death?” I asked, to humour his mood.

“You are not prepared to call it life, I suppose,” he answered. As he spoke he plucked a solitary gold-fish squirming and twisting out of its globe. “We’ll send this one after the other—wherever that is,” he said. There was feverish excitement in his voice. A dull weight of fever lay on my limbs and on my brain as I followed him to the fair crystal pool with its pink-tinted sides; and he dropped the creature in. Falling, its scales flashed with a hot orange gleam in its angry twistings and contortions; the moment it struck the liquid it became rigid and sank heavily to the bottom. Then came the milky foam, the splendid hues radiating on the surface and then the shaft of pure serene light broke through from seemingly infinite depths. Boris plunged in his hand and drew out an exquisite marble thing, blue-veined, rose-tinted, and glistening with opalescent drops.

“Child’s play,” he muttered, and looked wearily, longingly at me,—as if I could answer such questions! But Jack Scott came in and entered into the “game,” as he called it, with ardour. Nothing would do but to try the experiment on the white rabbit then and there. I was willing that Boris should find distraction from his cares, but I hated to see the life go out of a warm, living creature and I declined to be present. Picking up a book at random, I sat down in the studio to read. Alas! I had

found *The King in Yellow*. After a few moments, which seemed ages, I was putting it away with a nervous shudder, when Boris and Jack came in bringing their marble rabbit. At the same time the bell rang above, and a cry came from the sick-room. Boris was gone like a flash, and the next moment he called, "Jack, run for the doctor; bring him back with you. Alec, come here."

I went and stood at her door. A frightened maid came out in haste and ran away to fetch some remedy. Geneviève, sitting bolt upright, with crimson cheeks and glittering eyes, babbled incessantly and resisted Boris' gentle restraint. He called me to help. At my first touch she sighed and sank back, closing her eyes, and then—then—as we still bent above her, she opened them again, looked straight into Boris' face—poor fever-crazed girl!—and told her secret. At the same instant our three lives turned into new channels; the bond that held us so long together snapped for ever and a new bond was forged in its place, for she had spoken my name, and as the fever tortured her, her heart poured out its load of hidden sorrow. Amazed and dumb I bowed my head, while my face burned like a live coal, and the blood surged in my ears, stupefying me with its clamour. Incapable of movement, incapable of speech, I listened to her feverish words in an agony of shame and sorrow. I could not silence her, I could not look at Boris. Then I felt an arm upon my shoulder, and Boris turned a bloodless face to mine.

"It is not your fault, Alec; don't grieve so if she loves you—" but he could not finish; and as the doctor stepped swiftly into the room, saying—"Ah, the fever!" I seized Jack Scott and hurried him to the street, saying, "Boris would rather be alone." We crossed the street to our own

apartments, and that night, seeing I was going to be ill too, he went for the doctor again. The last thing I recollect with any distinctness was hearing Jack say, "For Heaven's sake, doctor, what ails him, to wear a face like that?" and I thought of *The King in Yellow* and the Pallid Mask.

I was very ill, for the strain of two years which I had endured since that fatal May morning when Geneviève murmured, "I love you, but I think I love Boris best," told on me at last. I had never imagined that it could become more than I could endure. Outwardly tranquil, I had deceived myself. Although the inward battle raged night after night, and I, lying alone in my room, cursed myself for rebellious thoughts unloyal to Boris and unworthy of Geneviève, the morning always brought relief, and I returned to Geneviève and to my dear Boris with a heart washed clean by the tempests of the night.

Never in word or deed or thought while with them had I betrayed my sorrow even to myself.

The mask of self-deception was no longer a mask for me, it was a part of me. Night lifted it, laying bare the stifled truth below; but there was no one to see except myself, and when the day broke the mask fell back again of its own accord. These thoughts passed through my troubled mind as I lay sick, but they were hopelessly entangled with visions of white creatures, heavy as stone, crawling about in Boris' basin,—of the wolf's head on the rug, foaming and snapping at Geneviève, who lay smiling beside it. I thought, too, of the King in Yellow wrapped in the fantastic colours of his tattered mantle, and that bitter cry of Cassilda, "Not upon us, oh King, not upon us!" Feverishly I struggled to put it from me, but I saw the lake of Hali, thin and blank, without a ripple or wind to stir it, and I saw the towers of Carcosa behind the moon.

Aldebaran, the Hyades, Alar, Hastur, glided through the cloud-rifts which fluttered and flapped as they passed like the scalloped tatters of the King in Yellow. Among all these, one sane thought persisted. It never wavered, no matter what else was going on in my disordered mind, that my chief reason for existing was to meet some requirement of Boris and Geneviève. What this obligation was, its nature, was never clear; sometimes it seemed to be protection, sometimes support, through a great crisis. Whatever it seemed to be for the time, its weight rested only on me, and I was never so ill or so weak that I did not respond with my whole soul. There were always crowds of faces about me, mostly strange, but a few I recognized, Boris among them. Afterward they told me that this could not have been, but I know that once at least he bent over me. It was only a touch, a faint echo of his voice, then the clouds settled back on my senses, and I lost him, but he *did* stand there and bend over me *once* at least.

At last, one morning I awoke to find the sunlight falling across my bed, and Jack Scott reading beside me. I had not strength enough to speak aloud, neither could I think, much less remember, but I could smile feebly, as Jack's eye met mine, and when he jumped up and asked eagerly if I wanted anything, I could whisper, "Yes—Boris." Jack moved to the head of my bed, and leaned down to arrange my pillow: I did not see his face, but he answered heartily, "You must wait, Alec; you are too weak to see even Boris."

I waited and I grew strong; in a few days I was able to see whom I would, but meanwhile I had thought and remembered. From the moment when all the past grew clear again in my mind, I never doubted what I should do when the time came, and I felt sure that Boris would

have resolved upon the same course so far as he was concerned; as for what pertained to me alone, I knew he would see that also as I did. I no longer asked for any one. I never inquired why no message came from them; why during the week I lay there, waiting and growing stronger, I never heard their name spoken. Preoccupied with my own searchings for the right way, and with my feeble but determined fight against despair, I simply acquiesced in Jack's reticence, taking for granted that he was afraid to speak of them, lest I should turn unruly and insist on seeing them. Meanwhile I said over and over to myself, how would it be when life began again for us all? We would take up our relations exactly as they were before Geneviève fell ill. Boris and I would look into each other's eyes, and there would be neither rancour nor cowardice nor mistrust in that glance. I would be with them again for a little while in the dear intimacy of their home, and then, without pretext or explanation, I would disappear from their lives for ever. Boris would know; Geneviève—the only comfort was that she would never know. It seemed, as I thought it over, that I had found the meaning of that sense of obligation which had persisted all through my delirium, and the only possible answer to it. So, when I was quite ready, I beckoned Jack to me one day, and said—

“Jack, I want Boris at once; and take my dearest greeting to Geneviève....”

When at last he made me understand that they were both dead, I fell into a wild rage that tore all my little convalescent strength to atoms. I raved and cursed myself into a relapse, from which I crawled forth some weeks afterward a boy of twenty-one who believed that his youth was gone for ever. I seemed to be past the capability

of further suffering, and one day when Jack handed me a letter and the keys to Boris' house, I took them without a tremor and asked him to tell me all. It was cruel of me to ask him, but there was no help for it, and he leaned wearily on his thin hands, to reopen the wound which could never entirely heal. He began very quietly—

“Alec, unless you have a clue that I know nothing about, you will not be able to explain any more than I what has happened. I suspect that you would rather not hear these details, but you must learn them, else I would spare you the relation. God knows I wish I could be spared the telling. I shall use few words.

“That day when I left you in the doctor's care and came back to Boris, I found him working on the ‘Fates.’ Geneviève, he said, was sleeping under the influence of drugs. She had been quite out of her mind, he said. He kept on working, not talking any more, and I watched him. Before long, I saw that the third figure of the group—the one looking straight ahead, out over the world—bore his face; not as you ever saw it, but as it looked then and to the end. This is one thing for which I should like to find an explanation, but I never shall.

“Well, he worked and I watched him in silence, and we went on that way until nearly midnight. Then we heard the door open and shut sharply, and a swift rush in the next room. Boris sprang through the doorway and I followed; but we were too late. She lay at the bottom of the pool, her hands across her breast. Then Boris shot himself through the heart.” Jack stopped speaking, drops of sweat stood under his eyes, and his thin cheeks twitched. “I carried Boris to his room. Then I went back and let that hellish fluid out of the pool, and turning on all the water, washed the marble clean of every drop.

When at length I dared descend the steps, I found her lying there as white as snow. At last, when I had decided what was best to do, I went into the laboratory, and first emptied the solution in the basin into the waste-pipe; then I poured the contents of every jar and bottle after it. There was wood in the fireplace, so I built a fire, and breaking the locks of Boris' cabinet I burnt every paper, notebook and letter that I found there. With a mallet from the studio I smashed to pieces all the empty bottles, then loading them into a coal-scuttle, I carried them to the cellar and threw them over the red-hot bed of the furnace. Six times I made the journey, and at last, not a vestige remained of anything which might again aid in seeking for the formula which Boris had found. Then at last I dared call the doctor. He is a good man, and together we struggled to keep it from the public. Without him I never could have succeeded. At last we got the servants paid and sent away into the country, where old Rosier keeps them quiet with stories of Boris' and Geneviève's travels in distant lands, from whence they will not return for years. We buried Boris in the little cemetery of Sèvres. The doctor is a good creature, and knows when to pity a man who can bear no more. He gave his certificate of heart disease and asked no questions of me."

Then, lifting his head from his hands, he said, "Open the letter, Alec; it is for us both."

I tore it open. It was Boris' will dated a year before. He left everything to Geneviève, and in case of her dying childless, I was to take control of the house in the Rue Sainte-Cécile, and Jack Scott the management at Ept. On our deaths the property reverted to his mother's family in Russia, with the exception of the sculptured marbles executed by himself. These he left to me.

The page blurred under our eyes, and Jack got up and walked to the window. Presently he returned and sat down again. I dreaded to hear what he was going to say, but he spoke with the same simplicity and gentleness.

“Geneviève lies before the Madonna in the marble room. The Madonna bends tenderly above her, and Geneviève smiles back into that calm face that never would have been except for her.”

His voice broke, but he grasped my hand, saying, “Courage, Alec.” Next morning he left for Ept to fulfil his trust.

IV

The same evening I took the keys and went into the house I had known so well. Everything was in order, but the silence was terrible. Though I went twice to the door of the marble room, I could not force myself to enter. It was beyond my strength. I went into the smoking-room and sat down before the spinet. A small lace handkerchief lay on the keys, and I turned away, choking. It was plain I could not stay, so I locked every door, every window, and the three front and back gates, and went away. Next morning Alcide packed my valise, and leaving him in charge of my apartments I took the Orient express for Constantinople. During the two years that I wandered through the East, at first, in our letters, we never mentioned Geneviève and Boris, but gradually their names crept in. I recollect particularly a passage in one of Jack’s letters replying to one of mine—

“What you tell me of seeing Boris bending over you while you lay ill, and feeling his touch on your face, and hearing his voice, of course troubles me. This that you describe must have happened a fortnight after he died. I

say to myself that you were dreaming, that it was part of your delirium, but the explanation does not satisfy me, nor would it you."

Toward the end of the second year a letter came from Jack to me in India so unlike anything that I had ever known of him that I decided to return at once to Paris. He wrote: "I am well, and sell all my pictures as artists do who have no need of money. I have not a care of my own, but I am more restless than if I had. I am unable to shake off a strange anxiety about you. It is not apprehension, it is rather a breathless expectancy—of what, God knows! I can only say it is wearing me out. Nights I dream always of you and Boris. I can never recall anything afterward, but I wake in the morning with my heart beating, and all day the excitement increases until I fall asleep at night to recall the same experience. I am quite exhausted by it, and have determined to break up this morbid condition. I must see you. Shall I go to Bombay, or will you come to Paris?"

I telegraphed him to expect me by the next steamer.

When we met I thought he had changed very little; I, he insisted, looked in splendid health. It was good to hear his voice again, and as we sat and chatted about what life still held for us, we felt that it was pleasant to be alive in the bright spring weather.

We stayed in Paris together a week, and then I went for a week to Ept with him, but first of all we went to the cemetery at Sèvres, where Boris lay.

"Shall we place the 'Fates' in the little grove above him?" Jack asked, and I answered—

"I think only the 'Madonna' should watch over Boris' grave." But Jack was none the better for my homecoming. The dreams of which he could not retain even

the least definite outline continued, and he said that at times the sense of breathless expectancy was suffocating.

“You see I do you harm and not good,” I said. “Try a change without me.” So he started alone for a ramble among the Channel Islands, and I went back to Paris. I had not yet entered Boris’ house, now mine, since my return, but I knew it must be done. It had been kept in order by Jack; there were servants there, so I gave up my own apartment and went there to live. Instead of the agitation I had feared, I found myself able to paint there tranquilly. I visited all the rooms—all but one. I could not bring myself to enter the marble room where Geneviève lay, and yet I felt the longing growing daily to look upon her face, to kneel beside her.

One April afternoon, I lay dreaming in the smoking-room, just as I had lain two years before, and mechanically I looked among the tawny Eastern rugs for the wolf-skin. At last I distinguished the pointed ears and flat cruel head, and I thought of my dream where I saw Geneviève lying beside it. The helmets still hung against the threadbare tapestry, among them the old Spanish morion which I remembered Geneviève had once put on when we were amusing ourselves with the ancient bits of mail. I turned my eyes to the spinet; every yellow key seemed eloquent of her caressing hand, and I rose, drawn by the strength of my life’s passion to the sealed door of the marble room. The heavy doors swung inward under my trembling hands. Sunlight poured through the window, tipping with gold the wings of Cupid, and lingered like a nimbus over the brows of the Madonna. Her tender face bent in compassion over a marble form so exquisitely pure that I knelt and signed myself. Geneviève lay in the shadow under the Madonna, and yet, through

her white arms, I saw the pale azure vein, and beneath her softly clasped hands the folds of her dress were tinged with rose, as if from some faint warm light within her breast.

Bending, with a breaking heart, I touched the marble drapery with my lips, then crept back into the silent house.

A maid came and brought me a letter, and I sat down in the little conservatory to read it; but as I was about to break the seal, seeing the girl lingering, I asked her what she wanted.

She stammered something about a white rabbit that had been caught in the house, and asked what should be done with it. I told her to let it loose in the walled garden behind the house, and opened my letter. It was from Jack, but so incoherent that I thought he must have lost his reason. It was nothing but a series of prayers to me not to leave the house until he could get back; he could not tell me why, there were the dreams, he said—he could explain nothing, but he was sure that I must not leave the house in the Rue Sainte-Cécile.

As I finished reading I raised my eyes and saw the same maid-servant standing in the doorway holding a glass dish in which two gold-fish were swimming: “Put them back into the tank and tell me what you mean by interrupting me,” I said.

With a half-suppressed whimper she emptied water and fish into an aquarium at the end of the conservatory, and turning to me asked my permission to leave my service. She said people were playing tricks on her, evidently with a design of getting her into trouble; the marble rabbit had been stolen and a live one had been brought into the house; the two beautiful marble fish

were gone, and she had just found those common live things flopping on the dining-room floor. I reassured her and sent her away, saying I would look about myself. I went into the studio; there was nothing there but my canvases and some casts, except the marble of the Easter lily. I saw it on a table across the room. Then I strode angrily over to it. But the flower I lifted from the table was fresh and fragile and filled the air with perfume.

Then suddenly I comprehended, and sprang through the hallway to the marble room. The doors flew open, the sunlight streamed into my face, and through it, in a heavenly glory, the Madonna smiled, as Geneviève lifted her flushed face from her marble couch and opened her sleepy eyes.

IN THE COURT OF THE DRAGON

“Oh, thou who burn’st in heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;
How long be crying—’Mercy on them.’ God!
Why, who art thou to teach and He to learn?”

In the Church of St. Barnabé vespers were over; the clergy left the altar; the little choir-boys flocked across the chancel and settled in the stalls. A Suisse in rich uniform marched down the south aisle, sounding his staff at every fourth step on the stone pavement; behind him came that eloquent preacher and good man, Monseigneur C—.

My chair was near the chancel rail, I now turned toward the west end of the church. The other people between the altar and the pulpit turned too. There was a little scraping and rustling while the congregation seated

itself again; the preacher mounted the pulpit stairs, and the organ voluntary ceased.

I had always found the organ-playing at St. Barnabé highly interesting. Learned and scientific it was, too much so for my small knowledge, but expressing a vivid if cold intelligence. Moreover, it possessed the French quality of taste: taste reigned supreme, self-controlled, dignified and reticent.

To-day, however, from the first chord I had felt a change for the worse, a sinister change. During vespers it had been chiefly the chancel organ which supported the beautiful choir, but now and again, quite wantonly as it seemed, from the west gallery where the great organ stands, a heavy hand had struck across the church at the serene peace of those clear voices. It was something more than harsh and dissonant, and it betrayed no lack of skill. As it recurred again and again, it set me thinking of what my architect's books say about the custom in early times to consecrate the choir as soon as it was built, and that the nave, being finished sometimes half a century later, often did not get any blessing at all: I wondered idly if that had been the case at St. Barnabé, and whether something not usually supposed to be at home in a Christian church might have entered undetected and taken possession of the west gallery. I had read of such things happening, too, but not in works on architecture.

Then I remembered that St. Barnabé was not much more than a hundred years old, and smiled at the incongruous association of mediaeval superstitions with that cheerful little piece of eighteenth-century rococo.

But now vespers were over, and there should have followed a few quiet chords, fit to accompany meditation, while we waited for the sermon. Instead of that, the

discord at the lower end of the church broke out with the departure of the clergy, as if now nothing could control it.

I belong to those children of an older and simpler generation who do not love to seek for psychological subtleties in art; and I have ever refused to find in music anything more than melody and harmony, but I felt that in the labyrinth of sounds now issuing from that instrument there was something being hunted. Up and down the pedals chased him, while the manuals blared approval. Poor devil! whoever he was, there seemed small hope of escape!

My nervous annoyance changed to anger. Who was doing this? How dare he play like that in the midst of divine service? I glanced at the people near me: not one appeared to be in the least disturbed. The placid brows of the kneeling nuns, still turned towards the altar, lost none of their devout abstraction under the pale shadow of their white head-dress. The fashionable lady beside me was looking expectantly at Monseigneur C—. For all her face betrayed, the organ might have been singing an Ave Maria.

But now, at last, the preacher had made the sign of the cross, and commanded silence. I turned to him gladly. Thus far I had not found the rest I had counted on when I entered St. Barnabé that afternoon.

I was worn out by three nights of physical suffering and mental trouble: the last had been the worst, and it was an exhausted body, and a mind benumbed and yet acutely sensitive, which I had brought to my favourite church for healing. For I had been reading *The King in Yellow*.

“The sun ariseth; they gather themselves together and lay them down in their dens.” Monseigneur C— delivered his text in a calm voice, glancing quietly over

the congregation. My eyes turned, I knew not why, toward the lower end of the church. The organist was coming from behind his pipes, and passing along the gallery on his way out, I saw him disappear by a small door that leads to some stairs which descend directly to the street. He was a slender man, and his face was as white as his coat was black. "Good riddance!" I thought, "with your wicked music! I hope your assistant will play the closing voluntary."

With a feeling of relief—with a deep, calm feeling of relief, I turned back to the mild face in the pulpit and settled myself to listen. Here, at last, was the ease of mind I longed for.

"My children," said the preacher, "one truth the human soul finds hardest of all to learn: that it has nothing to fear. It can never be made to see that nothing can really harm it."

"Curious doctrine!" I thought, "for a Catholic priest. Let us see how he will reconcile that with the Fathers."

"Nothing can really harm the soul," he went on, in, his coolest, clearest tones, "because——"

But I never heard the rest; my eye left his face, I knew not for what reason, and sought the lower end of the church. The same man was coming out from behind the organ, and was passing along the gallery *the same way*. But there had not been time for him to return, and if he had returned, I must have seen him. I felt a faint chill, and my heart sank; and yet, his going and coming were no affair of mine. I looked at him: I could not look away from his black figure and his white face. When he was exactly opposite to me, he turned and sent across the church straight into my eyes, a look of hate, intense and deadly: I have never seen any other like it; would to God I might

never see it again! Then he disappeared by the same door through which I had watched him depart less than sixty seconds before.

I sat and tried to collect my thoughts. My first sensation was like that of a very young child badly hurt, when it catches its breath before crying out.

To suddenly find myself the object of such hatred was exquisitely painful: and this man was an utter stranger. Why should he hate me so?—me, whom he had never seen before? For the moment all other sensation was merged in this one pang: even fear was subordinate to grief, and for that moment I never doubted; but in the next I began to reason, and a sense of the incongruous came to my aid.

As I have said, St. Barnabé is a modern church. It is small and well lighted; one sees all over it almost at a glance. The organ gallery gets a strong white light from a row of long windows in the clerestory, which have not even coloured glass.

The pulpit being in the middle of the church, it followed that, when I was turned toward it, whatever moved at the west end could not fail to attract my eye. When the organist passed it was no wonder that I saw him: I had simply miscalculated the interval between his first and his second passing. He had come in that last time by the other side-door. As for the look which had so upset me, there had been no such thing, and I was a nervous fool.

I looked about. This was a likely place to harbour supernatural horrors! That clear-cut, reasonable face of Monseigneur C—, his collected manner and easy, graceful gestures, were they not just a little discouraging to the notion of a gruesome mystery? I glanced above his head, and almost laughed. That flyaway lady supporting

one corner of the pulpit canopy, which looked like a fringed damask table-cloth in a high wind, at the first attempt of a basilisk to pose up there in the organ loft, she would point her gold trumpet at him, and puff him out of existence! I laughed to myself over this conceit, which, at the time, I thought very amusing, and sat and chaffed myself and everything else, from the old harpy outside the railing, who had made me pay ten centimes for my chair, before she would let me in (she was more like a basilisk, I told myself, than was my organist with the anaemic complexion): from that grim old dame, to, yes, alas! Monseigneur C— himself. For all devoutness had fled. I had never yet done such a thing in my life, but now I felt a desire to mock.

As for the sermon, I could not hear a word of it for the jingle in my ears of

“The skirts of St. Paul has reached.

Having preached us those six Lent lectures,
More unctuous than ever he preached,”

keeping time to the most fantastic and irreverent thoughts.

It was no use to sit there any longer: I must get out of doors and shake myself free from this hateful mood. I knew the rudeness I was committing, but still I rose and left the church.

A spring sun was shining on the Rue St. Honoré, as I ran down the church steps. On one corner stood a barrow full of yellow jonquils, pale violets from the Riviera, dark Russian violets, and white Roman hyacinths in a golden cloud of mimosa. The street was full of Sunday pleasure-seekers. I swung my cane and laughed with the rest. Some

one overtook and passed me. He never turned, but there was the same deadly malignity in his white profile that there had been in his eyes. I watched him as long as I could see him. His lithe back expressed the same menace; every step that carried him away from me seemed to bear him on some errand connected with my destruction.

I was creeping along, my feet almost refusing to move. There began to dawn in me a sense of responsibility for something long forgotten. It began to seem as if I deserved that which he threatened: it reached a long way back—a long, long way back. It had lain dormant all these years: it was there, though, and presently it would rise and confront me. But I would try to escape; and I stumbled as best I could into the Rue de Rivoli, across the Place de la Concorde and on to the Quai. I looked with sick eyes upon the sun, shining through the white foam of the fountain, pouring over the backs of the dusky bronze river-gods, on the far-away Arc, a structure of amethyst mist, on the countless vistas of grey stems and bare branches faintly green. Then I saw him again coming down one of the chestnut alleys of the Cours la Reine.

I left the river-side, plunged blindly across to the Champs Elysées and turned toward the Arc. The setting sun was sending its rays along the green sward of the Rond-point: in the full glow he sat on a bench, children and young mothers all about him. He was nothing but a Sunday loungeur, like the others, like myself. I said the words almost aloud, and all the while I gazed on the malignant hatred of his face. But he was not looking at me. I crept past and dragged my leaden feet up the Avenue. I knew that every time I met him brought him nearer to the accomplishment of his purpose and my fate. And still I tried to save myself.

The last rays of sunset were pouring through the great Arc. I passed under it, and met him face to face. I had left him far down the Champs Elysées, and yet he came in with a stream of people who were returning from the Bois de Boulogne. He came so close that he brushed me. His slender frame felt like iron inside its loose black covering. He showed no signs of haste, nor of fatigue, nor of any human feeling. His whole being expressed one thing: the will, and the power to work me evil.

In anguish I watched him where he went down the broad crowded Avenue, that was all flashing with wheels and the trappings of horses and the helmets of the Garde Republicaine.

He was soon lost to sight; then I turned and fled. Into the Bois, and far out beyond it—I know not where I went, but after a long while as it seemed to me, night had fallen, and I found myself sitting at a table before a small café. I had wandered back into the Bois. It was hours now since I had seen him. Physical fatigue and mental suffering had left me no power to think or feel. I was tired, so tired! I longed to hide away in my own den. I resolved to go home. But that was a long way off.

I live in the Court of the Dragon, a narrow passage that leads from the Rue de Rennes to the Rue du Dragon.

It is an “impasse”; traversable only for foot passengers. Over the entrance on the Rue de Rennes is a balcony, supported by an iron dragon. Within the court tall old houses rise on either side, and close the ends that give on the two streets. Huge gates, swung back during the day into the walls of the deep archways, close this court, after midnight, and one must enter then by ringing at certain small doors on the side. The sunken pavement collects unsavoury pools. Steep stairways pitch down to doors

that open on the court. The ground floors are occupied by shops of second-hand dealers, and by iron workers. All day long the place rings with the clink of hammers and the clang of metal bars.

Unsavoury as it is below, there is cheerfulness, and comfort, and hard, honest work above.

Five flights up are the ateliers of architects and painters, and the hiding-places of middle-aged students like myself who want to live alone. When I first came here to live I was young, and not alone.

I had to walk a while before any conveyance appeared, but at last, when I had almost reached the Arc de Triomphe again, an empty cab came along and I took it.

From the Arc to the Rue de Rennes is a drive of more than half an hour, especially when one is conveyed by a tired cab horse that has been at the mercy of Sunday fête-makers.

There had been time before I passed under the Dragon's wings to meet my enemy over and over again, but I never saw him once, and now refuge was close at hand.

Before the wide gateway a small mob of children were playing. Our concierge and his wife walked among them, with their black poodle, keeping order; some couples were waltzing on the sidewalk. I returned their greetings and hurried in.

All the inhabitants of the court had trooped out into the street. The place was quite deserted, lighted by a few lanterns hung high up, in which the gas burned dimly.

My apartment was at the top of a house, halfway down the court, reached by a staircase that descended almost into the street, with only a bit of passage-way intervening, I set my foot on the threshold of the open door, the

friendly old ruinous stairs rose before me, leading up to rest and shelter. Looking back over my right shoulder, I saw *him*, ten paces off. He must have entered the court with me.

He was coming straight on, neither slowly, nor swiftly, but straight on to me. And now he was looking at me. For the first time since our eyes encountered across the church they met now again, and I knew that the time had come.

Retreating backward, down the court, I faced him. I meant to escape by the entrance on the Rue du Dragon. His eyes told me that I never should escape.

It seemed ages while we were going, I retreating, he advancing, down the court in perfect silence; but at last I felt the shadow of the archway, and the next step brought me within it. I had meant to turn here and spring through into the street. But the shadow was not that of an archway; it was that of a vault. The great doors on the Rue du Dragon were closed. I felt this by the blackness which surrounded me, and at the same instant I read it in his face. How his face gleamed in the darkness, drawing swiftly nearer! The deep vaults, the huge closed doors, their cold iron clamps were all on his side. The thing which he had threatened had arrived: it gathered and bore down on me from the fathomless shadows; the point from which it would strike was his infernal eyes. Hopeless, I set my back against the barred doors and defied him.

There was a scraping of chairs on the stone floor, and a rustling as the congregation rose. I could hear the Suisse's staff in the south aisle, preceding Monseigneur C— to the sacristy.

The kneeling nuns, roused from their devout

abstraction, made their reverence and went away. The fashionable lady, my neighbour, rose also, with graceful reserve. As she departed her glance just flitted over my face in disapproval.

Half dead, or so it seemed to me, yet intensely alive to every trifle, I sat among the leisurely moving crowd, then rose too and went toward the door.

I had slept through the sermon. Had I slept through the sermon? I looked up and saw him passing along the gallery to his place. Only his side I saw; the thin bent arm in its black covering looked like one of those devilish, nameless instruments which lie in the disused torture-chambers of mediaeval castles.

But I had escaped him, though his eyes had said I should not. *Had* I escaped him? That which gave him the power over me came back out of oblivion, where I had hoped to keep it. For I knew him now. Death and the awful abode of lost souls, whither my weakness long ago had sent him—they had changed him for every other eye, but not for mine. I had recognized him almost from the first; I had never doubted what he was come to do; and now I knew while my body sat safe in the cheerful little church, he had been hunting my soul in the Court of the Dragon.

I crept to the door: the organ broke out overhead with a blare. A dazzling light filled the church, blotting the altar from my eyes. The people faded away, the arches, the vaulted roof vanished. I raised my seared eyes to the fathomless glare, and I saw the black stars hanging in the heavens: and the wet winds from the lake of Hali chilled my face.

And now, far away, over leagues of tossing cloud-waves, I saw the moon dripping with spray; and beyond, the towers of Carcosa rose behind the moon.

Death and the awful abode of lost souls, whither my weakness long ago had sent him, had changed him for every other eye but mine. And now I heard *his voice*, rising, swelling, thundering through the flaring light, and as I fell, the radiance increasing, increasing, poured over me in waves of flame. Then I sank into the depths, and I heard the King in Yellow whispering to my soul: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"

THE YELLOW SIGN

"Let the red dawn surmise
What we shall do,
When this blue starlight dies
And all is through."

I

There are so many things which are impossible to explain! Why should certain chords in music make me think of the brown and golden tints of autumn foliage? Why should the Mass of Sainte Cécile bend my thoughts wandering among caverns whose walls blaze with ragged masses of virgin silver? What was it in the roar and turmoil of Broadway at six o'clock that flashed before my eyes the picture of a still Breton forest where sunlight filtered through spring foliage and Sylvia bent, half curiously, half tenderly, over a small green lizard, murmuring: "To think that this also is a little ward of God!"

When I first saw the watchman his back was toward me. I looked at him indifferently until he went into the church. I paid no more attention to him than I had to any other man who lounged through Washington Square that

morning, and when I shut my window and turned back into my studio I had forgotten him. Late in the afternoon, the day being warm, I raised the window again and leaned out to get a sniff of air. A man was standing in the courtyard of the church, and I noticed him again with as little interest as I had that morning. I looked across the square to where the fountain was playing and then, with my mind filled with vague impressions of trees, asphalt drives, and the moving groups of nursemaids and holiday-makers, I started to walk back to my easel. As I turned, my listless glance included the man below in the churchyard. His face was toward me now, and with a perfectly involuntary movement I bent to see it. At the same moment he raised his head and looked at me. Instantly I thought of a coffin-worm. Whatever it was about the man that repelled me I did not know, but the impression of a plump white grave-worm was so intense and nauseating that I must have shown it in my expression, for he turned his puffy face away with a movement which made me think of a disturbed grub in a chestnut.

I went back to my easel and motioned the model to resume her pose. After working a while I was satisfied that I was spoiling what I had done as rapidly as possible, and I took up a palette knife and scraped the colour out again. The flesh tones were sallow and unhealthy, and I did not understand how I could have painted such sickly colour into a study which before that had glowed with healthy tones.

I looked at Tessie. She had not changed, and the clear flush of health dyed her neck and cheeks as I frowned.

“Is it something I’ve done?” she said.

“No,—I’ve made a mess of this arm, and for the life of

me I can't see how I came to paint such mud as that into the canvas," I replied.

"Don't I pose well?" she insisted.

"Of course, perfectly."

"Then it's not my fault?"

"No. It's my own."

"I am very sorry," she said.

I told her she could rest while I applied rag and turpentine to the plague spot on my canvas, and she went off to smoke a cigarette and look over the illustrations in the *Courrier Français*.

I did not know whether it was something in the turpentine or a defect in the canvas, but the more I scrubbed the more that gangrene seemed to spread. I worked like a beaver to get it out, and yet the disease appeared to creep from limb to limb of the study before me. Alarmed, I strove to arrest it, but now the colour on the breast changed and the whole figure seemed to absorb the infection as a sponge soaks up water. Vigorously I plied palette-knife, turpentine, and scraper, thinking all the time what a *séance* I should hold with Duval who had sold me the canvas; but soon I noticed that it was not the canvas which was defective nor yet the colours of Edward. "It must be the turpentine," I thought angrily, "or else my eyes have become so blurred and confused by the afternoon light that I can't see straight." I called Tessie, the model. She came and leaned over my chair blowing rings of smoke into the air.

"What *have* you been doing to it?" she exclaimed

"Nothing," I growled, "it must be this turpentine!"

"What a horrible colour it is now," she continued. "Do you think my flesh resembles green cheese?"

“No, I don’t,” I said angrily; “did you ever know me to paint like that before?”

“No, indeed!”

“Well, then!”

“It must be the turpentine, or something,” she admitted.

She slipped on a Japanese robe and walked to the window. I scraped and rubbed until I was tired, and finally picked up my brushes and hurled them through the canvas with a forcible expression, the tone alone of which reached Tessie’s ears.

Nevertheless she promptly began: “That’s it! Swear and act silly and ruin your brushes! You have been three weeks on that study, and now look! What’s the good of ripping the canvas? What creatures artists are!”

I felt about as much ashamed as I usually did after such an outbreak, and I turned the ruined canvas to the wall. Tessie helped me clean my brushes, and then danced away to dress. From the screen she regaled me with bits of advice concerning whole or partial loss of temper, until, thinking, perhaps, I had been tormented sufficiently, she came out to implore me to button her waist where she could not reach it on the shoulder.

“Everything went wrong from the time you came back from the window and talked about that horrid-looking man you saw in the churchyard,” she announced.

“Yes, he probably bewitched the picture,” I said, yawning. I looked at my watch.

“It’s after six, I know,” said Tessie, adjusting her hat before the mirror.

“Yes,” I replied, “I didn’t mean to keep you so long.” I leaned out of the window but recoiled with disgust, for the young man with the pasty face stood below in the

churchyard. Tessie saw my gesture of disapproval and leaned from the window.

“Is that the man you don’t like?” she whispered.

I nodded.

“I can’t see his face, but he does look fat and soft. Someway or other,” she continued, turning to look at me, “he reminds me of a dream,—an awful dream I once had. Or,” she mused, looking down at her shapely shoes, “was it a dream after all?”

“How should I know?” I smiled.

Tessie smiled in reply.

“You were in it,” she said, “so perhaps you might know something about it.”

“Tessie! Tessie!” I protested, “don’t you dare flatter by saying that you dream about me!”

“But I did,” she insisted; “shall I tell you about it?”

“Go ahead,” I replied, lighting a cigarette.

Tessie leaned back on the open window-sill and began very seriously.

“One night last winter I was lying in bed thinking about nothing at all in particular. I had been posing for you and I was tired out, yet it seemed impossible for me to sleep. I heard the bells in the city ring ten, eleven, and midnight. I must have fallen asleep about midnight because I don’t remember hearing the bells after that. It seemed to me that I had scarcely closed my eyes when I dreamed that something impelled me to go to the window. I rose, and raising the sash leaned out. Twenty-fifth Street was deserted as far as I could see. I began to be afraid; everything outside seemed so—so black and uncomfortable. Then the sound of wheels in the distance came to my ears, and it seemed to me as though that was what I must wait for. Very slowly the wheels approached,

and, finally, I could make out a vehicle moving along the street. It came nearer and nearer, and when it passed beneath my window I saw it was a hearse. Then, as I trembled with fear, the driver turned and looked straight at me. When I awoke I was standing by the open window shivering with cold, but the black-plumed hearse and the driver were gone. I dreamed this dream again in March last, and again awoke beside the open window. Last night the dream came again. You remember how it was raining; when I awoke, standing at the open window, my night-dress was soaked."

"But where did I come into the dream?" I asked.

"You—you were in the coffin; but you were not dead."

"In the coffin?"

"Yes."

"How did you know? Could you see me?"

"No; I only knew you were there."

"Had you been eating Welsh rarebits, or lobster salad?"

I began, laughing, but the girl interrupted me with a frightened cry.

"Hello! What's up?" I said, as she shrank into the embrasure by the window.

"The—the man below in the churchyard;—he drove the hearse."

"Nonsense," I said, but Tessie's eyes were wide with terror. I went to the window and looked out. The man was gone. "Come, Tessie," I urged, "don't be foolish. You have posed too long; you are nervous."

"Do you think I could forget that face?" she murmured. "Three times I saw the hearse pass below my window, and every time the driver turned and looked up at me. Oh, his face was so white and—and soft? It looked dead—it looked as if it had been dead a long time."

I induced the girl to sit down and swallow a glass of Marsala. Then I sat down beside her, and tried to give her some advice.

“Look here, Tessie,” I said, “you go to the country for a week or two, and you’ll have no more dreams about hearses. You pose all day, and when night comes your nerves are upset. You can’t keep this up. Then again, instead of going to bed when your day’s work is done, you run off to picnics at Sulzer’s Park, or go to the Eldorado or Coney Island, and when you come down here next morning you are fagged out. There was no real hearse. There was a soft-shell crab dream.”

She smiled faintly.

“What about the man in the churchyard?”

“Oh, he’s only an ordinary unhealthy, everyday creature.”

“As true as my name is Tessie Reardon, I swear to you, Mr. Scott, that the face of the man below in the churchyard is the face of the man who drove the hearse!”

“What of it?” I said. “It’s an honest trade.”

“Then you think I *did* see the hearse?”

“Oh,” I said diplomatically, “if you really did, it might not be unlikely that the man below drove it. There is nothing in that.”

Tessie rose, unrolled her scented handkerchief, and taking a bit of gum from a knot in the hem, placed it in her mouth. Then drawing on her gloves she offered me her hand, with a frank, “Good-night, Mr. Scott,” and walked out.

II

The next morning, Thomas, the bell-boy, brought me the *Herald* and a bit of news. The church next door had

been sold. I thanked Heaven for it, not that being a Catholic I had any repugnance for the congregation next door, but because my nerves were shattered by a blatant exhorter, whose every word echoed through the aisle of the church as if it had been my own rooms, and who insisted on his r's with a nasal persistence which revolted my every instinct. Then, too, there was a fiend in human shape, an organist, who reeled off some of the grand old hymns with an interpretation of his own, and I longed for the blood of a creature who could play the doxology with an amendment of minor chords which one hears only in a quartet of very young undergraduates. I believe the minister was a good man, but when he bellowed: "And the Lorrird said unto Moses, the Lorrird is a man of war; the Lorrird is his name. My wrath shall wax hot and I will kill you with the sworrird!" I wondered how many centuries of purgatory it would take to atone for such a sin.

"Who bought the property?" I asked Thomas.

"Nobody that I knows, sir. They do say the gent wot owns this 'ere 'Amilton flats was lookin' at it. 'E might be a bildin' more studios."

I walked to the window. The young man with the unhealthy face stood by the churchyard gate, and at the mere sight of him the same overwhelming repugnance took possession of me.

"By the way, Thomas," I said, "who is that fellow down there?"

Thomas sniffed. "That there worm, sir? 'Es night-watchman of the church, sir. 'E maikes me tired a-sittin' out all night on them steps and lookin' at you insultin' like. I'd a punched 'is 'ed, sir—beg pardon, sir—"

"Go on, Thomas."

"One night a comin' 'ome with 'Arry, the other English

boy, I sees 'im a sittin' there on them steps. We 'ad Molly and Jen with us, sir, the two girls on the tray service, an' 'e looks so insultin' at us that I up and sez: 'Wat you looking hat, you fat slug?'—beg pardon, sir, but that's 'ow I sez, sir. Then 'e don't say nothin' and I sez: 'Come out and I'll punch that puddin' 'ed.' Then I hopens the gate an' goes in, but 'e don't say nothin', only looks insultin' like. Then I 'its 'im one, but, ugh! 'is 'ed was that cold and mushy it ud sicken you to touch 'im."

"What did he do then?" I asked curiously.

"'Im? Nawthin'."

"And you, Thomas?"

The young fellow flushed with embarrassment and smiled uneasily.

"Mr. Scott, sir, I ain't no coward, an' I can't make it out at all why I run. I was in the 5th Lawncers, sir, bugler at Tel-el-Kebir, an' was shot by the wells."

"You don't mean to say you ran away?"

"Yes, sir; I run."

"Why?"

"That's just what I want to know, sir. I grabbed Molly an' run, an' the rest was as frightened as I."

"But what were they frightened at?"

Thomas refused to answer for a while, but now my curiosity was aroused about the repulsive young man below and I pressed him. Three years' sojourn in America had not only modified Thomas' cockney dialect but had given him the American's fear of ridicule.

"You won't believe me, Mr. Scott, sir?"

"Yes, I will."

"You will lawf at me, sir?"

"Nonsense!"

He hesitated. "Well, sir, it's Gawd's truth that when I 'it

‘im ‘e grabbed me wrists, sir, and when I twisted ‘is soft, mushy fist one of ‘is fingers come off in me ‘and.”

The utter loathing and horror of Thomas’ face must have been reflected in my own, for he added:

“It’s orful, an’ now when I see ‘im I just go away. ‘E maikes me hill.”

When Thomas had gone I went to the window. The man stood beside the church-railing with both hands on the gate, but I hastily retreated to my easel again, sickened and horrified, for I saw that the middle finger of his right hand was missing.

At nine o’clock Tessie appeared and vanished behind the screen with a merry “Good morning, Mr. Scott.” When she had reappeared and taken her pose upon the model-stand I started a new canvas, much to her delight. She remained silent as long as I was on the drawing, but as soon as the scrape of the charcoal ceased and I took up my fixative she began to chatter.

“Oh, I had such a lovely time last night. We went to Tony Pastor’s.”

“Who are ‘we’?” I demanded.

“Oh, Maggie, you know, Mr. Whyte’s model, and Pinkie McCormick—we call her Pinkie because she’s got that beautiful red hair you artists like so much—and Lizzie Burke.”

I sent a shower of spray from the fixative over the canvas, and said: “Well, go on.”

“We saw Kelly and Baby Barnes the skirt-dancer and—and all the rest. I made a mash.”

“Then you have gone back on me, Tessie?”

She laughed and shook her head.

“He’s Lizzie Burke’s brother, Ed. He’s a perfect gen’l man.”

I felt constrained to give her some parental advice concerning mashing, which she took with a bright smile.

“Oh, I can take care of a strange mash,” she said, examining her chewing gum, “but Ed is different. Lizzie is my best friend.”

Then she related how Ed had come back from the stocking mill in Lowell, Massachusetts, to find her and Lizzie grown up, and what an accomplished young man he was, and how he thought nothing of squandering half-a-dollar for ice-cream and oysters to celebrate his entry as clerk into the woollen department of Macy’s. Before she finished I began to paint, and she resumed the pose, smiling and chattering like a sparrow. By noon I had the study fairly well rubbed in and Tessie came to look at it.

“That’s better,” she said.

I thought so too, and ate my lunch with a satisfied feeling that all was going well. Tessie spread her lunch on a drawing table opposite me and we drank our claret from the same bottle and lighted our cigarettes from the same match. I was very much attached to Tessie. I had watched her shoot up into a slender but exquisitely formed woman from a frail, awkward child. She had posed for me during the last three years, and among all my models she was my favourite. It would have troubled me very much indeed had she become “tough” or “fly,” as the phrase goes, but I never noticed any deterioration of her manner, and felt at heart that she was all right. She and I never discussed morals at all, and I had no intention of doing so, partly because I had none myself, and partly because I knew she would do what she liked in spite of me. Still I did hope she would steer clear of complications, because I wished her well, and then also I had a selfish desire to retain the best model I had. I knew that mashing,

as she termed it, had no significance with girls like Tessie, and that such things in America did not resemble in the least the same things in Paris. Yet, having lived with my eyes open, I also knew that somebody would take Tessie away some day, in one manner or another, and though I professed to myself that marriage was nonsense, I sincerely hoped that, in this case, there would be a priest at the end of the vista. I am a Catholic. When I listen to high mass, when I sign myself, I feel that everything, including myself, is more cheerful, and when I confess, it does me good. A man who lives as much alone as I do, must confess to somebody. Then, again, Sylvia was Catholic, and it was reason enough for me. But I was speaking of Tessie, which is very different. Tessie also was Catholic and much more devout than I, so, taking it all in all, I had little fear for my pretty model until she should fall in love. But *then* I knew that fate alone would decide her future for her, and I prayed inwardly that fate would keep her away from men like me and throw into her path nothing but Ed Burkes and Jimmy McCormicks, bless her sweet face!

Tessie sat blowing rings of smoke up to the ceiling and tinkling the ice in her tumbler.

“Do you know that I also had a dream last night?” I observed.

“Not about that man,” she laughed.

“Exactly. A dream similar to yours, only much worse.”

It was foolish and thoughtless of me to say this, but you know how little tact the average painter has. “I must have fallen asleep about ten o’clock,” I continued, “and after a while I dreamt that I awoke. So plainly did I hear the midnight bells, the wind in the tree-branches, and the whistle of steamers from the bay, that even now I can

scarcely believe I was not awake. I seemed to be lying in a box which had a glass cover. Dimly I saw the street lamps as I passed, for I must tell you, Tessie, the box in which I reclined appeared to lie in a cushioned wagon which jolted me over a stony pavement. After a while I became impatient and tried to move, but the box was too narrow. My hands were crossed on my breast, so I could not raise them to help myself. I listened and then tried to call. My voice was gone. I could hear the trample of the horses attached to the wagon, and even the breathing of the driver. Then another sound broke upon my ears like the raising of a window sash. I managed to turn my head a little, and found I could look, not only through the glass cover of my box, but also through the glass panes in the side of the covered vehicle. I saw houses, empty and silent, with neither light nor life about any of them excepting one. In that house a window was open on the first floor, and a figure all in white stood looking down into the street. It was you."

Tessie had turned her face away from me and leaned on the table with her elbow.

"I could see your face," I resumed, "and it seemed to me to be very sorrowful. Then we passed on and turned into a narrow black lane. Presently the horses stopped. I waited and waited, closing my eyes with fear and impatience, but all was silent as the grave. After what seemed to me hours, I began to feel uncomfortable. A sense that somebody was close to me made me unclose my eyes. Then I saw the white face of the hearse-driver looking at me through the coffin-lid——"

A sob from Tessie interrupted me. She was trembling like a leaf. I saw I had made an ass of myself and attempted to repair the damage.

“Why, Tess,” I said, “I only told you this to show you what influence your story might have on another person’s dreams. You don’t suppose I really lay in a coffin, do you? What are you trembling for? Don’t you see that your dream and my unreasonable dislike for that inoffensive watchman of the church simply set my brain working as soon as I fell asleep?”

She laid her head between her arms, and sobbed as if her heart would break. What a precious triple donkey I had made of myself! But I was about to break my record. I went over and put my arm about her.

“Tessie dear, forgive me,” I said; “I had no business to frighten you with such nonsense. You are too sensible a girl, too good a Catholic to believe in dreams.”

Her hand tightened on mine and her head fell back upon my shoulder, but she still trembled and I petted her and comforted her.

“Come, Tess, open your eyes and smile.”

Her eyes opened with a slow languid movement and met mine, but their expression was so queer that I hastened to reassure her again.

“It’s all humbug, Tessie; you surely are not afraid that any harm will come to you because of that.”

“No,” she said, but her scarlet lips quivered.

“Then, what’s the matter? Are you afraid?”

“Yes. Not for myself.”

“For me, then?” I demanded gaily.

“For you,” she murmured in a voice almost inaudible. “I—I care for you.”

At first I started to laugh, but when I understood her, a shock passed through me, and I sat like one turned to stone. This was the crowning bit of idiocy I had committed. During the moment which elapsed between

her reply and my answer I thought of a thousand responses to that innocent confession. I could pass it by with a laugh, I could misunderstand her and assure her as to my health, I could simply point out that it was impossible she could love me. But my reply was quicker than my thoughts, and I might think and think now when it was too late, for I had kissed her on the mouth.

That evening I took my usual walk in Washington Park, pondering over the occurrences of the day. I was thoroughly committed. There was no back out now, and I stared the future straight in the face. I was not good, not even scrupulous, but I had no idea of deceiving either myself or Tessie. The one passion of my life lay buried in the sunlit forests of Brittany. Was it buried for ever? Hope cried "No!" For three years I had been listening to the voice of Hope, and for three years I had waited for a footstep on my threshold. Had Sylvia forgotten? "No!" cried Hope.

I said that I was no good. That is true, but still I was not exactly a comic opera villain. I had led an easy-going reckless life, taking what invited me of pleasure, deploring and sometimes bitterly regretting consequences. In one thing alone, except my painting, was I serious, and that was something which lay hidden if not lost in the Breton forests.

It was too late for me to regret what had occurred during the day. Whatever it had been, pity, a sudden tenderness for sorrow, or the more brutal instinct of gratified vanity, it was all the same now, and unless I wished to bruise an innocent heart, my path lay marked before me. The fire and strength, the depth of passion of a love which I had never even suspected, with all my imagined experience in the world, left me no alternative

but to respond or send her away. Whether because I am so cowardly about giving pain to others, or whether it was that I have little of the gloomy Puritan in me, I do not know, but I shrank from disclaiming responsibility for that thoughtless kiss, and in fact had no time to do so before the gates of her heart opened and the flood poured forth. Others who habitually do their duty and find a sullen satisfaction in making themselves and everybody else unhappy, might have withstood it. I did not. I dared not. After the storm had abated I did tell her that she might better have loved Ed Burke and worn a plain gold ring, but she would not hear of it, and I thought perhaps as long as she had decided to love somebody she could not marry, it had better be me. I, at least, could treat her with an intelligent affection, and whenever she became tired of her infatuation she could go none the worse for it. For I was decided on that point although I knew how hard it would be. I remembered the usual termination of Platonic liaisons, and thought how disgusted I had been whenever I heard of one. I knew I was undertaking a great deal for so unscrupulous a man as I was, and I dreamed the future, but never for one moment did I doubt that she was safe with me. Had it been anybody but Tessie I should not have bothered my head about scruples. For it did not occur to me to sacrifice Tessie as I would have sacrificed a woman of the world. I looked the future squarely in the face and saw the several probable endings to the affair. She would either tire of the whole thing, or become so unhappy that I should have either to marry her or go away. If I married her we would be unhappy. I with a wife unsuited to me, and she with a husband unsuitable for any woman. For my past life could scarcely entitle me to marry. If I went away she might either fall ill, recover,

and marry some Eddie Burke, or she might recklessly or deliberately go and do something foolish. On the other hand, if she tired of me, then her whole life would be before her with beautiful vistas of Eddie Burkes and marriage rings and twins and Harlem flats and Heaven knows what. As I strolled along through the trees by the Washington Arch, I decided that she should find a substantial friend in me, anyway, and the future could take care of itself. Then I went into the house and put on my evening dress, for the little faintly-perfumed note on my dresser said, "Have a cab at the stage door at eleven," and the note was signed "Edith Carmichel, Metropolitan Theatre."

I took supper that night, or rather we took supper, Miss Carmichel and I, at Solari's, and the dawn was just beginning to gild the cross on the Memorial Church as I entered Washington Square after leaving Edith at the Brunswick. There was not a soul in the park as I passed along the trees and took the walk which leads from the Garibaldi statue to the Hamilton Apartment House, but as I passed the churchyard I saw a figure sitting on the stone steps. In spite of myself a chill crept over me at the sight of the white puffy face, and I hastened to pass. Then he said something which might have been addressed to me or might merely have been a mutter to himself, but a sudden furious anger flamed up within me that such a creature should address me. For an instant I felt like wheeling about and smashing my stick over his head, but I walked on, and entering the Hamilton went to my apartment. For some time I tossed about the bed trying to get the sound of his voice out of my ears, but could not. It filled my head, that muttering sound, like thick oily smoke from a fat-rendering vat or an odour of noisome

decay. And as I lay and tossed about, the voice in my ears seemed more distinct, and I began to understand the words he had muttered. They came to me slowly as if I had forgotten them, and at last I could make some sense out of the sounds. It was this:

“Have you found the Yellow Sign?”

“Have you found the Yellow Sign?”

“Have you found the Yellow Sign?”

I was furious. What did he mean by that? Then with a curse upon him and his I rolled over and went to sleep, but when I awoke later I looked pale and haggard, for I had dreamed the dream of the night before, and it troubled me more than I cared to think.

I dressed and went down into my studio. Tessie sat by the window, but as I came in she rose and put both arms around my neck for an innocent kiss. She looked so sweet and dainty that I kissed her again and then sat down before the easel.

“Hello! Where’s the study I began yesterday?” I asked.

Tessie looked conscious, but did not answer. I began to hunt among the piles of canvases, saying, “Hurry up, Tess, and get ready; we must take advantage of the morning light.”

When at last I gave up the search among the other canvases and turned to look around the room for the missing study I noticed Tessie standing by the screen with her clothes still on.

“What’s the matter,” I asked, “don’t you feel well?”

“Yes.”

“Then hurry.”

“Do you want me to pose as—as I have always posed?”

Then I understood. Here was a new complication. I had lost, of course, the best nude model I had ever seen.

I looked at Tessie. Her face was scarlet. Alas! Alas! We had eaten of the tree of knowledge, and Eden and native innocence were dreams of the past—I mean for her.

I suppose she noticed the disappointment on my face, for she said: “I will pose if you wish. The study is behind the screen here where I put it.”

“No,” I said, “we will begin something new;” and I went into my wardrobe and picked out a Moorish costume which fairly blazed with tinsel. It was a genuine costume, and Tessie retired to the screen with it enchanted. When she came forth again I was astonished. Her long black hair was bound above her forehead with a circlet of turquoises, and the ends, curled about her glittering girdle. Her feet were encased in the embroidered pointed slippers and the skirt of her costume, curiously wrought with arabesques in silver, fell to her ankles. The deep metallic blue vest embroidered with silver and the short Mauresque jacket spangled and sewn with turquoises became her wonderfully. She came up to me and held up her face smiling. I slipped my hand into my pocket, and drawing out a gold chain with a cross attached, dropped it over her head.

“It’s yours, Tessie.”

“Mine?” she faltered.

“Yours. Now go and pose,” Then with a radiant smile she ran behind the screen and presently reappeared with a little box on which was written my name.

“I had intended to give it to you when I went home to-night,” she said, “but I can’t wait now.”

I opened the box. On the pink cotton inside lay a clasp of black onyx, on which was inlaid a curious symbol or letter in gold. It was neither Arabic nor Chinese, nor, as I found afterwards, did it belong to any human script.

"It's all I had to give you for a keepsake," she said timidly.

I was annoyed, but I told her how much I should prize it, and promised to wear it always. She fastened it on my coat beneath the lapel.

"How foolish, Tess, to go and buy me such a beautiful thing as this," I said.

"I did not buy it," she laughed.

"Where did you get it?"

Then she told me how she had found it one day while coming from the Aquarium in the Battery, how she had advertised it and watched the papers, but at last gave up all hopes of finding the owner.

"That was last winter," she said, "the very day I had the first horrid dream about the hearse."

I remembered my dream of the previous night but said nothing, and presently my charcoal was flying over a new canvas, and Tessie stood motionless on the model-stand.

III

The day following was a disastrous one for me. While moving a framed canvas from one easel to another my foot slipped on the polished floor, and I fell heavily on both wrists. They were so badly sprained that it was useless to attempt to hold a brush, and I was obliged to wander about the studio, glaring at unfinished drawings and sketches, until despair seized me and I sat down to smoke and twiddle my thumbs with rage. The rain blew against the windows and rattled on the roof of the church, driving me into a nervous fit with its interminable patter. Tessie sat sewing by the window, and every now and then raised her head and looked at me with such innocent compassion that I began to feel ashamed of my irritation

and looked about for something to occupy me. I had read all the papers and all the books in the library, but for the sake of something to do I went to the bookcases and shoved them open with my elbow. I knew every volume by its colour and examined them all, passing slowly around the library and whistling to keep up my spirits. I was turning to go into the dining-room when my eye fell upon a book bound in serpent skin, standing in a corner of the top shelf of the last bookcase. I did not remember it, and from the floor could not decipher the pale lettering on the back, so I went to the smoking-room and called Tessie. She came in from the studio and climbed up to reach the book.

“What is it?” I asked.

“*The King in Yellow.*”

I was dumfounded. Who had placed it there? How came it in my rooms? I had long ago decided that I should never open that book, and nothing on earth could have persuaded me to buy it. Fearful lest curiosity might tempt me to open it, I had never even looked at it in book-stores. If I ever had had any curiosity to read it, the awful tragedy of young Castaigne, whom I knew, prevented me from exploring its wicked pages. I had always refused to listen to any description of it, and indeed, nobody ever ventured to discuss the second part aloud, so I had absolutely no knowledge of what those leaves might reveal. I stared at the poisonous mottled binding as I would at a snake.

“Don’t touch it, Tessie,” I said; “come down.”

Of course my admonition was enough to arouse her curiosity, and before I could prevent it she took the book and, laughing, danced off into the studio with it. I called to her, but she slipped away with a tormenting smile at

my helpless hands, and I followed her with some impatience.

“Tessie!” I cried, entering the library, “listen, I am serious. Put that book away. I do not wish you to open it!” The library was empty. I went into both drawing-rooms, then into the bedrooms, laundry, kitchen, and finally returned to the library and began a systematic search. She had hidden herself so well that it was half-an-hour later when I discovered her crouching white and silent by the latticed window in the store-room above. At the first glance I saw she had been punished for her foolishness. *The King in Yellow* lay at her feet, but the book was open at the second part. I looked at Tessie and saw it was too late. She had opened *The King in Yellow*. Then I took her by the hand and led her into the studio. She seemed dazed, and when I told her to lie down on the sofa she obeyed me without a word. After a while she closed her eyes and her breathing became regular and deep, but I could not determine whether or not she slept. For a long while I sat silently beside her, but she neither stirred nor spoke, and at last I rose, and, entering the unused store-room, took the book in my least injured hand. It seemed heavy as lead, but I carried it into the studio again, and sitting down on the rug beside the sofa, opened it and read it through from beginning to end.

When, faint with excess of my emotions, I dropped the volume and leaned wearily back against the sofa, Tessie opened her eyes and looked at me....

We had been speaking for some time in a dull monotonous strain before I realized that we were discussing *The King in Yellow*. Oh the sin of writing such words,—words which are clear as crystal, limpid and musical as bubbling springs, words which sparkle and

glow like the poisoned diamonds of the Medicis! Oh the wickedness, the hopeless damnation of a soul who could fascinate and paralyze human creatures with such words,—words understood by the ignorant and wise alike, words which are more precious than jewels, more soothing than music, more awful than death!

We talked on, unmindful of the gathering shadows, and she was begging me to throw away the clasp of black onyx quaintly inlaid with what we now knew to be the Yellow Sign. I never shall know why I refused, though even at this hour, here in my bedroom as I write this confession, I should be glad to know *what* it was that prevented me from tearing the Yellow Sign from my breast and casting it into the fire. I am sure I wished to do so, and yet Tessie pleaded with me in vain. Night fell and the hours dragged on, but still we murmured to each other of the King and the Pallid Mask, and midnight sounded from the misty spires in the fog-wrapped city. We spoke of Hastur and of Cassilda, while outside the fog rolled against the blank window-panes as the cloud waves roll and break on the shores of Hali.

The house was very silent now, and not a sound came up from the misty streets. Tessie lay among the cushions, her face a grey blot in the gloom, but her hands were clasped in mine, and I knew that she knew and read my thoughts as I read hers, for we had understood the mystery of the Hyades and the Phantom of Truth was laid. Then as we answered each other, swiftly, silently, thought on thought, the shadows stirred in the gloom about us, and far in the distant streets we heard a sound. Nearer and nearer it came, the dull crunching of wheels, nearer and yet nearer, and now, outside before the door it ceased, and I dragged myself to the window and saw

a black-plumed hearse. The gate below opened and shut, and I crept shaking to my door and bolted it, but I knew no bolts, no locks, could keep that creature out who was coming for the Yellow Sign. And now I heard him moving very softly along the hall. Now he was at the door, and the bolts rotted at his touch. Now he had entered. With eyes starting from my head I peered into the darkness, but when he came into the room I did not see him. It was only when I felt him envelope me in his cold soft grasp that I cried out and struggled with deadly fury, but my hands were useless and he tore the onyx clasp from my coat and struck me full in the face. Then, as I fell, I heard Tessie's soft cry and her spirit fled: and even while falling I longed to follow her, for I knew that the King in Yellow had opened his tattered mantle and there was only God to cry to now.

I could tell more, but I cannot see what help it will be to the world. As for me, I am past human help or hope. As I lie here, writing, careless even whether or not I die before I finish, I can see the doctor gathering up his powders and phials with a vague gesture to the good priest beside me, which I understand.

They will be very curious to know the tragedy—they of the outside world who write books and print millions of newspapers, but I shall write no more, and the father confessor will seal my last words with the seal of sanctity when his holy office is done. They of the outside world may send their creatures into wrecked homes and death-smitten firesides, and their newspapers will batten on blood and tears, but with me their spies must halt before the confessional. They know that Tessie is dead and that I am dying. They know how the people in the house, aroused by an infernal scream, rushed into my room and

found one living and two dead, but they do not know what I shall tell them now; they do not know that the doctor said as he pointed to a horrible decomposed heap on the floor—the livid corpse of the watchman from the church: “I have no theory, no explanation. That man must have been dead for months!”

I think I am dying. I wish the priest would—

THE DEMOISELLE D'YS

“Mais je croy que je
Suis descendu on puiz
Ténébreux onquel disoit
Heraclytus estre Vereté cachée.”

“There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

“The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.”

I

The utter desolation of the scene began to have its effect; I sat down to face the situation and, if possible, recall to mind some landmark which might aid me in extricating myself from my present position. If I could only find the ocean again all would be clear, for I knew one could see the island of Groix from the cliffs.

I laid down my gun, and kneeling behind a rock lighted a pipe. Then I looked at my watch. It was nearly four o'clock. I might have wandered far from Kerselec since daybreak.

Standing the day before on the cliffs below Kerselec

with Goulven, looking out over the sombre moors among which I had now lost my way, these downs had appeared to me level as a meadow, stretching to the horizon, and although I knew how deceptive is distance, I could not realize that what from Kerselec seemed to be mere grassy hollows were great valleys covered with gorse and heather, and what looked like scattered boulders were in reality enormous cliffs of granite.

“It’s a bad place for a stranger,” old Goulven had said: “you’d better take a guide;” and I had replied, “I shall not lose myself.” Now I knew that I had lost myself, as I sat there smoking, with the sea-wind blowing in my face. On every side stretched the moorland, covered with flowering gorse and heath and granite boulders. There was not a tree in sight, much less a house. After a while, I picked up the gun, and turning my back on the sun tramped on again.

There was little use in following any of the brawling streams which every now and then crossed my path, for, instead of flowing into the sea, they ran inland to reedy pools in the hollows of the moors. I had followed several, but they all led me to swamps or silent little ponds from which the snipe rose peeping and wheeled away in an ecstasy of fright. I began to feel fatigued, and the gun galled my shoulder in spite of the double pads. The sun sank lower and lower, shining level across yellow gorse and the moorland pools.

As I walked my own gigantic shadow led me on, seeming to lengthen at every step. The gorse scraped against my leggings, crackled beneath my feet, showering the brown earth with blossoms, and the brake bowed and billowed along my path. From tufts of heath rabbits scurried away through the bracken, and among the

swamp grass I heard the wild duck's drowsy quack. Once a fox stole across my path, and again, as I stooped to drink at a hurrying rill, a heron flapped heavily from the reeds beside me. I turned to look at the sun. It seemed to touch the edges of the plain. When at last I decided that it was useless to go on, and that I must make up my mind to spend at least one night on the moors, I threw myself down thoroughly fagged out. The evening sunlight slanted warm across my body, but the sea-winds began to rise, and I felt a chill strike through me from my wet shooting-boots. High overhead gulls were wheeling and tossing like bits of white paper; from some distant marsh a solitary curlew called. Little by little the sun sank into the plain, and the zenith flushed with the after-glow. I watched the sky change from palest gold to pink and then to smouldering fire. Clouds of midges danced above me, and high in the calm air a bat dipped and soared. My eyelids began to droop. Then as I shook off the drowsiness a sudden crash among the bracken roused me. I raised my eyes. A great bird hung quivering in the air above my face. For an instant I stared, incapable of motion; then something leaped past me in the ferns and the bird rose, wheeled, and pitched headlong into the brake.

I was on my feet in an instant peering through the gorse. There came the sound of a struggle from a bunch of heather close by, and then all was quiet. I stepped forward, my gun poised, but when I came to the heather the gun fell under my arm again, and I stood motionless in silent astonishment. A dead hare lay on the ground, and on the hare stood a magnificent falcon, one talon buried in the creature's neck, the other planted firmly on its limp flank. But what astonished me, was not the mere sight

of a falcon sitting upon its prey. I had seen that more than once. It was that the falcon was fitted with a sort of leash about both talons, and from the leash hung a round bit of metal like a sleigh-bell. The bird turned its fierce yellow eyes on me, and then stooped and struck its curved beak into the quarry. At the same instant hurried steps sounded among the heather, and a girl sprang into the covert in front. Without a glance at me she walked up to the falcon, and passing her gloved hand under its breast, raised it from the quarry. Then she deftly slipped a small hood over the bird's head, and holding it out on her gauntlet, stooped and picked up the hare.

She passed a cord about the animal's legs and fastened the end of the thong to her girdle. Then she started to retrace her steps through the covert. As she passed me I raised my cap and she acknowledged my presence with a scarcely perceptible inclination. I had been so astonished, so lost in admiration of the scene before my eyes, that it had not occurred to me that here was my salvation. But as she moved away I recollected that unless I wanted to sleep on a windy moor that night I had better recover my speech without delay. At my first word she hesitated, and as I stepped before her I thought a look of fear came into her beautiful eyes. But as I humbly explained my unpleasant plight, her face flushed and she looked at me in wonder.

"Surely you did not come from Kerselec!" she repeated.

Her sweet voice had no trace of the Breton accent nor of any accent which I knew, and yet there was something in it I seemed to have heard before, something quaint and indefinable, like the theme of an old song.

I explained that I was an American, unacquainted with Finistère, shooting there for my own amusement.

"An American," she repeated in the same quaint musical tones. "I have never before seen an American."

For a moment she stood silent, then looking at me she said. "If you should walk all night you could not reach Kerselec now, even if you had a guide."

This was pleasant news.

"But," I began, "if I could only find a peasant's hut where I might get something to eat, and shelter."

The falcon on her wrist fluttered and shook its head. The girl smoothed its glossy back and glanced at me.

"Look around," she said gently. "Can you see the end of these moors? Look, north, south, east, west. Can you see anything but moorland and bracken?"

"No," I said.

"The moor is wild and desolate. It is easy to enter, but sometimes they who enter never leave it. There are no peasants' huts here."

"Well," I said, "if you will tell me in which direction Kerselec lies, to-morrow it will take me no longer to go back than it has to come."

She looked at me again with an expression almost like pity.

"Ah," she said, "to come is easy and takes hours; to go is different—and may take centuries."

I stared at her in amazement but decided that I had misunderstood her. Then before I had time to speak she drew a whistle from her belt and sounded it.

"Sit down and rest," she said to me; "you have come a long distance and are tired."

She gathered up her pleated skirts and motioning me to follow picked her dainty way through the gorse to a flat rock among the ferns.

"They will be here directly," she said, and taking a seat

at one end of the rock invited me to sit down on the other edge. The after-glow was beginning to fade in the sky and a single star twinkled faintly through the rosy haze. A long wavering triangle of water-fowl drifted southward over our heads, and from the swamps around plover were calling.

“They are very beautiful—these moors,” she said quietly.

“Beautiful, but cruel to strangers,” I answered.

“Beautiful and cruel,” she repeated dreamily, “beautiful and cruel.”

“Like a woman,” I said stupidly.

“Oh,” she cried with a little catch in her breath, and looked at me. Her dark eyes met mine, and I thought she seemed angry or frightened.

“Like a woman,” she repeated under her breath, “How cruel to say so!” Then after a pause, as though speaking aloud to herself, “How cruel for him to say that!”

I don’t know what sort of an apology I offered for my inane, though harmless speech, but I know that she seemed so troubled about it that I began to think I had said something very dreadful without knowing it, and remembered with horror the pitfalls and snares which the French language sets for foreigners. While I was trying to imagine what I might have said, a sound of voices came across the moor, and the girl rose to her feet.

“No,” she said, with a trace of a smile on her pale face, “I will not accept your apologies, monsieur, but I must prove you wrong, and that shall be my revenge. Look. Here come Hastur and Raoul.”

Two men loomed up in the twilight. One had a sack across his shoulders and the other carried a hoop before him as a waiter carries a tray. The hoop was fastened

with straps to his shoulders, and around the edge of the circlet sat three hooded falcons fitted with tinkling bells. The girl stepped up to the falconer, and with a quick turn of her wrist transferred her falcon to the hoop, where it quickly sidled off and nestled among its mates, who shook their hooded heads and ruffled their feathers till the belled jesses tinkled again. The other man stepped forward and bowing respectfully took up the hare and dropped it into the game-sack.

“These are my piqueurs,” said the girl, turning to me with a gentle dignity. “Raoul is a good fauconnier, and I shall some day make him grand veneur. Hastur is incomparable.”

The two silent men saluted me respectfully.

“Did I not tell you, monsieur, that I should prove you wrong?” she continued. “This, then, is my revenge, that you do me the courtesy of accepting food and shelter at my own house.”

Before I could answer she spoke to the falconers, who started instantly across the heath, and with a gracious gesture to me she followed. I don’t know whether I made her understand how profoundly grateful I felt, but she seemed pleased to listen, as we walked over the dewy heather.

“Are you not very tired?” she asked.

I had clean forgotten my fatigue in her presence, and I told her so.

“Don’t you think your gallantry is a little old-fashioned?” she said; and when I looked confused and humbled, she added quietly, “Oh, I like it, I like everything old-fashioned, and it is delightful to hear you say such pretty things.”

The moorland around us was very still now under its

ghostly sheet of mist. The plovers had ceased their calling; the crickets and all the little creatures of the fields were silent as we passed, yet it seemed to me as if I could hear them beginning again far behind us. Well in advance, the two tall falconers strode across the heather, and the faint jingling of the hawks' bells came to our ears in distant murmuring chimes.

Suddenly a splendid hound dashed out of the mist in front, followed by another and another until half-a-dozen or more were bounding and leaping around the girl beside me. She caressed and quieted them with her gloved hand, speaking to them in quaint terms which I remembered to have seen in old French manuscripts.

Then the falcons on the circlet borne by the falconer ahead began to beat their wings and scream, and from somewhere out of sight the notes of a hunting-horn floated across the moor. The hounds sprang away before us and vanished in the twilight, the falcons flapped and squealed upon their perch, and the girl, taking up the song of the horn, began to hum. Clear and mellow her voice sounded in the night air.

“Chasseur, chasseur, chassez encore,
Quittez Rosette et Jeanneton,
Tonton, tonton, tontaine, tonton,
Ou, pour, rabattre, dès l'aurore,
Que les Amours soient de planton,
Tonton, tontaine, tonton.”

As I listened to her lovely voice a grey mass which rapidly grew more distinct loomed up in front, and the horn rang out joyously through the tumult of the hounds and falcons. A torch glimmered at a gate, a light streamed

through an opening door, and we stepped upon a wooden bridge which trembled under our feet and rose creaking and straining behind us as we passed over the moat and into a small stone court, walled on every side. From an open doorway a man came and, bending in salutation, presented a cup to the girl beside me. She took the cup and touched it with her lips, then lowering it turned to me and said in a low voice, "I bid you welcome."

At that moment one of the falconers came with another cup, but before handing it to me, presented it to the girl, who tasted it. The falconer made a gesture to receive it, but she hesitated a moment, and then, stepping forward, offered me the cup with her own hands. I felt this to be an act of extraordinary graciousness, but hardly knew what was expected of me, and did not raise it to my lips at once. The girl flushed crimson. I saw that I must act quickly.

"Mademoiselle," I faltered, "a stranger whom you have saved from dangers he may never realize empties this cup to the gentlest and loveliest hostess of France."

"In His name," she murmured, crossing herself as I drained the cup. Then stepping into the doorway she turned to me with a pretty gesture and, taking my hand in hers, led me into the house, saying again and again: "You are very welcome, indeed you are welcome to the Château d'Ys."

II

I awoke next morning with the music of the horn in my ears, and leaping out of the ancient bed, went to a curtained window where the sunlight filtered through little deep-set panes. The horn ceased as I looked into the court below.

A man who might have been brother to the two

falconers of the night before stood in the midst of a pack of hounds. A curved horn was strapped over his back, and in his hand he held a long-lashed whip. The dogs whined and yelped, dancing around him in anticipation; there was the stamp of horses, too, in the walled yard.

“Mount!” cried a voice in Breton, and with a clatter of hoofs the two falconers, with falcons upon their wrists, rode into the courtyard among the hounds. Then I heard another voice which sent the blood throbbing through my heart: “Piriou Louis, hunt the hounds well and spare neither spur nor whip. Thou Raoul and thou Gaston, see that the *epervier* does not prove himself *niais*, and if it be best in your judgment, *faites courtoisie à l’oiseau*. *Jardiner un oiseau*, like the *mué* there on Hastur’s wrist, is not difficult, but thou, Raoul, mayest not find it so simple to govern that *hagard*. Twice last week he foamed *au vif* and lost the *beccade* although he is used to the *leurre*. The bird acts like a stupid *branchier*. *Paître un hagard n’est pas si facile.*”

Was I dreaming? The old language of falconry which I had read in yellow manuscripts—the old forgotten French of the middle ages was sounding in my ears while the hounds bayed and the hawks’ bells tinkled accompaniment to the stamping horses. She spoke again in the sweet forgotten language:

“If you would rather attach the *longe* and leave thy *hagard au bloc*, Raoul, I shall say nothing; for it were a pity to spoil so fair a day’s sport with an ill-trained *sors*. *Essimer abaisser*,—it is possibly the best way. *Ça lui donnera des reins*. I was perhaps hasty with the bird. It takes time to pass *à la filière* and the exercises *d’escap*.”

Then the falconer Raoul bowed in his stirrups and

replied: "If it be the pleasure of Mademoiselle, I shall keep the hawk."

"It is my wish," she answered. "Falconry I know, but you have yet to give me many a lesson in *Autourserie*, my poor Raoul. Sieur Piriou Louis mount!"

The huntsman sprang into an archway and in an instant returned, mounted upon a strong black horse, followed by a piqueur also mounted.

"Ah!" she cried joyously, "speed Glemarec René! speed! speed all! Sound thy horn, Sieur Piriou!"

The silvery music of the hunting-horn filled the courtyard, the hounds sprang through the gateway and galloping hoof-beats plunged out of the paved court; loud on the drawbridge, suddenly muffled, then lost in the heather and bracken of the moors. Distant and more distant sounded the horn, until it became so faint that the sudden carol of a soaring lark drowned it in my ears. I heard the voice below responding to some call from within the house.

"I do not regret the chase, I will go another time. Courtesy to the stranger, Pelagie, remember!"

And a feeble voice came quavering from within the house, "*Courtoisie*"

I stripped, and rubbed myself from head to foot in the huge earthen basin of icy water which stood upon the stone floor at the foot of my bed. Then I looked about for my clothes. They were gone, but on a settle near the door lay a heap of garments which I inspected with astonishment. As my clothes had vanished, I was compelled to attire myself in the costume which had evidently been placed there for me to wear while my own clothes dried. Everything was there, cap, shoes, and hunting doublet of silvery grey homespun; but the close-

fitting costume and seamless shoes belonged to another century, and I remembered the strange costumes of the three falconers in the courtyard. I was sure that it was not the modern dress of any portion of France or Brittany; but not until I was dressed and stood before a mirror between the windows did I realize that I was clothed much more like a young huntsman of the middle ages than like a Breton of that day. I hesitated and picked up the cap. Should I go down and present myself in that strange guise? There seemed to be no help for it, my own clothes were gone and there was no bell in the ancient chamber to call a servant; so I contented myself with removing a short hawk's feather from the cap, and, opening the door, went downstairs.

By the fireplace in the large room at the foot of the stairs an old Breton woman sat spinning with a distaff. She looked up at me when I appeared, and, smiling frankly, wished me health in the Breton language, to which I laughingly replied in French. At the same moment my hostess appeared and returned my salutation with a grace and dignity that sent a thrill to my heart. Her lovely head with its dark curly hair was crowned with a head-dress which set all doubts as to the epoch of my own costume at rest. Her slender figure was exquisitely set off in the homespun hunting-gown edged with silver, and on her gauntlet-covered wrist she bore one of her petted hawks. With perfect simplicity she took my hand and led me into the garden in the court, and seating herself before a table invited me very sweetly to sit beside her. Then she asked me in her soft quaint accent how I had passed the night, and whether I was very much inconvenienced by wearing the clothes which old Pelagie had put there for me while I slept. I looked at my own clothes and shoes,

drying in the sun by the garden-wall, and hated them. What horrors they were compared with the graceful costume which I now wore! I told her this laughing, but she agreed with me very seriously.

“We will throw them away,” she said in a quiet voice. In my astonishment I attempted to explain that I not only could not think of accepting clothes from anybody, although for all I knew it might be the custom of hospitality in that part of the country, but that I should cut an impossible figure if I returned to France clothed as I was then.

She laughed and tossed her pretty head, saying something in old French which I did not understand, and then Pelagie trotted out with a tray on which stood two bowls of milk, a loaf of white bread, fruit, a platter of honey-comb, and a flagon of deep red wine. “You see I have not yet broken my fast because I wished you to eat with me. But I am very hungry,” she smiled.

“I would rather die than forget one word of what you have said!” I blurted out, while my cheeks burned. “She will think me mad,” I added to myself, but she turned to me with sparkling eyes.

“Ah!” she murmured. “Then Monsieur knows all that there is of chivalry—”

She crossed herself and broke bread. I sat and watched her white hands, not daring to raise my eyes to hers.

“Will you not eat?” she asked. “Why do you look so troubled?”

Ah, why? I knew it now. I knew I would give my life to touch with my lips those rosy palms—I understood now that from the moment when I looked into her dark eyes there on the moor last night I had loved her. My great and sudden passion held me speechless.

“Are you ill at ease?” she asked again.

Then, like a man who pronounces his own doom, I answered in a low voice: “Yes, I am ill at ease for love of you.” And as she did not stir nor answer, the same power moved my lips in spite of me and I said, “I, who am unworthy of the lightest of your thoughts, I who abuse hospitality and repay your gentle courtesy with bold presumption, I love you.”

She leaned her head upon her hands, and answered softly, “I love you. Your words are very dear to me. I love you.”

“Then I shall win you.”

“Win me,” she replied.

But all the time I had been sitting silent, my face turned toward her. She, also silent, her sweet face resting on her upturned palm, sat facing me, and as her eyes looked into mine I knew that neither she nor I had spoken human speech; but I knew that her soul had answered mine, and I drew myself up feeling youth and joyous love coursing through every vein. She, with a bright colour in her lovely face, seemed as one awakened from a dream, and her eyes sought mine with a questioning glance which made me tremble with delight. We broke our fast, speaking of ourselves. I told her my name and she told me hers, the *Demoiselle Jeanne d’Ys*.

She spoke of her father and mother’s death, and how the nineteen of her years had been passed in the little fortified farm alone with her nurse Pelagie, Glemarec René the piqueur, and the four falconers, Raoul, Gaston, Hastur, and the *Sieur Piriou Louis*, who had served her father. She had never been outside the moorland—never even had seen a human soul before, except the falconers and Pelagie. She did not know how she had heard of

Kerselec; perhaps the falconers had spoken of it. She knew the legends of Loup Garou and Jeanne la Flamme from her nurse Pelagie. She embroidered and spun flax. Her hawks and hounds were her only distraction. When she had met me there on the moor she had been so frightened that she almost dropped at the sound of my voice. She had, it was true, seen ships at sea from the cliffs, but as far as the eye could reach the moors over which she galloped were destitute of any sign of human life. There was a legend which old Pelagie told, how anybody once lost in the unexplored moorland might never return, because the moors were enchanted. She did not know whether it was true, she never had thought about it until she met me. She did not know whether the falconers had even been outside, or whether they could go if they would. The books in the house which Pelagie, the nurse, had taught her to read were hundreds of years old.

All this she told me with a sweet seriousness seldom seen in any one but children. My own name she found easy to pronounce, and insisted, because my first name was Philip, I must have French blood in me. She did not seem curious to learn anything about the outside world, and I thought perhaps she considered it had forfeited her interest and respect from the stories of her nurse.

We were still sitting at the table, and she was throwing grapes to the small field birds which came fearlessly to our very feet.

I began to speak in a vague way of going, but she would not hear of it, and before I knew it I had promised to stay a week and hunt with hawk and hound in their company. I also obtained permission to come again from Kerselec and visit her after my return.

“Why,” she said innocently, “I do not know what I

should do if you never came back;" and I, knowing that I had no right to awaken her with the sudden shock which the avowal of my own love would bring to her, sat silent, hardly daring to breathe.

"You will come very often?" she asked.

"Very often," I said.

"Every day?"

"Every day."

"Oh," she sighed, "I am very happy. Come and see my hawks."

She rose and took my hand again with a childlike innocence of possession, and we walked through the garden and fruit trees to a grassy lawn which was bordered by a brook. Over the lawn were scattered fifteen or twenty stumps of trees—partially imbedded in the grass—and upon all of these except two sat falcons. They were attached to the stumps by thongs which were in turn fastened with steel rivets to their legs just above the talons. A little stream of pure spring water flowed in a winding course within easy distance of each perch.

The birds set up a clamour when the girl appeared, but she went from one to another, caressing some, taking others for an instant upon her wrist, or stooping to adjust their jesses.

"Are they not pretty?" she said. "See, here is a falcon-gentil. We call it 'ignoble,' because it takes the quarry in direct chase. This is a blue falcon. In falconry we call it 'noble' because it rises over the quarry, and wheeling, drops upon it from above. This white bird is a gerfalcon from the north. It is also 'noble!' Here is a merlin, and this tiercelet is a falcon-heroner."

I asked her how she had learned the old language of

falconry. She did not remember, but thought her father must have taught it to her when she was very young.

Then she led me away and showed me the young falcons still in the nest. "They are termed *niais* in falconry," she explained. "A *branchier* is the young bird which is just able to leave the nest and hop from branch to branch. A young bird which has not yet moulted is called a *sors*, and a *mué* is a hawk which has moulted in captivity. When we catch a wild falcon which has changed its plumage we term it a *hagard*. Raoul first taught me to dress a falcon. Shall I teach you how it is done?"

She seated herself on the bank of the stream among the falcons and I threw myself at her feet to listen.

Then the Demoiselle d'Ys held up one rosy-tipped finger and began very gravely.

"First one must catch the falcon."

"I am caught," I answered.

She laughed very prettily and told me my *dressage* would perhaps be difficult, as I was noble.

"I am already tamed," I replied; "jessed and belled."

She laughed, delighted. "Oh, my brave falcon; then you will return at my call?"

"I am yours," I answered gravely.

She sat silent for a moment. Then the colour heightened in her cheeks and she held up her finger again, saying, "Listen; I wish to speak of falconry—"

"I listen, Countess Jeanne d'Ys."

But again she fell into the reverie, and her eyes seemed fixed on something beyond the summer clouds.

"Philip," she said at last.

"Jeanne," I whispered.

"That is all,—that is what I wished," she sighed,— "Philip and Jeanne."

She held her hand toward me and I touched it with my lips.

“Win me,” she said, but this time it was the body and soul which spoke in unison.

After a while she began again: “Let us speak of falconry.”

“Begin,” I replied; “we have caught the falcon.”

Then Jeanne d’Ys took my hand in both of hers and told me how with infinite patience the young falcon was taught to perch upon the wrist, how little by little it became used to the belled jesses and the *chaperon à cornette*.

“They must first have a good appetite,” she said; “then little by little I reduce their nourishment; which in falconry we call *pât*. When, after many nights passed *au bloc* as these birds are now, I prevail upon the *hagard* to stay quietly on the wrist, then the bird is ready to be taught to come for its food. I fix the *pât* to the end of a thong, or *leurre*, and teach the bird to come to me as soon as I begin to whirl the cord in circles about my head. At first I drop the *pât* when the falcon comes, and he eats the food on the ground. After a little he will learn to seize the *leurre* in motion as I whirl it around my head or drag it over the ground. After this it is easy to teach the falcon to strike at game, always remembering to ‘*faire courtoisie à l’oiseau*’, that is, to allow the bird to taste the quarry.”

A squeal from one of the falcons interrupted her, and she arose to adjust the *longe* which had become whipped about the *bloc*, but the bird still flapped its wings and screamed.

“What is the matter?” she said. “Philip, can you see?”

I looked around and at first saw nothing to cause the commotion, which was now heightened by the screams

and flapping of all the birds. Then my eye fell upon the flat rock beside the stream from which the girl had risen. A grey serpent was moving slowly across the surface of the boulder, and the eyes in its flat triangular head sparkled like jet.

“A couleuvre,” she said quietly.

“It is harmless, is it not?” I asked.

She pointed to the black V-shaped figure on the neck.

“It is certain death,” she said; “it is a viper.”

We watched the reptile moving slowly over the smooth rock to where the sunlight fell in a broad warm patch.

I started forward to examine it, but she clung to my arm crying, “Don’t, Philip, I am afraid.”

“For me?”

“For you, Philip,—I love you.”

Then I took her in my arms and kissed her on the lips, but all I could say was: “Jeanne, Jeanne, Jeanne.” And as she lay trembling on my breast, something struck my foot in the grass below, but I did not heed it. Then again something struck my ankle, and a sharp pain shot through me. I looked into the sweet face of Jeanne d’Ys and kissed her, and with all my strength lifted her in my arms and flung her from me. Then bending, I tore the viper from my ankle and set my heel upon its head. I remember feeling weak and numb,—I remember falling to the ground. Through my slowly glazing eyes I saw Jeanne’s white face bending close to mine, and when the light in my eyes went out I still felt her arms about my neck, and her soft cheek against my drawn lips.

When I opened my eyes, I looked around in terror. Jeanne was gone. I saw the stream and the flat rock; I saw the crushed viper in the grass beside me, but the hawks and *blocs* had disappeared. I sprang to my feet. The

garden, the fruit trees, the drawbridge and the walled court were gone. I stared stupidly at a heap of crumbling ruins, ivy-covered and grey, through which great trees had pushed their way. I crept forward, dragging my numbed foot, and as I moved, a falcon sailed from the tree-tops among the ruins, and soaring, mounting in narrowing circles, faded and vanished in the clouds above.

“Jeanne, Jeanne,” I cried, but my voice died on my lips, and I fell on my knees among the weeds. And as God willed it, I, not knowing, had fallen kneeling before a crumbling shrine carved in stone for our Mother of Sorrows. I saw the sad face of the Virgin wrought in the cold stone. I saw the cross and thorns at her feet, and beneath it I read:

“PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF THE
DEMOISELLE JEANNE D’Ys,
WHO DIED
IN HER YOUTH FOR LOVE OF
PHILIP, A STRANGER.
A.D. 1573.”

But upon the icy slab lay a woman’s glove still warm and fragrant.

THE PROPHETS’ PARADISE

“If but the Vine and Love Abjuring Band
Are in the Prophets’ Paradise to stand,
Alack, I doubt the Prophets’ Paradise,
Were empty as the hollow of one’s hand.”

THE STUDIO

He smiled, saying, "Seek her throughout the world."

I said, "Why tell me of the world? My world is here, between these walls and the sheet of glass above; here among gilded flagons and dull jewelled arms, tarnished frames and canvasses, black chests and high-backed chairs, quaintly carved and stained in blue and gold."

"For whom do you wait?" he said, and I answered, "When she comes I shall know her."

On my hearth a tongue of flame whispered secrets to the whitening ashes. In the street below I heard footsteps, a voice, and a song.

"For whom then do you wait?" he said, and I answered, "I shall know her."

Footsteps, a voice, and a song in the street below, and I knew the song but neither the steps nor the voice.

"Fool!" he cried, "the song is the same, the voice and steps have but changed with years!"

On the hearth a tongue of flame whispered above the whitening ashes: "Wait no more; they have passed, the steps and the voice in the street below."

Then he smiled, saying, "For whom do you wait? Seek her throughout the world!"

I answered, "My world is here, between these walls and the sheet of glass above; here among gilded flagons and dull jewelled arms, tarnished frames and canvasses, black chests and high-backed chairs, quaintly carved and stained in blue and gold."

THE PHANTOM

The Phantom of the Past would go no further.

"If it is true," she sighed, "that you find in me a friend,

let us turn back together. You will forget, here, under the summer sky.”

I held her close, pleading, caressing; I seized her, white with anger, but she resisted.

“If it is true,” she sighed, “that you find in me a friend, let us turn back together.”

The Phantom of the Past would go no further.

THE SACRIFICE

I went into a field of flowers, whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

Far afield a woman cried, “I have killed him I loved!” and from a jar she poured blood upon the flowers whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

Far afield I followed, and on the jar I read a thousand names, while from within the fresh blood bubbled to the brim.

“I have killed him I loved!” she cried. “The world’s athirst; now let it drink!” She passed, and far afield I watched her pouring blood upon the flowers whose petals are whiter than snow and whose hearts are pure gold.

DESTINY

I came to the bridge which few may pass.

“Pass!” cried the keeper, but I laughed, saying, “There is time;” and he smiled and shut the gates.

To the bridge which few may pass came young and old. All were refused. Idly I stood and counted them, until, wearied of their noise and lamentations, I came again to the bridge which few may pass.

Those in the throng about the gates shrieked out, "He comes too late!" But I laughed, saying, "There is time."

"Pass!" cried the keeper as I entered; then smiled and shut the gates.

THE THRONG

There, where the throng was thickest in the street, I stood with Pierrot. All eyes were turned on me.

"What are they laughing at?" I asked, but he grinned, dusting the chalk from my black cloak. "I cannot see; it must be something droll, perhaps an honest thief!"

All eyes were turned on me.

"He has robbed you of your purse!" they laughed.

"My purse!" I cried; "Pierrot—help! it is a thief!"

They laughed: "He has robbed you of your purse!"

Then Truth stepped out, holding a mirror. "If he is an honest thief," cried Truth, "Pierrot shall find him with this mirror!" but he only grinned, dusting the chalk from my black cloak.

"You see," he said, "Truth is an honest thief, she brings you back your mirror."

All eyes were turned on me.

"Arrest Truth!" I cried, forgetting it was not a mirror but a purse I lost, standing with Pierrot, there, where the throng was thickest in the street.

THE JESTER

"Was she fair?" I asked, but he only chuckled, listening to the bells jingling on his cap.

"Stabbed," he tittered. "Think of the long journey, the days of peril, the dreadful nights! Think how he

wandered, for her sake, year after year, through hostile lands, yearning for kith and kin, yearning for her!”

“Stabbed,” he tittered, listening to the bells jingling on his cap.

“Was she fair?” I asked, but he only snarled, muttering to the bells jingling on his cap.

“She kissed him at the gate,” he tittered, “but in the hall his brother’s welcome touched his heart.”

“Was she fair?” I asked.

“Stabbed,” he chuckled. “Think of the long journey, the days of peril, the dreadful nights! Think how he wandered, for her sake, year after year through hostile lands, yearning for kith and kin, yearning for her!”

“She kissed him at the gate, but in the hall his brother’s welcome touched his heart.”

“Was she fair?” I asked; but he only snarled, listening to the bells jingling in his cap.

THE GREEN ROOM

The Clown turned his powdered face to the mirror.

“If to be fair is to be beautiful,” he said, “who can compare with me in my white mask?”

“Who can compare with him in his white mask?” I asked of Death beside me.

“Who can compare with me?” said Death, “for I am paler still.”

“You are very beautiful,” sighed the Clown, turning his powdered face from the mirror.

THE LOVE TEST

“If it is true that you love,” said Love, “then wait no longer. Give her these jewels which would dishonour her and so

dishonour you in loving one dishonoured. If it is true that you love," said Love, "then wait no longer."

I took the jewels and went to her, but she trod upon them, sobbing: "Teach me to wait—I love you!"

"Then wait, if it is true," said Love.

THE STREET OF THE FOUR WINDS

"Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,
Et de ton cœur endormi
Chasse à jamais tout dessein."

"Je chante la nature,
Les étoiles du soir, les larmes du matin,
Les couchers de soleil à l'horizon lointain,
Le ciel qui parle au cœur d'existence future!"

I

The animal paused on the threshold, interrogative alert, ready for flight if necessary. Severn laid down his palette, and held out a hand of welcome. The cat remained motionless, her yellow eyes fastened upon Severn.

"Puss," he said, in his low, pleasant voice, "come in."

The tip of her thin tail twitched uncertainly.

"Come in," he said again.

Apparently she found his voice reassuring, for she slowly settled upon all fours, her eyes still fastened upon him, her tail tucked under her gaunt flanks.

He rose from his easel smiling. She eyed him quietly, and when he walked toward her she watched him bend above her without a wince; her eyes followed his hand until it touched her head. Then she uttered a ragged mew.

It had long been Severn's custom to converse with animals, probably because he lived so much alone; and now he said, "What's the matter, puss?"

Her timid eyes sought his.

"I understand," he said gently, "you shall have it at once."

Then moving quietly about he busied himself with the duties of a host, rinsed a saucer, filled it with the rest of the milk from the bottle on the window-sill, and kneeling down, crumbled a roll into the hollow of his hand.

The creature rose and crept toward the saucer.

With the handle of a palette-knife he stirred the crumbs and milk together and stepped back as she thrust her nose into the mess. He watched her in silence. From time to time the saucer clinked upon the tiled floor as she reached for a morsel on the rim; and at last the bread was all gone, and her purple tongue travelled over every unlicked spot until the saucer shone like polished marble. Then she sat up, and coolly turning her back to him, began her ablutions.

"Keep it up," said Severn, much interested, "you need it."

She flattened one ear, but neither turned nor interrupted her toilet. As the grime was slowly removed Severn observed that nature had intended her for a white cat. Her fur had disappeared in patches, from disease or the chances of war, her tail was bony and her spine sharp. But what charms she had were becoming apparent under vigorous licking, and he waited until she had finished before re-opening the conversation. When at last she closed her eyes and folded her forepaws under her breast, he began again very gently: "Puss, tell me your troubles."

At the sound of his voice she broke into a harsh rumbling which he recognized as an attempt to purr. He bent over to rub her cheek and she mewed again, an

amiable inquiring little mew, to which he replied, "Certainly, you are greatly improved, and when you recover your plumage you will be a gorgeous bird." Much flattered, she stood up and marched around and around his legs, pushing her head between them and making pleased remarks, to which he responded with grave politeness.

"Now, what sent you here," he said—"here into the Street of the Four Winds, and up five flights to the very door where you would be welcome? What was it that prevented your meditated flight when I turned from my canvas to encounter your yellow eyes? Are you a Latin Quarter cat as I am a Latin Quarter man? And why do you wear a rose-coloured flowered garter buckled about your neck?" The cat had climbed into his lap, and now sat purring as he passed his hand over her thin coat.

"Excuse me," he continued in lazy soothing tones, harmonizing with her purring, "if I seem indelicate, but I cannot help musing on this rose-coloured garter, flowered so quaintly and fastened with a silver clasp. For the clasp is silver; I can see the mint mark on the edge, as is prescribed by the law of the French Republic. Now, why is this garter woven of rose silk and delicately embroidered,—why is this silken garter with its silver clasp about your famished throat? Am I indiscreet when I inquire if its owner is your owner? Is she some aged dame living in memory of youthful vanities, fond, doting on you, decorating you with her intimate personal attire? The circumference of the garter would suggest this, for your neck is thin, and the garter fits you. But then again I notice—I notice most things—that the garter is capable of being much enlarged. These small silver-rimmed eyelets, of which I count five, are proof of that. And now I observe

that the fifth eyelet is worn out, as though the tongue of the clasp were accustomed to lie there. That seems to argue a well-rounded form.”

The cat curled her toes in contentment. The street was very still outside.

He murmured on: “Why should your mistress decorate you with an article most necessary to her at all times? Anyway, at most times. How did she come to slip this bit of silk and silver about your neck? Was it the caprice of a moment,—when you, before you had lost your pristine plumpness, marched singing into her bedroom to bid her good-morning? Of course, and she sat up among the pillows, her coiled hair tumbling to her shoulders, as you sprang upon the bed purring: ‘Good-day, my lady.’ Oh, it is very easy to understand,” he yawned, resting his head on the back of the chair. The cat still purred, tightening and relaxing her padded claws over his knee.

“Shall I tell you all about her, cat? She is very beautiful—your mistress,” he murmured drowsily, “and her hair is heavy as burnished gold. I could paint her,—not on canvas—for I should need shades and tones and hues and dyes more splendid than the iris of a splendid rainbow. I could only paint her with closed eyes, for in dreams alone can such colours as I need be found. For her eyes, I must have azure from skies untroubled by a cloud—the skies of dreamland. For her lips, roses from the palaces of slumberland, and for her brow, snow-drifts from mountains which tower in fantastic pinnacles to the moons;—oh, much higher than our moon here,—the crystal moons of dreamland. She is—very—beautiful, your mistress.”

The words died on his lips and his eyelids drooped.

The cat, too, was asleep, her cheek turned up upon her wasted flank, her paws relaxed and limp.

II

“It is fortunate,” said Severn, sitting up and stretching, “that we have tided over the dinner hour, for I have nothing to offer you for supper but what may be purchased with one silver franc.”

The cat on his knee rose, arched her back, yawned, and looked up at him.

“What shall it be? A roast chicken with salad? No? Possibly you prefer beef? Of course,—and I shall try an egg and some white bread. Now for the wines. Milk for you? Good. I shall take a little water, fresh from the wood,” with a motion toward the bucket in the sink.

He put on his hat and left the room. The cat followed to the door, and after he had closed it behind him, she settled down, smelling at the cracks, and cocking one ear at every creak from the crazy old building.

The door below opened and shut. The cat looked serious, for a moment doubtful, and her ears flattened in nervous expectation. Presently she rose with a jerk of her tail and started on a noiseless tour of the studio. She sneezed at a pot of turpentine, hastily retreating to the table, which she presently mounted, and having satisfied her curiosity concerning a roll of red modelling wax, returned to the door and sat down with her eyes on the crack over the threshold. Then she lifted her voice in a thin plaint.

When Severn returned he looked grave, but the cat, joyous and demonstrative, marched around him, rubbing her gaunt body against his legs, driving her head

enthusiastically into his hand, and purring until her voice mounted to a squeal.

He placed a bit of meat, wrapped in brown paper, upon the table, and with a penknife cut it into shreds. The milk he took from a bottle which had served for medicine, and poured it into the saucer on the hearth.

The cat crouched before it, purring and lapping at the same time.

He cooked his egg and ate it with a slice of bread, watching her busy with the shredded meat, and when he had finished, and had filled and emptied a cup of water from the bucket in the sink, he sat down, taking her into his lap, where she at once curled up and began her toilet. He began to speak again, touching her caressingly at times by way of emphasis.

“Cat, I have found out where your mistress lives. It is not very far away;—it is here, under this same leaky roof, but in the north wing which I had supposed was uninhabited. My janitor tells me this. By chance, he is almost sober this evening. The butcher on the rue de Seine, where I bought your meat, knows you, and old Cabane the baker identified you with needless sarcasm. They tell me hard tales of your mistress which I shall not believe. They say she is idle and vain and pleasure-loving; they say she is hare-brained and reckless. The little sculptor on the ground floor, who was buying rolls from old Cabane, spoke to me to-night for the first time, although we have always bowed to each other. He said she was very good and very beautiful. He has only seen her once, and does not know her name. I thanked him;—I don’t know why I thanked him so warmly. Cabane said, ‘Into this cursed Street of the Four Winds, the four winds blow all things evil.’ The sculptor looked confused, but

when he went out with his rolls, he said to me, 'I am sure, Monsieur, that she is as good as she is beautiful.'

The cat had finished her toilet, and now, springing softly to the floor, went to the door and sniffed. He knelt beside her, and unclasping the garter held it for a moment in his hands. After a while he said: "There is a name engraved upon the silver clasp beneath the buckle. It is a pretty name, Sylvia Elven. Sylvia is a woman's name, Elven is the name of a town. In Paris, in this quarter, above all, in this Street of the Four Winds, names are worn and put away as the fashions change with the seasons. I know the little town of Elven, for there I met Fate face to face and Fate was unkind. But do you know that in Elven Fate had another name, and that name was Sylvia?"

He replaced the garter and stood up looking down at the cat crouched before the closed door.

"The name of Elven has a charm for me. It tells me of meadows and clear rivers. The name of Sylvia troubles me like perfume from dead flowers."

The cat mewed.

"Yes, yes," he said soothingly, "I will take you back. Your Sylvia is not my Sylvia; the world is wide and Elven is not unknown. Yet in the darkness and filth of poorer Paris, in the sad shadows of this ancient house, these names are very pleasant to me."

He lifted her in his arms and strode through the silent corridors to the stairs. Down five flights and into the moonlit court, past the little sculptor's den, and then again in at the gate of the north wing and up the worm-eaten stairs he passed, until he came to a closed door. When he had stood knocking for a long time, something moved behind the door; it opened and he went in. The

room was dark. As he crossed the threshold, the cat sprang from his arms into the shadows. He listened but heard nothing. The silence was oppressive and he struck a match. At his elbow stood a table and on the table a candle in a gilded candlestick. This he lighted, then looked around. The chamber was vast, the hangings heavy with embroidery. Over the fireplace towered a carved mantel, grey with the ashes of dead fires. In a recess by the deep-set windows stood a bed, from which the bedclothes, soft and fine as lace, trailed to the polished floor. He lifted the candle above his head. A handkerchief lay at his feet. It was faintly perfumed. He turned toward the windows. In front of them was a *canapé* and over it were flung, pell-mell, a gown of silk, a heap of lace-like garments, white and delicate as spiders' meshes, long, crumpled gloves, and, on the floor beneath, the stockings, the little pointed shoes, and one garter of rosy silk, quaintly flowered and fitted with a silver clasp. Wondering, he stepped forward and drew the heavy curtains from the bed. For a moment the candle flared in his hand; then his eyes met two other eyes, wide open, smiling, and the candle-flame flashed over hair heavy as gold.

She was pale, but not as white as he; her eyes were untroubled as a child's; but he stared, trembling from head to foot, while the candle flickered in his hand.

At last he whispered: "Sylvia, it is I."

Again he said, "It is I."

Then, knowing that she was dead, he kissed her on the mouth. And through the long watches of the night the cat purred on his knee, tightening and relaxing her padded claws, until the sky paled above the Street of the Four Winds.

THE STREET OF THE FIRST SHELL

“Be of Good Cheer, the Sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and by:
Look how the Old one, meagre, bent, and wan
With age and Fast, is fainting from the sky.”

The room was already dark. The high roofs opposite cut off what little remained of the December daylight. The girl drew her chair nearer the window, and choosing a large needle, threaded it, knotting the thread over her fingers. Then she smoothed the baby garment across her knees, and bending, bit off the thread and drew the smaller needle from where it rested in the hem. When she had brushed away the stray threads and bits of lace, she laid it again over her knees caressingly. Then she slipped the threaded needle from her corsage and passed it through a button, but as the button spun down the thread, her hand faltered, the thread snapped, and the button rolled across the floor. She raised her head. Her eyes were fixed on a strip of waning light above the chimneys. From somewhere in the city came sounds like the distant beating of drums, and beyond, far beyond, a vague muttering, now growing, swelling, rumbling in the distance like the pounding of surf upon the rocks, now like the surf again, receding, growling, menacing. The cold had become intense, a bitter piercing cold which strained and snapped at joist and beam and turned the slush of yesterday to flint. From the street below every sound broke sharp and metallic—the clatter of sabots, the rattle of shutters or the rare sound of a human voice. The air was heavy, weighted with the black cold as with a pall. To breathe was painful, to move an effort.

In the desolate sky there was something that wearied, in the brooding clouds, something that saddened. It penetrated the freezing city cut by the freezing river, the splendid city with its towers and domes, its quays and bridges and its thousand spires. It entered the squares, it seized the avenues and the palaces, stole across bridges and crept among the narrow streets of the Latin Quarter, grey under the grey of the December sky. Sadness, utter sadness. A fine icy sleet was falling, powdering the pavement with a tiny crystalline dust. It sifted against the window-panes and drifted in heaps along the sill. The light at the window had nearly failed, and the girl bent low over her work. Presently she raised her head, brushing the curls from her eyes.

“Jack?”

“Dearest?”

“Don’t forget to clean your palette.”

He said, “All right,” and picking up the palette, sat down upon the floor in front of the stove. His head and shoulders were in the shadow, but the firelight fell across his knees and glimmered red on the blade of the palette-knife. Full in the firelight beside him stood a colour-box. On the lid was carved,

J. TRENT.

École des Beaux Arts.

1870.

This inscription was ornamented with an American and a French flag.

The sleet blew against the window-panes, covering them with stars and diamonds, then, melting from the

warmer air within, ran down and froze again in fern-like traceries.

A dog whined and the patter of small paws sounded on the zinc behind the stove.

“Jack, dear, do you think Hercules is hungry?”

The patter of paws was redoubled behind the stove.

“He’s whining,” she continued nervously, “and if it isn’t because he’s hungry it is because—”

Her voice faltered. A loud humming filled the air, the windows vibrated.

“Oh, Jack,” she cried, “another—” but her voice was drowned in the scream of a shell tearing through the clouds overhead.

“That is the nearest yet,” she murmured.

“Oh, no,” he answered cheerfully, “it probably fell way over by Montmartre,” and as she did not answer, he said again with exaggerated unconcern, “They wouldn’t take the trouble to fire at the Latin Quarter; anyway they haven’t a battery that can hurt it.”

After a while she spoke up brightly: “Jack, dear, when are you going to take me to see Monsieur West’s statues?”

“I will bet,” he said, throwing down his palette and walking over to the window beside her, “that Colette has been here to-day.”

“Why?” she asked, opening her eyes very wide. Then, “Oh, it’s too bad!—really, men are tiresome when they think they know everything! And I warn you that if Monsieur West is vain enough to imagine that Colette—”

From the north another shell came whistling and quavering through the sky, passing above them with long-drawn screech which left the windows singing.

“That,” he blurted out, “was too near for comfort.”

They were silent for a while, then he spoke again gaily:

“Go on, Sylvia, and wither poor West;” but she only sighed, “Oh, dear, I can never seem to get used to the shells.”

He sat down on the arm of the chair beside her.

Her scissors fell jingling to the floor; she tossed the unfinished frock after them, and putting both arms about his neck drew him down into her lap.

“Don’t go out to-night, Jack.”

He kissed her uplifted face; “You know I must; don’t make it hard for me.”

“But when I hear the shells and—and know you are out in the city—”

“But they all fall in Montmartre—”

“They may all fall in the Beaux Arts; you said yourself that two struck the Quai d’Orsay—”

“Mere accident—”

“Jack, have pity on me! Take me with you!”

“And who will there be to get dinner?”

She rose and flung herself on the bed.

“Oh, I can’t get used to it, and I know you must go, but I beg you not to be late to dinner. If you knew what I suffer! I—I—cannot help it, and you must be patient with me, dear.”

He said, “It is as safe there as it is in our own house.”

She watched him fill for her the alcohol lamp, and when he had lighted it and had taken his hat to go, she jumped up and clung to him in silence. After a moment he said: “Now, Sylvia, remember my courage is sustained by yours. Come, I must go!” She did not move, and he repeated: “I must go.” Then she stepped back and he thought she was going to speak and waited, but she only looked at him, and, a little impatiently, he kissed her again, saying: “Don’t worry, dearest.”

When he had reached the last flight of stairs on his way to the street a woman hobbled out of the house-keeper's lodge waving a letter and calling: "Monsieur Jack! Monsieur Jack! this was left by Monsieur Fallowby!"

He took the letter, and leaning on the threshold of the lodge, read it:

"Dear Jack,

"I believe Braith is dead broke and I'm sure Fallowby is. Braith swears he isn't, and Fallowby swears he is, so you can draw your own conclusions. I've got a scheme for a dinner, and if it works, I will let you fellows in.

"Yours faithfully,
"WEST.

"P.S.—Fallowby has shaken Hartman and his gang, thank the Lord! There is something rotten there,—or it may be he's only a miser.

"P.P.S.—I'm more desperately in love than ever, but I'm sure she does not care a straw for me."

"All right," said Trent, with a smile, to the concierge; "but tell me, how is Papa Cottard?"

The old woman shook her head and pointed to the curtained bed in the lodge.

"Père Cottard!" he cried cheerily, "how goes the wound to-day?"

He walked over to the bed and drew the curtains. An old man was lying among the tumbled sheets.

"Better?" smiled Trent.

"Better," repeated the man wearily; and, after a pause, "Have you any news, Monsieur Jack?"

"I haven't been out to-day. I will bring you any rumour I may hear, though goodness knows I've got enough of rumours," he muttered to himself. Then aloud: "Cheer up; you're looking better."

“And the sortie?”

“Oh, the sortie, that’s for this week. General Trochu sent orders last night.”

“It will be terrible.”

“It will be sickening,” thought Trent as he went out into the street and turned the corner toward the rue de Seine; “slaughter, slaughter, phew! I’m glad I’m not going.”

The street was almost deserted. A few women muffled in tattered military capes crept along the frozen pavement, and a wretchedly clad gamin hovered over the sewer-hole on the corner of the Boulevard. A rope around his waist held his rags together. From the rope hung a rat, still warm and bleeding.

“There’s another in there,” he yelled at Trent; “I hit him but he got away.”

Trent crossed the street and asked: “How much?”

“Two francs for a quarter of a fat one; that’s what they give at the St. Germain Market.”

A violent fit of coughing interrupted him, but he wiped his face with the palm of his hand and looked cunningly at Trent.

“Last week you could buy a rat for six francs, but,” and here he swore vilely, “the rats have quit the rue de Seine and they kill them now over by the new hospital. I’ll let you have this for seven francs; I can sell it for ten in the Isle St. Louis.”

“You lie,” said Trent, “and let me tell you that if you try to swindle anybody in this quarter the people will make short work of you and your rats.”

He stood a moment eyeing the gamin, who pretended to snivel. Then he tossed him a franc, laughing. The child caught it, and thrusting it into his mouth wheeled about to the sewer-hole. For a second he crouched, motionless,

alert, his eyes on the bars of the drain, then leaping forward he hurled a stone into the gutter, and Trent left him to finish a fierce grey rat that writhed squealing at the mouth of the sewer.

“Suppose Braith should come to that,” he thought; “poor little chap;” and hurrying, he turned in the dirty passage des Beaux Arts and entered the third house to the left.

“Monsieur is at home,” quavered the old concierge.

Home? A garret absolutely bare, save for the iron bedstead in the corner and the iron basin and pitcher on the floor.

West appeared at the door, winking with much mystery, and motioned Trent to enter. Braith, who was painting in bed to keep warm, looked up, laughed, and shook hands.

“Any news?”

The perfunctory question was answered as usual by: “Nothing but the cannon.”

Trent sat down on the bed.

“Where on earth did you get that?” he demanded, pointing to a half-finished chicken nestling in a wash-basin.

West grinned.

“Are you millionaires, you two? Out with it.”

Braith, looking a little ashamed, began, “Oh, it’s one of West’s exploits,” but was cut short by West, who said he would tell the story himself.

“You see, before the siege, I had a letter of introduction to a *‘type’* here, a fat banker, German-American variety. You know the species, I see. Well, of course I forgot to present the letter, but this morning, judging it to be a favourable opportunity, I called on him.

“The villain lives in comfort;—fires, my boy!—fires in the ante-rooms! The Buttons finally condescends to carry my letter and card up, leaving me standing in the hallway, which I did not like, so I entered the first room I saw and nearly fainted at the sight of a banquet on a table by the fire. Down comes Buttons, very insolent. No, oh, no, his master, ‘is not at home, and in fact is too busy to receive letters of introduction just now; the siege, and many business difficulties—’

“I deliver a kick to Buttons, pick up this chicken from the table, toss my card on to the empty plate, and addressing Buttons as a species of Prussian pig, march out with the honours of war.”

Trent shook his head.

“I forgot to say that Hartman often dines there, and I draw my own conclusions,” continued West. “Now about this chicken, half of it is for Braith and myself, and half for Colette, but of course you will help me eat my part because I’m not hungry.”

“Neither am I,” began Braith, but Trent, with a smile at the pinched faces before him, shook his head saying, “What nonsense! You know I’m never hungry!”

West hesitated, reddened, and then slicing off Braith’s portion, but not eating any himself, said good-night, and hurried away to number 470 rue Serpente, where lived a pretty girl named Colette, orphan after Sedan, and Heaven alone knew where she got the roses in her cheeks, for the siege came hard on the poor.

“That chicken will delight her, but I really believe she’s in love with West,” said Trent. Then walking over to the bed: “See here, old man, no dodging, you know, how much have you left?”

The other hesitated and flushed.

"Come, old chap," insisted Trent.

Braith drew a purse from beneath his bolster, and handed it to his friend with a simplicity that touched him.

"Seven sons," he counted; "you make me tired! Why on earth don't you come to me? I take it d—d ill, Braith! How many times must I go over the same thing and explain to you that because I have money it is my duty to share it, and your duty and the duty of every American to share it with me? You can't get a cent, the city's blockaded, and the American Minister has his hands full with all the German riff-raff and deuce knows what! Why don't you act sensibly?"

"I—I will, Trent, but it's an obligation that perhaps I can never even in part repay, I'm poor and—"

"Of course you'll pay me! If I were a usurer I would take your talent for security. When you are rich and famous—"

"Don't, Trent—"

"All right, only no more monkey business."

He slipped a dozen gold pieces into the purse, and tucking it again under the mattress smiled at Braith.

"How old are you?" he demanded.

"Sixteen."

Trent laid his hand lightly on his friend's shoulder. "I'm twenty-two, and I have the rights of a grandfather as far as you are concerned. You'll do as I say until you're twenty-one."

"The si ge will be over then, I hope," said Braith, trying to laugh, but the prayer in their hearts: "How long, O Lord, how long!" was answered by the swift scream of a shell soaring among the storm-clouds of that December night.

II

West, standing in the doorway of a house in the rue Serpentine, was speaking angrily. He said he didn't care whether Hartman liked it or not; he was telling him, not arguing with him.

"You call yourself an American!" he sneered; "Berlin and hell are full of that kind of American. You come loafing about Colette with your pockets stuffed with white bread and beef, and a bottle of wine at thirty francs and you can't really afford to give a dollar to the American Ambulance and Public Assistance, which Braith does, and he's half starved!"

Hartman retreated to the curbstone, but West followed him, his face like a thunder-cloud. "Don't you dare to call yourself a countryman of mine," he growled,—no,—nor an artist either! Artists don't worm themselves into the service of the Public Defence where they do nothing but feed like rats on the people's food! And I'll tell you now," he continued dropping his voice, for Hartman had started as though stung, "you might better keep away from that Alsatian Brasserie and the smug-faced thieves who haunt it. You know what they do with suspects!"

"You lie, you hound!" screamed Hartman, and flung the bottle in his hand straight at West's face. West had him by the throat in a second, and forcing him against the dead wall shook him wickedly.

"Now you listen to me," he muttered, through his clenched teeth. "You are already a suspect and—I swear—I believe you are a paid spy! It isn't my business to detect such vermin, and I don't intend to denounce you, but understand this! Colette don't like you and I can't stand

you, and if I catch you in this street again I'll make it somewhat unpleasant. Get out, you sleek Prussian!"

Hartman had managed to drag a knife from his pocket, but West tore it from him and hurled him into the gutter. A gamin who had seen this burst into a peal of laughter, which rattled harshly in the silent street. Then everywhere windows were raised and rows of haggard faces appeared demanding to know why people should laugh in the starving city.

"Is it a victory?" murmured one.

"Look at that," cried West as Hartman picked himself up from the pavement, "look! you miser! look at those faces!" But Hartman gave *him* a look which he never forgot, and walked away without a word. Trent, who suddenly appeared at the corner, glanced curiously at West, who merely nodded toward his door saying, "Come in; Fallowby's upstairs."

"What are you doing with that knife?" demanded Fallowby, as he and Trent entered the studio.

West looked at his wounded hand, which still clutched the knife, but saying, "Cut myself by accident," tossed it into a corner and washed the blood from his fingers.

Fallowby, fat and lazy, watched him without comment, but Trent, half divining how things had turned, walked over to Fallowby smiling.

"I've a bone to pick with you!" he said.

"Where is it? I'm hungry," replied Fallowby with affected eagerness, but Trent, frowning, told him to listen.

"How much did I advance you a week ago?"

"Three hundred and eighty francs," replied the other, with a squirm of contrition.

"Where is it?"

Fallowby began a series of intricate explanations, which were soon cut short by Trent.

“I know; you blew it in;—you always blow it in. I don’t care a rap what you did before the siege: I know you are rich and have a right to dispose of your money as you wish to, and I also know that, generally speaking, it is none of my business. But *now* it is my business, as I have to supply the funds until you get some more, which you won’t until the siege is ended one way or another. I wish to share what I have, but I won’t see it thrown out of the window. Oh, yes, of course I know you will reimburse me, but that isn’t the question; and, anyway, it’s the opinion of your friends, old man, that you will not be worse off for a little abstinence from fleshly pleasures. You are positively a freak in this famine-cursed city of skeletons!”

“I *am* rather stout,” he admitted.

“Is it true you are out of money?” demanded Trent.

“Yes, I am,” sighed the other.

“That roast sucking pig on the rue St. Honoré,—is it there yet?” continued Trent.

“Wh—at?” stammered the feeble one.

“Ah—I thought so! I caught you in ecstasy before that sucking pig at least a dozen times!”

Then laughing, he presented Fallowby with a roll of twenty franc pieces saying: “If these go for luxuries you must live on your own flesh,” and went over to aid West, who sat beside the wash-basin binding up his hand.

West suffered him to tie the knot, and then said: “You remember, yesterday, when I left you and Braith to take the chicken to Colette.”

“Chicken! Good heavens!” moaned Fallowby.

“Chicken,” repeated West, enjoying Fallowby’s

grief;—"I—that is, I must explain that things are changed. Colette and I—are to be married—"

"What—what about the chicken?" groaned Fallowby.

"Shut up!" laughed Trent, and slipping his arm through West's, walked to the stairway.

"The poor little thing," said West, "just think, not a splinter of firewood for a week and wouldn't tell me because she thought I needed it for my clay figure. Whew! When I heard it I smashed that smirking clay nymph to pieces, and the rest can freeze and be hanged!" After a moment he added timidly: "Won't you call on your way down and say *bon soir*? It's No. 17."

"Yes," said Trent, and he went out softly closing the door behind.

He stopped on the third landing, lighted a match, scanned the numbers over the row of dingy doors, and knocked at No. 17.

"C'est toi Georges?" The door opened.

"Oh, pardon, Monsieur Jack, I thought it was Monsieur West," then blushing furiously, "Oh, I see you have heard! Oh, thank you so much for your wishes, and I'm sure we love each other very much,—and I'm dying to see Sylvia and tell her and—"

"And what?" laughed Trent.

"I am very happy," she sighed.

"He's pure gold," returned Trent, and then gaily: "I want you and George to come and dine with us to-night. It's a little treat,—you see to-morrow is Sylvia's *fête*. She will be nineteen. I have written to Thorne, and the Guernalecs will come with their cousin Odile. Fallowby has engaged not to bring anybody but himself."

The girl accepted shyly, charging him with loads of loving messages to Sylvia, and he said good-night.

He started up the street, walking swiftly, for it was bitter cold, and cutting across the rue de la Lune he entered the rue de Seine. The early winter night had fallen, almost without warning, but the sky was clear and myriads of stars glittered in the heavens. The bombardment had become furious—a steady rolling thunder from the Prussian cannon punctuated by the heavy shocks from Mont Valérien.

The shells streamed across the sky leaving trails like shooting stars, and now, as he turned to look back, rockets blue and red flared above the horizon from the Fort of Issy, and the Fortress of the North flamed like a bonfire.

“Good news!” a man shouted over by the Boulevard St. Germain. As if by magic the streets were filled with people,—shivering, chattering people with shrunken eyes.

“Jacques!” cried one. “The Army of the Loire!”

“Eh! *mon vieux*, it has come then at last! I told thee! I told thee! To-morrow—to-night—who knows?”

“Is it true? Is it a sortie?”

Some one said: “Oh, God—a sortie—and my son?” Another cried: “To the Seine? They say one can see the signals of the Army of the Loire from the Pont Neuf.”

There was a child standing near Trent who kept repeating: “Mamma, Mamma, then to-morrow we may eat white bread?” and beside him, an old man swaying, stumbling, his shrivelled hands crushed to his breast, muttering as if insane.

“Could it be true? Who has heard the news? The shoemaker on the rue de Buci had it from a Mobile who had heard a Franctireur repeat it to a captain of the National Guard.”

Trent followed the throng surging through the rue de Seine to the river.

Rocket after rocket clove the sky, and now, from Montmartre, the cannon clanged, and the batteries on Montparnasse joined in with a crash. The bridge was packed with people.

Trent asked: "Who has seen the signals of the Army of the Loire?"

"We are waiting for them," was the reply.

He looked toward the north. Suddenly the huge silhouette of the Arc de Triomphe sprang into black relief against the flash of a cannon. The boom of the gun rolled along the quay and the old bridge vibrated.

Again over by the Point du Jour a flash and heavy explosion shook the bridge, and then the whole eastern bastion of the fortifications blazed and crackled, sending a red flame into the sky.

"Has any one seen the signals yet?" he asked again.

"We are waiting," was the reply.

"Yes, waiting," murmured a man behind him, "waiting, sick, starved, freezing, but waiting. Is it a sortie? They go gladly. Is it to starve? They starve. They have no time to think of surrender. Are they heroes,—these Parisians? Answer me, Trent!"

The American Ambulance surgeon turned about and scanned the parapets of the bridge.

"Any news, Doctor," asked Trent mechanically.

"News?" said the doctor; "I don't know any;—I haven't time to know any. What are these people after?"

"They say that the Army of the Loire has signalled Mont Valérien."

"Poor devils." The doctor glanced about him for an instant, and then: "I'm so harried and worried that I don't

know what to do. After the last sortie we had the work of fifty ambulances on our poor little corps. To-morrow there's another sortie, and I wish you fellows could come over to headquarters. We may need volunteers. How is madame?" he added abruptly.

"Well," replied Trent, "but she seems to grow more nervous every day. I ought to be with her now."

"Take care of her," said the doctor, then with a sharp look at the people: "I can't stop now—good-night!" and he hurried away muttering, "Poor devils!"

Trent leaned over the parapet and blinked at the black river surging through the arches. Dark objects, carried swiftly on the breast of the current, struck with a grinding tearing noise against the stone piers, spun around for an instant, and hurried away into the darkness. The ice from the Marne.

As he stood staring into the water, a hand was laid on his shoulder. "Hello, Southwark!" he cried, turning around; "this is a queer place for you!"

"Trent, I have something to tell you. Don't stay here,—don't believe in the Army of the Loire:" and the *attaché* of the American Legation slipped his arm through Trent's and drew him toward the Louvre.

"Then it's another lie!" said Trent bitterly.

"Worse—we know at the Legation—I can't speak of it. But that's not what I have to say. Something happened this afternoon. The Alsatian Brasserie was visited and an American named Hartman has been arrested. Do you know him?"

"I know a German who calls himself an American;—his name is Hartman."

"Well, he was arrested about two hours ago. They mean to shoot him."

“What!”

“Of course we at the Legation can’t allow them to shoot him off-hand, but the evidence seems conclusive.”

“Is he a spy?”

“Well, the papers seized in his rooms are pretty damning proofs, and besides he was caught, they say, swindling the Public Food Committee. He drew rations for fifty, how, I don’t know. He claims to be an American artist here, and we have been obliged to take notice of it at the Legation. It’s a nasty affair.”

“To cheat the people at such a time is worse than robbing the poor-box,” cried Trent angrily. “Let them shoot him!”

“He’s an American citizen.”

“Yes, oh yes,” said the other with bitterness. “American citizenship is a precious privilege when every goggle-eyed German—” His anger choked him.

Southwark shook hands with him warmly. “It can’t be helped, we must own the carrion. I am afraid you may be called upon to identify him as an American artist,” he said with a ghost of a smile on his deep-lined face; and walked away through the Cours la Reine.

Trent swore silently for a moment and then drew out his watch. Seven o’clock. “Sylvia will be anxious,” he thought, and hurried back to the river. The crowd still huddled shivering on the bridge, a sombre pitiful congregation, peering out into the night for the signals of the Army of the Loire: and their hearts beat time to the pounding of the guns, their eyes lighted with each flash from the bastions, and hope rose with the drifting rockets.

A black cloud hung over the fortifications. From horizon to horizon the cannon smoke stretched in

wavering bands, now capping the spires and domes with cloud, now blowing in streamers and shreds along the streets, now descending from the housetops, enveloping quays, bridges, and river, in a sulphurous mist. And through the smoke pall the lightning of the cannon played, while from time to time a rift above showed a fathomless black vault set with stars.

He turned again into the rue de Seine, that sad abandoned street, with its rows of closed shutters and desolate ranks of unlighted lamps. He was a little nervous and wished once or twice for a revolver, but the slinking forms which passed him in the darkness were too weak with hunger to be dangerous, he thought, and he passed on unmolested to his doorway. But there somebody sprang at his throat. Over and over the icy pavement he rolled with his assailant, tearing at the noose about his neck, and then with a wrench sprang to his feet.

“Get up,” he cried to the other.

Slowly and with great deliberation, a small gamin picked himself out of the gutter and surveyed Trent with disgust.

“That’s a nice clean trick,” said Trent; “a whelp of your age! You’ll finish against a dead wall! Give me that cord!”

The urchin handed him the noose without a word.

Trent struck a match and looked at his assailant. It was the rat-killer of the day before.

“H’m! I thought so,” he muttered.

“Tiens, c’est toi?” said the gamin tranquilly.

The impudence, the overpowering audacity of the ragamuffin took Trent’s breath away.

“Do you know, you young strangler,” he gasped, “that they shoot thieves of your age?”

The child turned a passionless face to Trent. "Shoot, then."

That was too much, and he turned on his heel and entered his hotel.

Groping up the unlighted stairway, he at last reached his own landing and felt about in the darkness for the door. From his studio came the sound of voices, West's hearty laugh and Fallowby's chuckle, and at last he found the knob and, pushing back the door, stood a moment confused by the light.

"Hello, Jack!" cried West, "you're a pleasant creature, inviting people to dine and letting them wait. Here's Fallowby weeping with hunger—"

"Shut up," observed the latter, "perhaps he's been out to buy a turkey."

"He's been out garroting, look at his noose!" laughed Guernalec.

"So now we know where you get your cash!" added West; "vive le coup du Père François!"

Trent shook hands with everybody and laughed at Sylvia's pale face.

"I didn't mean to be late; I stopped on the bridge a moment to watch the bombardment. Were you anxious, Sylvia?"

She smiled and murmured, "Oh, no!" but her hand dropped into his and tightened convulsively.

"To the table!" shouted Fallowby, and uttered a joyous whoop.

"Take it easy," observed Thorne, with a remnant of manners; "you are not the host, you know."

Marie Guernalec, who had been chattering with Colette, jumped up and took Thorne's arm and Monsieur Guernalec drew Odile's arm through his.

Trent, bowing gravely, offered his own arm to Colette, West took in Sylvia, and Fallowby hovered anxiously in the rear.

“You march around the table three times singing the Marseillaise,” explained Sylvia, “and Monsieur Fallowby pounds on the table and beats time.”

Fallowby suggested that they could sing after dinner, but his protest was drowned in the ringing chorus—

“Aux armes!

Formez vos bataillons!”

Around the room they marched singing,

“Marchons! Marchons!”

with all their might, while Fallowby with very bad grace, hammered on the table, consoling himself a little with the hope that the exercise would increase his appetite. Hercules, the black and tan, fled under the bed, from which retreat he yapped and whined until dragged out by Guernalec and placed in Odile’s lap.

“And now,” said Trent gravely, when everybody was seated, “listen!” and he read the menu.

Beef Soup à la Siège de Paris.

—

Fish.

Sardines à la père Lachaise.

(White Wine).

—

Rôti (Red Wine).

Fresh Beef à la sortie.

—

Vegetables.

Canned Beans à la chasse-pot,

Canned Peas Gravelotte,

Potatoes Irlandaises,

Miscellaneous.

—

Cold Corned Beef à la Thieis,

Stewed Prunes à la Garibaldi.

—

Dessert.

Dried prunes—White bread,

Currant Jelly,

Tea—Café,

Liqueurs,

Pipes and Cigarettes.

Fallowby applauded frantically, and Sylvia served the soup.

“Isn’t it delicious?” sighed Odile.

Marie Guernalec sipped her soup in rapture.

“Not at all like horse, and I don’t care what they say,

horse doesn't taste like beef," whispered Colette to West. Fallowby, who had finished, began to caress his chin and eye the tureen.

"Have some more, old chap?" inquired Trent.

"Monsieur Fallowby cannot have any more," announced Sylvia; "I am saving this for the concierge." Fallowby transferred his eyes to the fish.

The sardines, hot from the grille, were a great success. While the others were eating Sylvia ran downstairs with the soup for the old concierge and her husband, and when she hurried back, flushed and breathless, and had slipped into her chair with a happy smile at Trent, that young man arose, and silence fell over the table. For an instant he looked at Sylvia and thought he had never seen her so beautiful.

"You all know," he began, "that to-day is my wife's nineteenth birthday—"

Fallowby, bubbling with enthusiasm, waved his glass in circles about his head to the terror of Odile and Colette, his neighbours, and Thorne, West and Guernalec refilled their glasses three times before the storm of applause which the toast of Sylvia had provoked, subsided.

Three times the glasses were filled and emptied to Sylvia, and again to Trent, who protested.

"This is irregular," he cried, "the next toast is to the twin Republics, France and America?"

"To the Republics! To the Republics!" they cried, and the toast was drunk amid shouts of "Vive la France! Vive l'Amérique! Vive la Nation!"

Then Trent, with a smile at West, offered the toast, "To a Happy Pair!" and everybody understood, and Sylvia leaned over and kissed Colette, while Trent bowed to West.

The beef was eaten in comparative calm, but when it was finished and a portion of it set aside for the old people below, Trent cried: "Drink to Paris! May she rise from her ruins and crush the invader!" and the cheers rang out, drowning for a moment the monotonous thunder of the Prussian guns.

Pipes and cigarettes were lighted, and Trent listened an instant to the animated chatter around him, broken by ripples of laughter from the girls or the mellow chuckle of Fallowby. Then he turned to West.

"There is going to be a *sortie* to-night," he said. "I saw the American Ambulance surgeon just before I came in and he asked me to speak to you fellows. Any aid we can give him will not come amiss."

Then dropping his voice and speaking in English, "As for me, I shall go out with the ambulance to-morrow morning. There is of course no danger, but it's just as well to keep it from Sylvia."

West nodded. Thorne and Guernalec, who had heard, broke in and offered assistance, and Fallowby volunteered with a groan.

"All right," said Trent rapidly,— "no more now, but meet me at Ambulance headquarters to-morrow morning at eight."

Sylvia and Colette, who were becoming uneasy at the conversation in English, now demanded to know what they were talking about.

"What does a sculptor usually talk about?" cried West, with a laugh.

Odile glanced reproachfully at Thorne, her *fiancé*.

"You are not French, you know, and it is none of your business, this war," said Odile with much dignity.

Thorne looked meek, but West assumed an air of outraged virtue.

"It seems," he said to Fallowby, "that a fellow cannot discuss the beauties of Greek sculpture in his mother tongue, without being openly suspected."

Colette placed her hand over his mouth and turning to Sylvia, murmured, "They are horridly untruthful, these men."

"I believe the word for ambulance is the same in both languages," said Marie Guernalec saucily; "Sylvia, don't trust Monsieur Trent."

"Jack," whispered Sylvia, "promise me—"

A knock at the studio door interrupted her.

"Come in!" cried Fallowby, but Trent sprang up, and opening the door, looked out. Then with a hasty excuse to the rest, he stepped into the hallway and closed the door.

When he returned he was grumbling.

"What is it, Jack?" cried West.

"What is it?" repeated Trent savagely; "I'll tell you what it is. I have received a dispatch from the American Minister to go at once and identify and claim, as a fellow-countryman and a brother artist, a rascally thief and a German spy!"

"Don't go," suggested Fallowby.

"If I don't they'll shoot him at once."

"Let them," growled Thorne.

"Do you fellows know who it is?"

"Hartman!" shouted West, inspired.

Sylvia sprang up deathly white, but Odile slipped her arm around her and supported her to a chair, saying calmly, "Sylvia has fainted,—it's the hot room,—bring some water."

Trent brought it at once.

Sylvia opened her eyes, and after a moment rose, and supported by Marie Guernalec and Trent, passed into the bedroom.

It was the signal for breaking up, and everybody came and shook hands with Trent, saying they hoped Sylvia would sleep it off and that it would be nothing.

When Marie Guernalec took leave of him, she avoided his eyes, but he spoke to her cordially and thanked her for her aid.

“Anything I can do, Jack?” inquired West, lingering, and then hurried downstairs to catch up with the rest.

Trent leaned over the banisters, listening to their footsteps and chatter, and then the lower door banged and the house was silent. He lingered, staring down into the blackness, biting his lips; then with an impatient movement, “I am crazy!” he muttered, and lighting a candle, went into the bedroom. Sylvia was lying on the bed. He bent over her, smoothing the curly hair on her forehead.

“Are you better, dear Sylvia?”

She did not answer, but raised her eyes to his. For an instant he met her gaze, but what he read there sent a chill to his heart and he sat down covering his face with his hands.

At last she spoke in a voice, changed and strained,—a voice which he had never heard, and he dropped his hands and listened, bolt upright in his chair.

“Jack, it has come at last. I have feared it and trembled,—ah! how often have I lain awake at night with this on my heart and prayed that I might die before you should ever know of it! For I love you, Jack, and if you go away I cannot live. I have deceived you;—it happened before I knew you, but since that first day when you

found me weeping in the Luxembourg and spoke to me, Jack, I have been faithful to you in every thought and deed. I loved you from the first, and did not dare to tell you this—fearing that you would go away; and since then my love has grown—grown—and oh! I suffered!—but I dared not tell you. And now you know, but you do not know the worst. For him—now—what do I care? He was cruel—oh, so cruel!”

She hid her face in her arms.

“Must I go on? Must I tell you—can you not imagine, oh! Jack—”

He did not stir; his eyes seemed dead.

“I—I was so young, I knew nothing, and he said—said that he loved me—”

Trent rose and struck the candle with his clenched fist, and the room was dark.

The bells of St. Sulpice tolled the hour, and she started up, speaking with feverish haste,—”I must finish! When you told me you loved me—you—you asked me nothing; but then, even then, it was too late, and *that other life* which binds me to him, must stand for ever between you and me! For there *is another* whom he has claimed, and is good to. He must not die,—they cannot shoot him, for that *other’s* sake!”

Trent sat motionless, but his thoughts ran on in an interminable whirl.

Sylvia, little Sylvia, who shared with him his student life,—who bore with him the dreary desolation of the siege without complaint,—this slender blue-eyed girl whom he was so quietly fond of, whom he teased or caressed as the whim suited, who sometimes made him the least bit impatient with her passionate devotion to

him,—could this be the same Sylvia who lay weeping there in the darkness?

Then he clinched his teeth. “Let him die! Let him die!”—but then,—for Sylvia’s sake, and,—for that *other’s* sake,—Yes, he would go,—he *must* go,—his duty was plain before him. But Sylvia,—he could not be what he had been to her, and yet a vague terror seized him, now all was said. Trembling, he struck a light.

She lay there, her curly hair tumbled about her face, her small white hands pressed to her breast.

He could not leave her, and he could not stay. He never knew before that he loved her. She had been a mere comrade, this girl wife of his. Ah! he loved her now with all his heart and soul, and he knew it, only when it was too late. Too late? Why? Then he thought of that *other* one, binding her, linking her forever to the creature, who stood in danger of his life. With an oath he sprang to the door, but the door would not open,—or was it that he pressed it back,—locked it,—and flung himself on his knees beside the bed, knowing that he dared not for his life’s sake leave what was his all in life.

III

It was four in the morning when he came out of the Prison of the Condemned with the Secretary of the American Legation. A knot of people had gathered around the American Minister’s carriage, which stood in front of the prison, the horses stamping and pawing in the icy street, the coachman huddled on the box, wrapped in furs. Southwark helped the Secretary into the carriage, and shook hands with Trent, thanking him for coming.

“How the scoundrel did stare,” he said; “your evidence

was worse than a kick, but it saved his skin for the moment at least,—and prevented complications.”

The Secretary sighed. “We have done our part. Now let them prove him a spy and we wash our hands of him. Jump in, Captain! Come along, Trent!”

“I have a word to say to Captain Southwark, I won’t detain him,” said Trent hastily, and dropping his voice, “Southwark, help *me* now. You know the story from the blackguard. You know the—the child is at his rooms. Get it, and take it to my own apartment, and if he is shot, I will provide a home for it.”

“I understand,” said the Captain gravely.

“Will you do this at once?”

“At once,” he replied.

Their hands met in a warm clasp, and then Captain Southwark climbed into the carriage, motioning Trent to follow; but he shook his head saying, “Good-bye!” and the carriage rolled away.

He watched the carriage to the end of the street, then started toward his own quarter, but after a step or two hesitated, stopped, and finally turned away in the opposite direction. Something—perhaps it was the sight of the prisoner he had so recently confronted nauseated him. He felt the need of solitude and quiet to collect his thoughts. The events of the evening had shaken him terribly, but he would walk it off, forget, bury everything, and then go back to Sylvia. He started on swiftly, and for a time the bitter thoughts seemed to fade, but when he paused at last, breathless, under the Arc de Triomphe, the bitterness and the wretchedness of the whole thing—yes, of his whole misspent life came back with a pang. Then the face of the prisoner, stamped with the horrible grimace of fear, grew in the shadows before his eyes.

Sick at heart he wandered up and down under the great Arc, striving to occupy his mind, peering up at the sculptured cornices to read the names of the heroes and battles which he knew were engraved there, but always the ashen face of Hartman followed him, grinning with terror!—or was it terror?—was it not triumph?—At the thought he leaped like a man who feels a knife at his throat, but after a savage tramp around the square, came back again and sat down to battle with his misery.

The air was cold, but his cheeks were burning with angry shame. Shame? Why? Was it because he had married a girl whom chance had made a mother? *Did* he love her? Was this miserable bohemian existence, then, his end and aim in life? He turned his eyes upon the secrets of his heart, and read an evil story,—the story of the past, and he covered his face for shame, while, keeping time to the dull pain throbbing in his head, his heart beat out the story for the future. Shame and disgrace.

Roused at last from a lethargy which had begun to numb the bitterness of his thoughts, he raised his head and looked about. A sudden fog had settled in the streets; the arches of the Arc were choked with it. He would go home. A great horror of being alone seized him. *But he was not alone.* The fog was peopled with phantoms. All around him in the mist they moved, drifting through the arches in lengthening lines, and vanished, while from the fog others rose up, swept past and were engulfed. He was not alone, for even at his side they crowded, touched him, swarmed before him, beside him, behind him, pressed him back, seized, and bore him with them through the mist. Down a dim avenue, through lanes and alleys white with fog, they moved, and if they spoke their voices were dull as the vapour which shrouded them. At last in front,

a bank of masonry and earth cut by a massive iron barred gate towered up in the fog. Slowly and more slowly they glided, shoulder to shoulder and thigh to thigh. Then all movement ceased. A sudden breeze stirred the fog. It wavered and eddied. Objects became more distinct. A pallor crept above the horizon, touching the edges of the watery clouds, and drew dull sparks from a thousand bayonets. Bayonets—they were everywhere, cleaving the fog or flowing beneath it in rivers of steel. High on the wall of masonry and earth a great gun loomed, and around it figures moved in silhouettes. Below, a broad torrent of bayonets swept through the iron barred gateway, out into the shadowy plain. It became lighter. Faces grew more distinct among the marching masses and he recognized one.

“You, Philippe!”

The figure turned its head.

Trent cried, “Is there room for me?” but the other only waved his arm in a vague adieu and was gone with the rest. Presently the cavalry began to pass, squadron on squadron, crowding out into the darkness; then many cannon, then an ambulance, then again the endless lines of bayonets. Beside him a cuirassier sat on his steaming horse, and in front, among a group of mounted officers he saw a general, with the astrakan collar of his dolman turned up about his bloodless face.

Some women were weeping near him and one was struggling to force a loaf of black bread into a soldier’s haversack. The soldier tried to aid her, but the sack was fastened, and his rifle bothered him, so Trent held it, while the woman unbuttoned the sack and forced in the bread, now all wet with her tears. The rifle was not heavy. Trent found it wonderfully manageable. Was the bayonet

sharp? He tried it. Then a sudden longing, a fierce, imperative desire took possession of him.

“*Chouette!*” cried a gamin, clinging to the barred gate, “*encore toi mon vieux?*”

Trent looked up, and the rat-killer laughed in his face. But when the soldier had taken the rifle again, and thanking him, ran hard to catch his battalion, he plunged into the throng about the gateway.

“Are you going?” he cried to a marine who sat in the gutter bandaging his foot.

“Yes.”

Then a girl—a mere child—caught him by the hand and led him into the café which faced the gate. The room was crowded with soldiers, some, white and silent, sitting on the floor, others groaning on the leather-covered settees. The air was sour and suffocating.

“Choose!” said the girl with a little gesture of pity; “they can’t go!”

In a heap of clothing on the floor he found a capote and képi.

She helped him buckle his knapsack, cartridge-box, and belt, and showed him how to load the chasse-pot rifle, holding it on her knees.

When he thanked her she started to her feet.

“You are a foreigner!”

“American,” he said, moving toward the door, but the child barred his way.

“I am a Bretonne. My father is up there with the cannon of the marine. He will shoot you if you are a spy.”

They faced each other for a moment. Then sighing, he bent over and kissed the child. “Pray for France, little one,” he murmured, and she repeated with a pale smile: “For France and you, beau Monsieur.”

He ran across the street and through the gateway. Once outside, he edged into line and shouldered his way along the road. A corporal passed, looked at him, repassed, and finally called an officer. "You belong to the 60th," growled the corporal looking at the number on his képi.

"We have no use for Franc-tireurs," added the officer, catching sight of his black trousers.

"I wish to volunteer in place of a comrade," said Trent, and the officer shrugged his shoulders and passed on.

Nobody paid much attention to him, one or two merely glancing at his trousers. The road was deep with slush and mud-ploughed and torn by wheels and hoofs. A soldier in front of him wrenched his foot in an icy rut and dragged himself to the edge of the embankment groaning. The plain on either side of them was grey with melting snow. Here and there behind dismantled hedge-rows stood wagons, bearing white flags with red crosses. Sometimes the driver was a priest in rusty hat and gown, sometimes a crippled Mobile. Once they passed a wagon driven by a Sister of Charity. Silent empty houses with great rents in their walls, and every window blank, huddled along the road. Further on, within the zone of danger, nothing of human habitation remained except here and there a pile of frozen bricks or a blackened cellar choked with snow.

For some time Trent had been annoyed by the man behind him, who kept treading on his heels. Convinced at last that it was intentional, he turned to remonstrate and found himself face to face with a fellow-student from the Beaux Arts. Trent stared.

"I thought you were in the hospital!"

The other shook his head, pointing to his bandaged jaw.

"I see, you can't speak. Can I do anything?"

The wounded man rummaged in his haversack and produced a crust of black bread.

“He can’t eat it, his jaw is smashed, and he wants you to chew it for him,” said the soldier next to him.

Trent took the crust, and grinding it in his teeth morsel by morsel, passed it back to the starving man.

From time to time mounted orderlies sped to the front, covering them with slush. It was a chilly, silent march through sodden meadows wreathed in fog. Along the railroad embankment across the ditch, another column moved parallel to their own. Trent watched it, a sombre mass, now distinct, now vague, now blotted out in a puff of fog. Once for half-an-hour he lost it, but when again it came into view, he noticed a thin line detach itself from the flank, and, bellying in the middle, swing rapidly to the west. At the same moment a prolonged crackling broke out in the fog in front. Other lines began to slough off from the column, swinging east and west, and the crackling became continuous. A battery passed at full gallop, and he drew back with his comrades to give it way. It went into action a little to the right of his battalion, and as the shot from the first rifled piece boomed through the mist, the cannon from the fortifications opened with a mighty roar. An officer galloped by shouting something which Trent did not catch, but he saw the ranks in front suddenly part company with his own, and disappear in the twilight. More officers rode up and stood beside him peering into the fog. Away in front the crackling had become one prolonged crash. It was dreary waiting. Trent chewed some bread for the man behind, who tried to swallow it, and after a while shook his head, motioning Trent to eat the rest himself. A corporal offered him a little brandy and he drank it, but when he turned around

to return the flask, the corporal was lying on the ground. Alarmed, he looked at the soldier next to him, who shrugged his shoulders and opened his mouth to speak, but something struck him and he rolled over and over into the ditch below. At that moment the horse of one of the officers gave a bound and backed into the battalion, lashing out with his heels. One man was ridden down; another was kicked in the chest and hurled through the ranks. The officer sank his spurs into the horse and forced him to the front again, where he stood trembling. The cannonade seemed to draw nearer. A staff-officer, riding slowly up and down the battalion suddenly collapsed in his saddle and clung to his horse's mane. One of his boots dangled, crimsoned and dripping, from the stirrup. Then out of the mist in front men came running. The roads, the fields, the ditches were full of them, and many of them fell. For an instant he imagined he saw horsemen riding about like ghosts in the vapours beyond, and a man behind him cursed horribly, declaring he too had seen them, and that they were Uhlans; but the battalion stood inactive, and the mist fell again over the meadows.

The colonel sat heavily upon his horse, his bullet-shaped head buried in the astrakan collar of his dolman, his fat legs sticking straight out in the stirrups.

The buglers clustered about him with bugles poised, and behind him a staff-officer in a pale blue jacket smoked a cigarette and chatted with a captain of hussars. From the road in front came the sound of furious galloping and an orderly reined up beside the colonel, who motioned him to the rear without turning his head. Then on the left a confused murmur arose which ended in a shout. A hussar passed like the wind, followed by

another and another, and then squadron after squadron whirled by them into the sheeted mists. At that instant the colonel reared in his saddle, the bugles clanged, and the whole battalion scrambled down the embankment, over the ditch and started across the soggy meadow. Almost at once Trent lost his cap. Something snatched it from his head, he thought it was a tree branch. A good many of his comrades rolled over in the slush and ice, and he imagined that they had slipped. One pitched right across his path and he stopped to help him up, but the man screamed when he touched him and an officer shouted, "Forward! Forward!" so he ran on again. It was a long jog through the mist, and he was often obliged to shift his rifle. When at last they lay panting behind the railroad embankment, he looked about him. He had felt the need of action, of a desperate physical struggle, of killing and crushing. He had been seized with a desire to fling himself among masses and tear right and left. He longed to fire, to use the thin sharp bayonet on his chasse-pot. He had not expected this. He wished to become exhausted, to struggle and cut until incapable of lifting his arm. Then he had intended to go home. He heard a man say that half the battalion had gone down in the charge, and he saw another examining a corpse under the embankment. The body, still warm, was clothed in a strange uniform, but even when he noticed the spiked helmet lying a few inches further away, he did not realize what had happened.

The colonel sat on his horse a few feet to the left, his eyes sparkling under the crimson képi. Trent heard him reply to an officer: "I can hold it, but another charge, and I won't have enough men left to sound a bugle."

“Were the Prussians here?” Trent asked of a soldier who sat wiping the blood trickling from his hair.

“Yes. The hussars cleaned them out. We caught their cross fire.”

“We are supporting a battery on the embankment,” said another.

Then the battalion crawled over the embankment and moved along the lines of twisted rails. Trent rolled up his trousers and tucked them into his woollen socks: but they halted again, and some of the men sat down on the dismantled railroad track. Trent looked for his wounded comrade from the Beaux Arts. He was standing in his place, very pale. The cannonade had become terrific. For a moment the mist lifted. He caught a glimpse of the first battalion motionless on the railroad track in front, of regiments on either flank, and then, as the fog settled again, the drums beat and the music of the bugles began away on the extreme left. A restless movement passed among the troops, the colonel threw up his arm, the drums rolled, and the battalion moved off through the fog. They were near the front now for the battalion was firing as it advanced. Ambulances galloped along the base of the embankment to the rear, and the hussars passed and repassed like phantoms. They were in the front at last, for all about them was movement and turmoil, while from the fog, close at hand, came cries and groans and crashing volleys. Shells fell everywhere, bursting along the embankment, splashing them with frozen slush. Trent was frightened. He began to dread the unknown, which lay there crackling and flaming in obscurity. The shock of the cannon sickened him. He could even see the fog light up with a dull orange as the thunder shook the earth. It was near, he felt certain, for the colonel shouted

“Forward!” and the first battalion was hastening into it. He felt its breath, he trembled, but hurried on. A fearful discharge in front terrified him. Somewhere in the fog men were cheering, and the colonel’s horse, streaming with blood plunged about in the smoke.

Another blast and shock, right in his face, almost stunned him, and he faltered. All the men to the right were down. His head swam; the fog and smoke stupefied him. He put out his hand for a support and caught something. It was the wheel of a gun-carriage, and a man sprang from behind it, aiming a blow at his head with a rammer, but stumbled back shrieking with a bayonet through his neck, and Trent knew that he had killed. Mechanically he stooped to pick up his rifle, but the bayonet was still in the man, who lay, beating with red hands against the sod. It sickened him and he leaned on the cannon. Men were fighting all around him now, and the air was foul with smoke and sweat. Somebody seized him from behind and another in front, but others in turn seized them or struck them solid blows. The click! click! click! of bayonets infuriated him, and he grasped the rammer and struck out blindly until it was shivered to pieces.

A man threw his arm around his neck and bore him to the ground, but he throttled him and raised himself on his knees. He saw a comrade seize the cannon, and fall across it with his skull crushed in; he saw the colonel tumble clean out of his saddle into the mud; then consciousness fled.

When he came to himself, he was lying on the embankment among the twisted rails. On every side huddled men who cried out and cursed and fled away into the fog, and he staggered to his feet and followed them.

Once he stopped to help a comrade with a bandaged jaw, who could not speak but clung to his arm for a time and then fell dead in the freezing mire; and again he aided another, who groaned: "Trent, c'est moi—Philippe," until a sudden volley in the midst relieved him of his charge.

An icy wind swept down from the heights, cutting the fog into shreds. For an instant, with an evil leer the sun peered through the naked woods of Vincennes, sank like a blood-clot in the battery smoke, lower, lower, into the blood-soaked plain.

IV

When midnight sounded from the belfry of St. Sulpice the gates of Paris were still choked with fragments of what had once been an army.

They entered with the night, a sullen horde, spattered with slime, faint with hunger and exhaustion. There was little disorder at first, and the throng at the gates parted silently as the troops tramped along the freezing streets. Confusion came as the hours passed. Swiftly and more swiftly, crowding squadron after squadron and battery on battery, horses plunging and caissons jolting, the remnants from the front surged through the gates, a chaos of cavalry and artillery struggling for the right of way. Close upon them stumbled the infantry; here a skeleton of a regiment marching with a desperate attempt at order, there a riotous mob of Mobiles crushing their way to the streets, then a turmoil of horsemen, cannon, troops without, officers, officers without men, then again a line of ambulances, the wheels groaning under their heavy loads.

Dumb with misery the crowd looked on.

All through the day the ambulances had been arriving,

and all day long the ragged throng whimpered and shivered by the barriers. At noon the crowd was increased ten-fold, filling the squares about the gates, and swarming over the inner fortifications.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the German batteries suddenly wreathed themselves in smoke, and the shells fell fast on Montparnasse. At twenty minutes after four two projectiles struck a house in the rue de Bac, and a moment later the first shell fell in the Latin Quarter.

Braith was painting in bed when West came in very much scared.

"I wish you would come down; our house has been knocked into a cocked hat, and I'm afraid that some of the pillagers may take it into their heads to pay us a visit to-night."

Braith jumped out of bed and bundled himself into a garment which had once been an overcoat.

"Anybody hurt?" he inquired, struggling with a sleeve full of dilapidated lining.

"No. Colette is barricaded in the cellar, and the concierge ran away to the fortifications. There will be a rough gang there if the bombardment keeps up. You might help us—"

"Of course," said Braith; but it was not until they had reached the rue Serpente and had turned in the passage which led to West's cellar, that the latter cried: "Have you seen Jack Trent, to-day?"

"No," replied Braith, looking troubled, "he was not at Ambulance Headquarters."

"He stayed to take care of Sylvia, I suppose."

A bomb came crashing through the roof of a house at the end of the alley and burst in the basement, showering the street with slate and plaster. A second struck a

chimney and plunged into the garden, followed by an avalanche of bricks, and another exploded with a deafening report in the next street.

They hurried along the passage to the steps which led to the cellar. Here again Braith stopped.

“Don’t you think I had better run up to see if Jack and Sylvia are well entrenched? I can get back before dark.”

“No. Go in and find Colette, and I’ll go.”

“No, no, let me go, there’s no danger.”

“I know it,” replied West calmly; and, dragging Braith into the alley, pointed to the cellar steps. The iron door was barred.

“Colette! Colette!” he called. The door swung inward, and the girl sprang up the stairs to meet them. At that instant, Braith, glancing behind him, gave a startled cry, and pushing the two before him into the cellar, jumped down after them and slammed the iron door. A few seconds later a heavy jar from the outside shook the hinges.

“They are here,” muttered West, very pale.

“That door,” observed Colette calmly, “will hold for ever.”

Braith examined the low iron structure, now trembling with the blows rained on it from without. West glanced anxiously at Colette, who displayed no agitation, and this comforted him.

“I don’t believe they will spend much time here,” said Braith; “they only rummage in cellars for spirits, I imagine.”

“Unless they hear that valuables are buried there.”

“But surely nothing is buried here?” exclaimed Braith uneasily.

“Unfortunately there is,” growled West. “That miserly landlord of mine—”

A crash from the outside, followed by a yell, cut him short; then blow after blow shook the doors, until there came a sharp snap, a clinking of metal and a triangular bit of iron fell inwards, leaving a hole through which struggled a ray of light.

Instantly West knelt, and shoving his revolver through the aperture fired every cartridge. For a moment the alley resounded with the racket of the revolver, then absolute silence followed.

Presently a single questioning blow fell upon the door, and a moment later another and another, and then a sudden crack zigzagged across the iron plate.

“Here,” said West, seizing Colette by the wrist, “you follow me, Braith!” and he ran swiftly toward a circular spot of light at the further end of the cellar. The spot of light came from a barred man-hole above. West motioned Braith to mount on his shoulders.

“Push it over. You *must!*”

With little effort Braith lifted the barred cover, scrambled out on his stomach, and easily raised Colette from West’s shoulders.

“Quick, old chap!” cried the latter.

Braith twisted his legs around a fence-chain and leaned down again. The cellar was flooded with a yellow light, and the air reeked with the stench of petroleum torches. The iron door still held, but a whole plate of metal was gone, and now as they looked a figure came creeping through, holding a torch.

“Quick!” whispered Braith. “Jump!” and West hung dangling until Colette grasped him by the collar, and he was dragged out. Then her nerves gave way and she wept

hysterically, but West threw his arm around her and led her across the gardens into the next street, where Braith, after replacing the man-hole cover and piling some stone slabs from the wall over it, rejoined them. It was almost dark. They hurried through the street, now only lighted by burning buildings, or the swift glare of the shells. They gave wide berth to the fires, but at a distance saw the flitting forms of pillagers among the *débris*. Sometimes they passed a female fury crazed with drink shrieking anathemas upon the world, or some slouching lout whose blackened face and hands betrayed his share in the work of destruction. At last they reached the Seine and passed the bridge, and then Braith said: "I must go back. I am not sure of Jack and Sylvia." As he spoke, he made way for a crowd which came trampling across the bridge, and along the river wall by the d'Orsay barracks. In the midst of it West caught the measured tread of a platoon. A lantern passed, a file of bayonets, then another lantern which glimmered on a deathly face behind, and Colette gasped, "Hartman!" and he was gone. They peered fearfully across the embankment, holding their breath. There was a shuffle of feet on the quay, and the gate of the barracks slammed. A lantern shone for a moment at the postern, the crowd pressed to the grille, then came the clang of the volley from the stone parade.

One by one the petroleum torches flared up along the embankment, and now the whole square was in motion. Down from the Champs Elysées and across the Place de la Concorde straggled the fragments of the battle, a company here, and a mob there. They poured in from every street followed by women and children, and a great murmur, borne on the icy wind, swept through the Arc de Triomphe and down the dark avenue,—*"Perdus! perdus!"*

A ragged end of a battalion was pressing past, the spectre of annihilation. West groaned. Then a figure sprang from the shadowy ranks and called West's name, and when he saw it was Trent he cried out. Trent seized him, white with terror.

"Sylvia?"

West stared speechless, but Colette moaned, "Oh, Sylvia! Sylvia!—and they are shelling the Quarter!"

"Trent!" shouted Braith; but he was gone, and they could not overtake him.

The bombardment ceased as Trent crossed the Boulevard St. Germain, but the entrance to the rue de Seine was blocked by a heap of smoking bricks. Everywhere the shells had torn great holes in the pavement. The café was a wreck of splinters and glass, the book-store tottered, ripped from roof to basement, and the little bakery, long since closed, bulged outward above a mass of slate and tin.

He climbed over the steaming bricks and hurried into the rue de Tournon. On the corner a fire blazed, lighting up his own street, and on the bank wall, beneath a shattered gas lamp, a child was writing with a bit of cinder.

"HERE FELL THE FIRST SHELL."

The letters stared him in the face. The rat-killer finished and stepped back to view his work, but catching sight of Trent's bayonet, screamed and fled, and as Trent staggered across the shattered street, from holes and crannies in the ruins fierce women fled from their work of pillage, cursing him.

At first he could not find his house, for the tears blinded him, but he felt along the wall and reached the door. A lantern burned in the concierge's lodge and the old man

lay dead beside it. Faint with fright he leaned a moment on his rifle, then, snatching the lantern, sprang up the stairs. He tried to call, but his tongue hardly moved. On the second floor he saw plaster on the stairway, and on the third the floor was torn and the concierge lay in a pool of blood across the landing. The next floor was his, *theirs*. The door hung from its hinges, the walls gaped. He crept in and sank down by the bed, and there two arms were flung around his neck, and a tear-stained face sought his own.

“Sylvia!”

“O Jack! Jack! Jack!”

From the tumbled pillow beside them a child wailed.

“They brought it; it is mine,” she sobbed.

“Ours,” he whispered, with his arms around them both.

Then from the stairs below came Braith’s anxious voice.

“Trent! Is all well?”

THE STREET OF OUR LADY OF THE FIELDS

“Et tout les jours passés dans la tristesse

Nous sont comptés comme des jours heureux!”

I

The street is not fashionable, neither is it shabby. It is a pariah among streets—a street without a Quarter. It is generally understood to lie outside the pale of the aristocratic Avenue de l’Observatoire. The students of the Montparnasse Quarter consider it swell and will have none of it. The Latin Quarter, from the Luxembourg, its northern frontier, sneers at its respectability and regards with disfavour the correctly costumed students who

haunt it. Few strangers go into it. At times, however, the Latin Quarter students use it as a thoroughfare between the rue de Rennes and the Bullier, but except for that and the weekly afternoon visits of parents and guardians to the Convent near the rue Vavin, the street of Our Lady of the Fields is as quiet as a Passy boulevard. Perhaps the most respectable portion lies between the rue de la Grande Chaumière and the rue Vavin, at least this was the conclusion arrived at by the Reverend Joel Byram, as he rambled through it with Hastings in charge. To Hastings the street looked pleasant in the bright June weather, and he had begun to hope for its selection when the Reverend Byram shied violently at the cross on the Convent opposite.

“Jesuits,” he muttered.

“Well,” said Hastings wearily, “I imagine we won’t find anything better. You say yourself that vice is triumphant in Paris, and it seems to me that in every street we find Jesuits or something worse.”

After a moment he repeated, “Or something worse, which of course I would not notice except for your kindness in warning me.”

Dr. Byram sucked in his lips and looked about him. He was impressed by the evident respectability of the surroundings. Then frowning at the Convent he took Hastings’ arm and shuffled across the street to an iron gateway which bore the number 201 *bis* painted in white on a blue ground. Below this was a notice printed in English:

-
1. For Porter please oppress once.
 2. For Servant please oppress twice.
 3. For Parlour please oppress thrice.
-

Hastings touched the electric button three times, and they were ushered through the garden and into the parlour by a trim maid. The dining-room door, just beyond, was open, and from the table in plain view a stout woman hastily arose and came toward them. Hastings caught a glimpse of a young man with a big head and several snuffy old gentlemen at breakfast, before the door closed and the stout woman waddled into the room, bringing with her an aroma of coffee and a black poodle.

"It ees a plaisir to you receive!" she cried. "Monsieur is English? No? Americain? Off course. My pension it ees for Americains surtout. Here all spik Angleesh, c'est à dire, ze personnel; ze sairvants do spik, plus ou moins, a little. I am happy to have you comme pensionnaires—"

"Madame," began Dr. Byram, but was cut short again.

"Ah, yess, I know, ah! mon Dieu! you do not spik Frainch but you have come to lairne! My husband does spik Frainch wiss ze pensionnaires. We have at ze moment a family Americaine who learn of my husband Frainch—"

Here the poodle growled at Dr. Byram and was promptly cuffed by his mistress.

"Veux tu!" she cried, with a slap, "veux tu! Oh! le vilain, oh! le vilain!"

"Mais, madame," said Hastings, smiling, "il n'a pas l'air très féroce."

The poodle fled, and his mistress cried, "Ah, ze accent charming! He does spik already Frainch like a Parisien young gentleman!"

Then Dr. Byram managed to get in a word or two and gathered more or less information with regard to prices.

"It ees a pension serieux; my clientèle ees of ze best, indeed a pension de famille where one ees at 'ome."

Then they went upstairs to examine Hastings' future quarters, test the bed-springs and arrange for the weekly towel allowance. Dr. Byram appeared satisfied.

Madame Marotte accompanied them to the door and rang for the maid, but as Hastings stepped out into the gravel walk, his guide and mentor paused a moment and fixed Madame with his watery eyes.

"You understand," he said, "that he is a youth of most careful bringing up, and his character and morals are without a stain. He is young and has never been abroad, never even seen a large city, and his parents have requested me, as an old family friend living in Paris, to see that he is placed under good influences. He is to study art, but on no account would his parents wish him to live in the Latin Quarter if they knew of the immorality which is rife there."

A sound like the click of a latch interrupted him and he raised his eyes, but not in time to see the maid slap the big-headed young man behind the parlour-door.

Madame coughed, cast a deadly glance behind her and then beamed on Dr. Byram.

"It ees well zat he come here. The pension more serious, il n'en existe pas, eet ees not any!" she announced with conviction.

So, as there was nothing more to add, Dr. Byram joined Hastings at the gate.

"I trust," he said, eyeing the Convent, "that you will make no acquaintances among Jesuits!"

Hastings looked at the Convent until a pretty girl passed before the gray façade, and then he looked at her. A young fellow with a paint-box and canvas came swinging along, stopped before the pretty girl, said something during a brief but vigorous handshake at

which they both laughed, and he went his way, calling back, "À demain Valentine!" as in the same breath she cried, "À demain!"

"Valentine," thought Hastings, "what a quaint name;" and he started to follow the Reverend Joel Byram, who was shuffling towards the nearest tramway station.

II

"An' you are pleas wiz Paris, Monsieur' Astang?" demanded Madame Marotte the next morning as Hastings came into the breakfast-room of the pension, rosy from his plunge in the limited bath above.

"I am sure I shall like it," he replied, wondering at his own depression of spirits.

The maid brought him coffee and rolls. He returned the vacant glance of the big-headed young man and acknowledged diffidently the salutes of the snuffy old gentlemen. He did not try to finish his coffee, and sat crumbling a roll, unconscious of the sympathetic glances of Madame Marotte, who had tact enough not to bother him.

Presently a maid entered with a tray on which were balanced two bowls of chocolate, and the snuffy old gentlemen leered at her ankles. The maid deposited the chocolate at a table near the window and smiled at Hastings. Then a thin young lady, followed by her counterpart in all except years, marched into the room and took the table near the window. They were evidently American, but Hastings, if he expected any sign of recognition, was disappointed. To be ignored by compatriots intensified his depression. He fumbled with his knife and looked at his plate.

The thin young lady was talkative enough. She was

quite aware of Hastings' presence, ready to be flattered if he looked at her, but on the other hand she felt her superiority, for she had been three weeks in Paris and he, it was easy to see, had not yet unpacked his steamer-trunk.

Her conversation was complacent. She argued with her mother upon the relative merits of the Louvre and the Bon Marché, but her mother's part of the discussion was mostly confined to the observation, "Why, Susie!"

The snuffy old gentlemen had left the room in a body, outwardly polite and inwardly raging. They could not endure the Americans, who filled the room with their chatter.

The big-headed young man looked after them with a knowing cough, murmuring, "Gay old birds!"

"They look like bad old men, Mr. Bladen," said the girl.

To this Mr. Bladen smiled and said, "They've had their day," in a tone which implied that he was now having his.

"And that's why they all have baggy eyes," cried the girl. "I think it's a shame for young gentlemen—"

"Why, Susie!" said the mother, and the conversation lagged.

After a while Mr. Bladen threw down the *Petit Journal*, which he daily studied at the expense of the house, and turning to Hastings, started to make himself agreeable. He began by saying, "I see you are American."

To this brilliant and original opening, Hastings, deadly homesick, replied gratefully, and the conversation was judiciously nourished by observations from Miss Susie Byng distinctly addressed to Mr. Bladen. In the course of events Miss Susie, forgetting to address herself exclusively to Mr. Bladen, and Hastings replying to her general question, the *entente cordiale* was established, and

Susie and her mother extended a protectorate over what was clearly neutral territory.

“Mr. Hastings, you must not desert the pension every evening as Mr. Bladen does. Paris is an awful place for young gentlemen, and Mr. Bladen is a horrid cynic.”

Mr. Bladen looked gratified.

Hastings answered, “I shall be at the studio all day, and I imagine I shall be glad enough to come back at night.”

Mr. Bladen, who, at a salary of fifteen dollars a week, acted as agent for the Pewly Manufacturing Company of Troy, N.Y., smiled a sceptical smile and withdrew to keep an appointment with a customer on the Boulevard Magenta.

Hastings walked into the garden with Mrs. Byng and Susie, and, at their invitation, sat down in the shade before the iron gate.

The chestnut trees still bore their fragrant spikes of pink and white, and the bees hummed among the roses, trellised on the white-walled house.

A faint freshness was in the air. The watering carts moved up and down the street, and a clear stream bubbled over the spotless gutters of the rue de la Grande Chaumière. The sparrows were merry along the curbstones, taking bath after bath in the water and ruffling their feathers with delight. In a walled garden across the street a pair of blackbirds whistled among the almond trees.

Hastings swallowed the lump in his throat, for the song of the birds and the ripple of water in a Paris gutter brought back to him the sunny meadows of Millbrook.

“That’s a blackbird,” observed Miss Byng; “see him there on the bush with pink blossoms. He’s all black

except his bill, and that looks as if it had been dipped in an omelet, as some Frenchman says—”

“Why, Susie!” said Mrs. Byng.

“That garden belongs to a studio inhabited by two Americans,” continued the girl serenely, “and I often see them pass. They seem to need a great many models, mostly young and feminine—”

“Why, Susie!”

“Perhaps they prefer painting that kind, but I don’t see why they should invite five, with three more young gentlemen, and all get into two cabs and drive away singing. This street,” she continued, “is dull. There is nothing to see except the garden and a glimpse of the Boulevard Montparnasse through the rue de la Grande Chaumière. No one ever passes except a policeman. There is a convent on the corner.”

“I thought it was a Jesuit College,” began Hastings, but was at once overwhelmed with a Baedeker description of the place, ending with, “On one side stand the palatial hotels of Jean Paul Laurens and Guillaume Bouguereau, and opposite, in the little Passage Stanislas, Carolus Duran paints the masterpieces which charm the world.”

The blackbird burst into a ripple of golden throaty notes, and from some distant green spot in the city an unknown wild-bird answered with a frenzy of liquid trills until the sparrows paused in their ablutions to look up with restless chirps.

Then a butterfly came and sat on a cluster of heliotrope and waved his crimson-banded wings in the hot sunshine. Hastings knew him for a friend, and before his eyes there came a vision of tall mulleins and scented milkweed alive with painted wings, a vision of a white house and woodbine-covered piazza,—a glimpse of a man reading

and a woman leaning over the pansy bed,—and his heart was full. He was startled a moment later by Miss Byng.

“I believe you are homesick!” Hastings blushed. Miss Byng looked at him with a sympathetic sigh and continued: “Whenever I felt homesick at first I used to go with mamma and walk in the Luxembourg Gardens. I don’t know why it is, but those old-fashioned gardens seemed to bring me nearer home than anything in this artificial city.”

“But they are full of marble statues,” said Mrs. Byng mildly; “I don’t see the resemblance myself.”

“Where is the Luxembourg?” inquired Hastings after a silence.

“Come with me to the gate,” said Miss Byng. He rose and followed her, and she pointed out the rue Vavin at the foot of the street.

“You pass by the convent to the right,” she smiled; and Hastings went.

III

The Luxembourg was a blaze of flowers. He walked slowly through the long avenues of trees, past mossy marbles and old-time columns, and threading the grove by the bronze lion, came upon the tree-crowned terrace above the fountain. Below lay the basin shining in the sunlight. Flowering almonds encircled the terrace, and, in a greater spiral, groves of chestnuts wound in and out and down among the moist thickets by the western palace wing. At one end of the avenue of trees the Observatory rose, its white domes piled up like an eastern mosque; at the other end stood the heavy palace, with every window-pane ablaze in the fierce sun of June.

Around the fountain, children and white-capped

nurses armed with bamboo poles were pushing toy boats, whose sails hung limp in the sunshine. A dark policeman, wearing red epaulettes and a dress sword, watched them for a while and then went away to remonstrate with a young man who had unchained his dog. The dog was pleasantly occupied in rubbing grass and dirt into his back while his legs waved into the air.

The policeman pointed at the dog. He was speechless with indignation.

“Well, Captain,” smiled the young fellow.

“Well, Monsieur Student,” growled the policeman.

“What do you come and complain to me for?”

“If you don’t chain him I’ll take him,” shouted the policeman.

“What’s that to me, mon capitaine?”

“Wha—t! Isn’t that bull-dog yours?”

“If it was, don’t you suppose I’d chain him?”

The officer glared for a moment in silence, then deciding that as he was a student he was wicked, grabbed at the dog, who promptly dodged. Around and around the flower-beds they raced, and when the officer came too near for comfort, the bull-dog cut across a flower-bed, which perhaps was not playing fair.

The young man was amused, and the dog also seemed to enjoy the exercise.

The policeman noticed this and decided to strike at the fountain-head of the evil. He stormed up to the student and said, “As the owner of this public nuisance I arrest you!”

“But,” objected the other, “I disclaim the dog.”

That was a poser. It was useless to attempt to catch the dog until three gardeners lent a hand, but then the dog simply ran away and disappeared in the rue de Medici.

The policeman shambled off to find consolation among the white-capped nurses, and the student, looking at his watch, stood up yawning. Then catching sight of Hastings, he smiled and bowed. Hastings walked over to the marble, laughing.

“Why, Clifford,” he said, “I didn’t recognize you.”

“It’s my moustache,” sighed the other. “I sacrificed it to humour a whim of—of—a friend. What do you think of my dog?”

“Then he is yours?” cried Hastings.

“Of course. It’s a pleasant change for him, this playing tag with policemen, but he is known now and I’ll have to stop it. He’s gone home. He always does when the gardeners take a hand. It’s a pity; he’s fond of rolling on lawns.” Then they chatted for a moment of Hastings’ prospects, and Clifford politely offered to stand his sponsor at the studio.

“You see, old tabby, I mean Dr. Byram, told me about you before I met you,” explained Clifford, “and Elliott and I will be glad to do anything we can.” Then looking at his watch again, he muttered, “I have just ten minutes to catch the Versailles train; au revoir,” and started to go, but catching sight of a girl advancing by the fountain, took off his hat with a confused smile.

“Why are you not at Versailles?” she said, with an almost imperceptible acknowledgment of Hastings’ presence.

“I—I’m going,” murmured Clifford.

For a moment they faced each other, and then Clifford, very red, stammered, “With your permission I have the honour of presenting to you my friend, Monsieur Hastings.”

Hastings bowed low. She smiled very sweetly, but there

was something of malice in the quiet inclination of her small Parisienne head.

"I could have wished," she said, "that Monsieur Clifford might spare me more time when he brings with him so charming an American."

"Must—must I go, Valentine?" began Clifford.

"Certainly," she replied.

Clifford took his leave with very bad grace, wincing, when she added, "And give my dearest love to Cécile!" As he disappeared in the rue d'Assas, the girl turned as if to go, but then suddenly remembering Hastings, looked at him and shook her head.

"Monsieur Clifford is so perfectly hare-brained," she smiled, "it is embarrassing sometimes. You have heard, of course, all about his success at the Salon?"

He looked puzzled and she noticed it.

"You have been to the Salon, of course?"

"Why, no," he answered, "I only arrived in Paris three days ago."

She seemed to pay little heed to his explanation, but continued: "Nobody imagined he had the energy to do anything good, but on varnishing day the Salon was astonished by the entrance of Monsieur Clifford, who strolled about as bland as you please with an orchid in his buttonhole, and a beautiful picture on the line."

She smiled to herself at the reminiscence, and looked at the fountain.

"Monsieur Bouguereau told me that Monsieur Julian was so astonished that he only shook hands with Monsieur Clifford in a dazed manner, and actually forgot to pat him on the back! Fancy," she continued with much merriment, "fancy papa Julian forgetting to pat one on the back."

Hastings, wondering at her acquaintance with the great Bouguereau, looked at her with respect. "May I ask," he said diffidently, "whether you are a pupil of Bouguereau?"

"I?" she said in some surprise. Then she looked at him curiously. Was he permitting himself the liberty of joking on such short acquaintance?

His pleasant serious face questioned hers.

"Tiens," she thought, "what a droll man!"

"You surely study art?" he said.

She leaned back on the crooked stick of her parasol, and looked at him. "Why do you think so?"

"Because you speak as if you did."

"You are making fun of me," she said, "and it is not good taste."

She stopped, confused, as he coloured to the roots of his hair.

"How long have you been in Paris?" she said at length.

"Three days," he replied gravely.

"But—but—surely you are not a nouveau! You speak French too well!"

Then after a pause, "Really are you a nouveau?"

"I am," he said.

She sat down on the marble bench lately occupied by Clifford, and tilting her parasol over her small head looked at him.

"I don't believe it."

He felt the compliment, and for a moment hesitated to declare himself one of the despised. Then mustering up his courage, he told her how new and green he was, and all with a frankness which made her blue eyes open very wide and her lips part in the sweetest of smiles.

"You have never seen a studio?"

"Never."

"Nor a model?"

"No."

"How funny," she said solemnly. Then they both laughed.

"And you," he said, "have seen studios?"

"Hundreds."

"And models?"

"Millions."

"And you know Bouguereau?"

"Yes, and Henner, and Constant and Laurens, and Puvis de Chavannes and Dagnan and Courtois, and—and all the rest of them!"

"And yet you say you are not an artist."

"Pardon," she said gravely, "did I say I was not?"

"Won't you tell me?" he hesitated.

At first she looked at him, shaking her head and smiling, then of a sudden her eyes fell and she began tracing figures with her parasol in the gravel at her feet. Hastings had taken a place on the seat, and now, with his elbows on his knees, sat watching the spray drifting above the fountain jet. A small boy, dressed as a sailor, stood poking his yacht and crying, "I won't go home! I won't go home!" His nurse raised her hands to Heaven.

"Just like a little American boy," thought Hastings, and a pang of homesickness shot through him.

Presently the nurse captured the boat, and the small boy stood at bay.

"Monsieur René, when you decide to come here you may have your boat."

The boy backed away scowling.

"Give me my boat, I say," he cried, "and don't call me René, for my name's Randall and you know it!"

"Hello!" said Hastings,— "Randall?—that's English."

"I am American," announced the boy in perfectly good English, turning to look at Hastings, "and she's such a fool she calls me René because mamma calls me Ranny—"

Here he dodged the exasperated nurse and took up his station behind Hastings, who laughed, and catching him around the waist lifted him into his lap.

"One of my countrymen," he said to the girl beside him. He smiled while he spoke, but there was a queer feeling in his throat.

"Don't you see the stars and stripes on my yacht?" demanded Randall. Sure enough, the American colours hung limply under the nurse's arm.

"Oh," cried the girl, "he is charming," and impulsively stooped to kiss him, but the infant Randall wriggled out of Hastings' arms, and his nurse pounced upon him with an angry glance at the girl.

She reddened and then bit her lips as the nurse, with eyes still fixed on her, dragged the child away and ostentatiously wiped his lips with her handkerchief.

Then she stole a look at Hastings and bit her lip again.

"What an ill-tempered woman!" he said. "In America, most nurses are flattered when people kiss their children."

For an instant she tipped the parasol to hide her face, then closed it with a snap and looked at him defiantly.

"Do you think it strange that she objected?"

"Why not?" he said in surprise.

Again she looked at him with quick searching eyes.

His eyes were clear and bright, and he smiled back, repeating, "Why not?"

"You *are* droll," she murmured, bending her head.

"Why?"

But she made no answer, and sat silent, tracing curves and circles in the dust with her parasol. After a while he

said—"I am glad to see that young people have so much liberty here. I understood that the French were not at all like us. You know in America—or at least where I live in Milbrook, girls have every liberty,—go out alone and receive their friends alone, and I was afraid I should miss it here. But I see how it is now, and I am glad I was mistaken."

She raised her eyes to his and kept them there.

He continued pleasantly—"Since I have sat here I have seen a lot of pretty girls walking alone on the terrace there,—and then *you* are alone too. Tell me, for I do not know French customs,—do you have the liberty of going to the theatre without a chaperone?"

For a long time she studied his face, and then with a trembling smile said, "Why do you ask me?"

"Because you must know, of course," he said gaily.

"Yes," she replied indifferently, "I know."

He waited for an answer, but getting none, decided that perhaps she had misunderstood him.

"I hope you don't think I mean to presume on our short acquaintance," he began,— "in fact it is very odd but I don't know your name. When Mr. Clifford presented me he only mentioned mine. Is that the custom in France?"

"It is the custom in the Latin Quarter," she said with a queer light in her eyes. Then suddenly she began talking almost feverishly.

"You must know, Monsieur Hastings, that we are all *un peu sans gêne* here in the Latin Quarter. We are very Bohemian, and etiquette and ceremony are out of place. It was for that Monsieur Clifford presented you to me with small ceremony, and left us together with less,—only for that, and I am his friend, and I have many friends in the

Latin Quarter, and we all know each other very well—and I am not studying art, but—but—”

“But what?” he said, bewildered.

“I shall not tell you,—it is a secret,” she said with an uncertain smile. On both cheeks a pink spot was burning, and her eyes were very bright.

Then in a moment her face fell. “Do you know Monsieur Clifford very intimately?”

“Not very.”

After a while she turned to him, grave and a little pale.

“My name is Valentine—Valentine Tissot. Might—might I ask a service of you on such very short acquaintance?”

“Oh,” he cried, “I should be honoured.”

“It is only this,” she said gently, “it is not much. Promise me not to speak to Monsieur Clifford about me. Promise me that you will speak to no one about me.”

“I promise,” he said, greatly puzzled.

She laughed nervously. “I wish to remain a mystery. It is a caprice.”

“But,” he began, “I had wished, I had hoped that you might give Monsieur Clifford permission to bring me, to present me at your house.”

“My—my house!” she repeated.

“I mean, where you live, in fact, to present me to your family.”

The change in the girl’s face shocked him.

“I beg your pardon,” he cried, “I have hurt you.”

And as quick as a flash she understood him because she was a woman.

“My parents are dead,” she said.

Presently he began again, very gently.

“Would it displease you if I beg you to receive me? It is the custom?”

“I cannot,” she answered. Then glancing up at him, “I am sorry; I should like to; but believe me. I cannot.”

He bowed seriously and looked vaguely uneasy.

“It isn’t because I don’t wish to. I—I like you; you are very kind to me.”

“Kind?” he cried, surprised and puzzled.

“I like you,” she said slowly, “and we will see each other sometimes if you will.”

“At friends’ houses.”

“No, not at friends’ houses.”

“Where?”

“Here,” she said with defiant eyes.

“Why,” he cried, “in Paris you are much more liberal in your views than we are.”

She looked at him curiously.

“Yes, we are very Bohemian.”

“I think it is charming,” he declared.

“You see, we shall be in the best of society,” she ventured timidly, with a pretty gesture toward the statues of the dead queens, ranged in stately ranks above the terrace.

He looked at her, delighted, and she brightened at the success of her innocent little pleasantry.

“Indeed,” she smiled, “I shall be well chaperoned, because you see we are under the protection of the gods themselves; look, there are Apollo, and Juno, and Venus, on their pedestals,” counting them on her small gloved fingers, “and Ceres, Hercules, and—but I can’t make out—”

Hastings turned to look up at the winged god under whose shadow they were seated.

“Why, it’s Love,” he said.

IV

"There is a nouveau here," drawled Laffat, leaning around his easel and addressing his friend Bowles, "there is a nouveau here who is so tender and green and appetizing that Heaven help him if he should fall into a salad bowl."

"Hayseed?" inquired Bowles, plastering in a background with a broken palette-knife and squinting at the effect with approval.

"Yes, Squeedunk or Oshkosh, and how he ever grew up among the daisies and escaped the cows, Heaven alone knows!"

Bowles rubbed his thumb across the outlines of his study to "throw in a little atmosphere," as he said, glared at the model, pulled at his pipe and finding it out struck a match on his neighbour's back to relight it.

"His name," continued Laffat, hurling a bit of bread at the hat-rack, "his name is Hastings. He is a berry. He knows no more about the world,"—and here Mr. Laffat's face spoke volumes for his own knowledge of that planet,— "than a maiden cat on its first moonlight stroll."

Bowles now having succeeded in lighting his pipe, repeated the thumb touch on the other edge of the study and said, "Ah!"

"Yes," continued his friend, "and would you imagine it, he seems to think that everything here goes on as it does in his d—d little backwoods ranch at home; talks about the pretty girls who walk alone in the street; says how sensible it is; and how French parents are misrepresented in America; says that for his part he finds French girls,—and he confessed to only knowing one,—as jolly as American girls. I tried to set him right, tried to give him a pointer as to what sort of ladies walk about alone or with

students, and he was either too stupid or too innocent to catch on. Then I gave it to him straight, and he said I was a vile-minded fool and marched off."

"Did you assist him with your shoe?" inquired Bowles, languidly interested.

"Well, no."

"He called you a vile-minded fool."

"He was correct," said Clifford from his easel in front.

"What—what do you mean?" demanded Laffat, turning red.

"*That*," replied Clifford.

"Who spoke to you? Is this your business?" sneered Bowles, but nearly lost his balance as Clifford swung about and eyed him.

"Yes," he said slowly, "it's my business."

No one spoke for some time.

Then Clifford sang out, "I say, Hastings!"

And when Hastings left his easel and came around, he nodded toward the astonished Laffat.

"This man has been disagreeable to you, and I want to tell you that any time you feel inclined to kick him, why, I will hold the other creature."

Hastings, embarrassed, said, "Why no, I don't agree with his ideas, nothing more."

Clifford said "Naturally," and slipping his arm through Hastings', strolled about with him, and introduced him to several of his own friends, at which all the nouveaux opened their eyes with envy, and the studio were given to understand that Hastings, although prepared to do menial work as the latest nouveau, was already within the charmed circle of the old, respected and feared, the truly great.

The rest finished, the model resumed his place, and

work went on in a chorus of songs and yells and every ear-splitting noise which the art student utters when studying the beautiful.

Five o'clock struck,—the model yawned, stretched and climbed into his trousers, and the noisy contents of six studios crowded through the hall and down into the street. Ten minutes later, Hastings found himself on top of a Montrouge tram, and shortly afterward was joined by Clifford.

They climbed down at the rue Gay Lussac.

"I always stop here," observed Clifford, "I like the walk through the Luxembourg."

"By the way," said Hastings, "how can I call on you when I don't know where you live?"

"Why, I live opposite you."

"What—the studio in the garden where the almond trees are and the blackbirds—"

"Exactly," said Clifford. "I'm with my friend Elliott."

Hastings thought of the description of the two American artists which he had heard from Miss Susie Byng, and looked blank.

Clifford continued, "Perhaps you had better let me know when you think of coming so,—so that I will be sure to—to be there," he ended rather lamely.

"I shouldn't care to meet any of your model friends there," said Hastings, smiling. "You know—my ideas are rather straitlaced,—I suppose you would say, Puritanical. I shouldn't enjoy it and wouldn't know how to behave."

"Oh, I understand," said Clifford, but added with great cordiality,— "I'm sure we'll be friends although you may not approve of me and my set, but you will like Severn and Selby because—because, well, they are like yourself, old chap."

After a moment he continued, "There is something I want to speak about. You see, when I introduced you, last week, in the Luxembourg, to Valentine—"

"Not a word!" cried Hastings, smiling; "you must not tell me a word of her!"

"Why—"

"No—not a word!" he said gaily. "I insist,—promise me upon your honour you will not speak of her until I give you permission; promise!"

"I promise," said Clifford, amazed.

"She is a charming girl,—we had such a delightful chat after you left, and I thank you for presenting me, but not another word about her until I give you permission."

"Oh," murmured Clifford.

"Remember your promise," he smiled, as he turned into his gateway.

Clifford strolled across the street and, traversing the ivy-covered alley, entered his garden.

He felt for his studio key, muttering, "I wonder—I wonder,—but of course he doesn't!"

He entered the hallway, and fitting the key into the door, stood staring at the two cards tacked over the panels.

FOXHALL CLIFFORD

RICHARD OSBORNE ELLIOTT

"Why the devil doesn't he want me to speak of her?"

He opened the door, and, discouraging the caresses of two brindle bull-dogs, sank down on the sofa.

Elliott sat smoking and sketching with a piece of charcoal by the window.

"Hello," he said without looking around.

Clifford gazed absently at the back of his head, murmuring, "I'm afraid, I'm afraid that man is too innocent. I say, Elliott," he said, at last, "Hastings,—you know the chap that old Tabby Byram came around here to tell us about—the day you had to hide Colette in the armoire—"

"Yes, what's up?"

"Oh, nothing. He's a brick."

"Yes," said Elliott, without enthusiasm.

"Don't you think so?" demanded Clifford.

"Why yes, but he is going to have a tough time when some of his illusions are dispelled."

"More shame to those who dispel 'em!"

"Yes,—wait until he comes to pay his call on us, unexpectedly, of course—"

Clifford looked virtuous and lighted a cigar.

"I was just going to say," he observed, "that I have asked him not to come without letting us know, so I can postpone any orgie you may have intended—"

"Ah!" cried Elliott indignantly, "I suppose you put it to him in that way."

"Not exactly," grinned Clifford. Then more seriously, "I don't want anything to occur here to bother him. He's a brick, and it's a pity we can't be more like him."

"I am," observed Elliott complacently, "only living with you—"

"Listen!" cried the other. "I have managed to put my foot in it in great style. Do you know what I've done? Well—the first time I met him in the street,—or rather, it was in the Luxembourg, I introduced him to Valentine!"

"Did he object?"

"Believe me," said Clifford, solemnly, "this rustic

Hastings has no more idea that Valentine is—is—in fact is Valentine, than he has that he himself is a beautiful example of moral decency in a Quarter where morals are as rare as elephants. I heard enough in a conversation between that blackguard Loffat and the little immoral eruption, Bowles, to open my eyes. I tell you Hastings is a trump! He's a healthy, clean-minded young fellow, bred in a small country village, brought up with the idea that saloons are way-stations to hell—and as for women—”

“Well?” demanded Elliott

“Well,” said Clifford, “his idea of the dangerous woman is probably a painted Jezebel.”

“Probably,” replied the other.

“He's a trump!” said Clifford, “and if he swears the world is as good and pure as his own heart, I'll swear he's right.”

Elliott rubbed his charcoal on his file to get a point and turned to his sketch saying, “He will never hear any pessimism from Richard Osborne E.”

“He's a lesson to me,” said Clifford. Then he unfolded a small perfumed note, written on rose-coloured paper, which had been lying on the table before him.

He read it, smiled, whistled a bar or two from “Miss Helyett,” and sat down to answer it on his best cream-laid note-paper. When it was written and sealed, he picked up his stick and marched up and down the studio two or three times, whistling.

“Going out?” inquired the other, without turning.

“Yes,” he said, but lingered a moment over Elliott's shoulder, watching him pick out the lights in his sketch with a bit of bread.

“To-morrow is Sunday,” he observed after a moment's silence.

"Well?" inquired Elliott.

"Have you seen Colette?"

"No, I will to-night. She and Rowden and Jacqueline are coming to Boulant's. I suppose you and Cécile will be there?"

"Well, no," replied Clifford. "Cécile dines at home to-night, and I—I had an idea of going to Mignon's."

Elliott looked at him with disapproval.

"You can make all the arrangements for La Roche without me," he continued, avoiding Elliott's eyes.

"What are you up to now?"

"Nothing," protested Clifford.

"Don't tell me," replied his chum, with scorn; "fellows don't rush off to Mignon's when the set dine at Boulant's. Who is it now?—but no, I won't ask that,—what's the use!" Then he lifted up his voice in complaint and beat upon the table with his pipe. "What's the use of ever trying to keep track of you? What will Cécile say,—oh, yes, what will she say? It's a pity you can't be constant two months, yes, by Jove! and the Quarter is indulgent, but you abuse its good nature and mine too!"

Presently he arose, and jamming his hat on his head, marched to the door.

"Heaven alone knows why any one puts up with your antics, but they all do and so do I. If I were Cécile or any of the other pretty fools after whom you have toddled and will, in all human probabilities, continue to toddle, I say, if I were Cécile I'd spank you! Now I'm going to Boulant's, and as usual I shall make excuses for you and arrange the affair, and I don't care a continental where you are going, but, by the skull of the studio skeleton! if you don't turn up to-morrow with your sketching-kit under one arm and Cécile under the other,—if you don't turn up in good

shape, I'm done with you, and the rest can think what they please. Good-night."

Clifford said good-night with as pleasant a smile as he could muster, and then sat down with his eyes on the door. He took out his watch and gave Elliott ten minutes to vanish, then rang the concierge's call, murmuring, "Oh dear, oh dear, why the devil do I do it?"

"Alfred," he said, as that gimlet-eyed person answered the call, "make yourself clean and proper, Alfred, and replace your sabots with a pair of shoes. Then put on your best hat and take this letter to the big white house in the Rue de Dragon. There is no answer, *mon petit* Alfred."

The concierge departed with a snort in which unwillingness for the errand and affection for M. Clifford were blended. Then with great care the young fellow arrayed himself in all the beauties of his and Elliott's wardrobe. He took his time about it, and occasionally interrupted his toilet to play his banjo or make pleasing diversion for the bull-dogs by gambling about on all fours. "I've got two hours before me," he thought, and borrowed a pair of Elliott's silken foot-gear, with which he and the dogs played ball until he decided to put them on. Then he lighted a cigarette and inspected his dress-coat. When he had emptied it of four handkerchiefs, a fan, and a pair of crumpled gloves as long as his arm, he decided it was not suited to add *éclat* to his charms and cast about in his mind for a substitute. Elliott was too thin, and, anyway, his coats were now under lock and key. Rowden probably was as badly off as himself. Hastings! Hastings was the man! But when he threw on a smoking-jacket and sauntered over to Hastings' house, he was informed that he had been gone over an hour.

"Now, where in the name of all that's reasonable could

he have gone!" muttered Clifford, looking down the street.

The maid didn't know, so he bestowed upon her a fascinating smile and lounged back to the studio.

Hastings was not far away. The Luxembourg is within five minutes' walk of the rue Notre Dame des Champs, and there he sat under the shadow of a winged god, and there he had sat for an hour, poking holes in the dust and watching the steps which lead from the northern terrace to the fountain. The sun hung, a purple globe, above the misty hills of Meudon. Long streamers of clouds touched with rose swept low on the western sky, and the dome of the distant Invalides burned like an opal through the haze. Behind the Palace the smoke from a high chimney mounted straight into the air, purple until it crossed the sun, where it changed to a bar of smouldering fire. High above the darkening foliage of the chestnuts the twin towers of St. Sulpice rose, an ever-deepening silhouette.

A sleepy blackbird was carolling in some near thicket, and pigeons passed and repassed with the whisper of soft winds in their wings. The light on the Palace windows had died away, and the dome of the Pantheon swam aglow above the northern terrace, a fiery Valhalla in the sky; while below in grim array, along the terrace ranged, the marble ranks of queens looked out into the west.

From the end of the long walk by the northern façade of the Palace came the noise of omnibuses and the cries of the street. Hastings looked at the Palace clock. Six, and as his own watch agreed with it, he fell to poking holes in the gravel again. A constant stream of people passed between the Odéon and the fountain. Priests in black, with silver-buckled shoes; line soldiers, slouchy and rakish; neat girls without hats bearing milliners' boxes, students with black

portfolios and high hats, students with bérets and big canes, nervous, quick-stepping officers, symphonies in turquoise and silver; ponderous jangling cavalrymen all over dust, pastry cooks' boys skipping along with utter disregard for the safety of the basket balanced on the impish head, and then the lean outcast, the shambling Paris tramp, slouching with shoulders bent and little eye furtively scanning the ground for smokers' refuse;—all these moved in a steady stream across the fountain circle and out into the city by the Odeon, whose long arcades were now beginning to flicker with gas-jets. The melancholy bells of St Sulpice struck the hour and the clock-tower of the Palace lighted up. Then hurried steps sounded across the gravel and Hastings raised his head.

“How late you are,” he said, but his voice was hoarse and only his flushed face told how long had seemed the waiting.

She said, “I was kept—indeed, I was so much annoyed—and—and I may only stay a moment.”

She sat down beside him, casting a furtive glance over her shoulder at the god upon his pedestal.

“What a nuisance, that intruding cupid still there?”

“Wings and arrows too,” said Hastings, unheeding her motion to be seated.

“Wings,” she murmured, “oh, yes—to fly away with when he's tired of his play. Of course it was a man who conceived the idea of wings, otherwise Cupid would have been insupportable.”

“Do you think so?”

“*Ma foi*, it's what men think.”

“And women?”

“Oh,” she said, with a toss of her small head, “I really forget what we were speaking of.”

"We were speaking of love," said Hastings.

"I was not," said the girl. Then looking up at the marble god, "I don't care for this one at all. I don't believe he knows how to shoot his arrows—no, indeed, he is a coward;—he creeps up like an assassin in the twilight. I don't approve of cowardice," she announced, and turned her back on the statue.

"I think," said Hastings quietly, "that he does shoot fairly—yes, and even gives one warning."

"Is it your experience, Monsieur Hastings?"

He looked straight into her eyes and said, "He is warning me."

"Heed the warning then," she cried, with a nervous laugh. As she spoke she stripped off her gloves, and then carefully proceeded to draw them on again. When this was accomplished she glanced at the Palace clock, saying, "Oh dear, how late it is!" furled her umbrella, then unfurled it, and finally looked at him.

"No," he said, "I shall not heed his warning."

"Oh dear," she sighed again, "still talking about that tiresome statue!" Then stealing a glance at his face, "I suppose—I suppose you are in love."

"I don't know," he muttered, "I suppose I am."

She raised her head with a quick gesture. "You seem delighted at the idea," she said, but bit her lip and trembled as his eyes met hers. Then sudden fear came over her and she sprang up, staring into the gathering shadows.

"Are you cold?" he said.

But she only answered, "Oh dear, oh dear, it is late—so late! I must go—good-night."

She gave him her gloved hand a moment and then withdrew it with a start.

“What is it?” he insisted. “Are you frightened?”

She looked at him strangely.

“No—no—not frightened,—you are very good to me—”

“By Jove!” he burst out, “what do you mean by saying I’m good to you? That’s at least the third time, and I don’t understand!”

The sound of a drum from the guard-house at the palace cut him short. “Listen,” she whispered, “they are going to close. It’s late, oh, so late!”

The rolling of the drum came nearer and nearer, and then the silhouette of the drummer cut the sky above the eastern terrace. The fading light lingered a moment on his belt and bayonet, then he passed into the shadows, drumming the echoes awake. The roll became fainter along the eastern terrace, then grew and grew and rattled with increasing sharpness when he passed the avenue by the bronze lion and turned down the western terrace walk. Louder and louder the drum sounded, and the echoes struck back the notes from the grey palace wall; and now the drummer loomed up before them—his red trousers a dull spot in the gathering gloom, the brass of his drum and bayonet touched with a pale spark, his epaulettes tossing on his shoulders. He passed leaving the crash of the drum in their ears, and far into the alley of trees they saw his little tin cup shining on his haversack. Then the sentinels began the monotonous cry: “On ferme! on ferme!” and the bugle blew from the barracks in the rue de Tournon.

“On ferme! on ferme!”

“Good-night,” she whispered, “I must return alone to-night.”

He watched her until she reached the northern terrace,

and then sat down on the marble seat until a hand on his shoulder and a glimmer of bayonets warned him away.

She passed on through the grove, and turning into the rue de Medici, traversed it to the Boulevard. At the corner she bought a bunch of violets and walked on along the Boulevard to the rue des Écoles. A cab was drawn up before Boulant's, and a pretty girl aided by Elliott jumped out.

"Valentine!" cried the girl, "come with us!"

"I can't," she said, stopping a moment—"I have a rendezvous at Mignon's."

"Not Victor?" cried the girl, laughing, but she passed with a little shiver, nodding good-night, then turning into the Boulevard St. Germain, she walked a tittle faster to escape a gay party sitting before the Café Cluny who called to her to join them. At the door of the Restaurant Mignon stood a coal-black negro in buttons. He took off his peaked cap as she mounted the carpeted stairs.

"Send Eugene to me," she said at the office, and passing through the hallway to the right of the dining-room stopped before a row of panelled doors. A waiter passed and she repeated her demand for Eugene, who presently appeared, noiselessly skipping, and bowed murmuring, "Madame."

"Who is here?"

"No one in the cabinets, madame; in the half Madame Madelon and Monsieur Gay, Monsieur de Clamart, Monsieur Clisson, Madame Marie and their set." Then he looked around and bowing again murmured, "Monsieur awaits madame since half an hour," and he knocked at one of the panelled doors bearing the number six.

Clifford opened the door and the girl entered.

The garçon bowed her in, and whispering, "Will Monsieur have the goodness to ring?" vanished.

He helped her off with her jacket and took her hat and umbrella. When she was seated at the little table with Clifford opposite she smiled and leaned forward on both elbows looking him in the face.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"Waiting," he replied, in accents of adoration.

For an instant she turned and examined herself in the glass. The wide blue eyes, the curling hair, the straight nose and short curled lip flashed in the mirror an instant only, and then its depths reflected her pretty neck and back. "Thus do I turn my back on vanity," she said, and then leaning forward again, "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you," repeated Clifford, slightly troubled.

"And Cécile."

"Now don't, Valentine—"

"Do you know," she said calmly, "I dislike your conduct?"

He was a little disconcerted, and rang for Eugene to cover his confusion.

The soup was bisque, and the wine Pommery, and the courses followed each other with the usual regularity until Eugene brought coffee, and there was nothing left on the table but a small silver lamp.

"Valentine," said Clifford, after having obtained permission to smoke, "is it the Vaudeville or the Eldorado—or both, or the Nouveau Cirque, or—"

"It is here," said Valentine.

"Well," he said, greatly flattered, "I'm afraid I couldn't amuse you—"

"Oh, yes, you are funnier than the Eldorado."

"Now see here, don't guy me, Valentine. You always

do, and, and,—you know what they say,—a good laugh kills—”

“What?”

“Er—er—love and all that.”

She laughed until her eyes were moist with tears.

“Tiens,” she cried, “he is dead, then!”

Clifford eyed her with growing alarm.

“Do you know why I came?” she said.

“No,” he replied uneasily, “I don’t.”

“How long have you made love to me?”

“Well,” he admitted, somewhat startled,—“I should say,—for about a year.”

“It is a year, I think. Are you not tired?”

He did not answer.

“Don’t you know that I like you too well to—to ever fall in love with you?” she said. “Don’t you know that we are too good comrades,—too old friends for that? And were we not,—do you think that I do not know your history, Monsieur Clifford?”

“Don’t be—don’t be so sarcastic,” he urged; “don’t be unkind, Valentine.”

“I’m not. I’m kind. I’m very kind,—to you and to Cécile.”

“Cécile is tired of me.”

“I hope she is,” said the girl, “for she deserves a better fate. Tiens, do you know your reputation in the Quarter? Of the inconstant, the most inconstant,—utterly incorrigible and no more serious than a gnat on a summer night. Poor Cécile!”

Clifford looked so uncomfortable that she spoke more kindly.

“I like you. You know that. Everybody does. You are a spoiled child here. Everything is permitted you and every

one makes allowance, but every one cannot be a victim to caprice."

"Caprice!" he cried. "By Jove, if the girls of the Latin Quarter are not capricious—"

"Never mind,—never mind about that! You must not sit in judgment—you of all men. Why are you here to-night? Oh," she cried, "I will tell you why! Monsieur receives a little note; he sends a little answer; he dresses in his conquering raiment—"

"I don't," said Clifford, very red.

"You do, and it becomes you," she retorted with a faint smile. Then again, very quietly, "I am in your power, but I know I am in the power of a friend. I have come to acknowledge it to you here,—and it is because of that that I am here to beg of you—a—a favour."

Clifford opened his eyes, but said nothing.

"I am in—great distress of mind. It is Monsieur Hastings."

"Well?" said Clifford, in some astonishment.

"I want to ask you," she continued in a low voice, "I want to ask you to—to—in case you should speak of me before him,—not to say,—not to say,—"

"I shall not speak of you to him," he said quietly.

"Can—can you prevent others?"

"I might if I was present. May I ask why?"

"That is not fair," she murmured; "you know how—how he considers me,—as he considers every woman. You know how different he is from you and the rest. I have never seen a man,—such a man as Monsieur Hastings."

He let his cigarette go out unnoticed.

"I am almost afraid of him—afraid he should know—what we all are in the Quarter. Oh, I do not wish him to know! I do not wish him to—to turn from me—to

cease from speaking to me as he does! You—you and the rest cannot know what it has been to me. I could not believe him,—I could not believe he was so good and—and noble. I do not wish him to know—so soon. He will find out—sooner or later, he will find out for himself, and then he will turn away from me. Why!” she cried passionately, “why should he turn from me and not from *you*?”

Clifford, much embarrassed, eyed his cigarette.

The girl rose, very white. “He is your friend—you have a right to warn him.”

“He is my friend,” he said at length.

They looked at each other in silence.

Then she cried, “By all that I hold to me most sacred, you need not warn him!”

“I shall trust your word,” he said pleasantly.

V

The month passed quickly for Hastings, and left few definite impressions after it. It did leave some, however. One was a painful impression of meeting Mr. Bladen on the Boulevard des Capucines in company with a very pronounced young person whose laugh dismayed him, and when at last he escaped from the café where Mr. Bladen had hauled him to join them in a *bock* he felt as if the whole boulevard was looking at him, and judging him by his company. Later, an instinctive conviction regarding the young person with Mr. Bladen sent the hot blood into his cheek, and he returned to the pension in such a miserable state of mind that Miss Byng was alarmed and advised him to conquer his homesickness at once.

Another impression was equally vivid. One Saturday

morning, feeling lonely, his wanderings about the city brought him to the Gare St. Lazare. It was early for breakfast, but he entered the Hôtel Terminus and took a table near the window. As he wheeled about to give his order, a man passing rapidly along the aisle collided with his head, and looking up to receive the expected apology, he was met instead by a slap on the shoulder and a hearty, "What the deuce are you doing here, old chap?" It was Rowden, who seized him and told him to come along. So, mildly protesting, he was ushered into a private dining-room where Clifford, rather red, jumped up from the table and welcomed him with a startled air which was softened by the unaffected glee of Rowden and the extreme courtesy of Elliott. The latter presented him to three bewitching girls who welcomed him so charmingly and seconded Rowden in his demand that Hastings should make one of the party, that he consented at once. While Elliott briefly outlined the projected excursion to La Roche, Hastings delightedly ate his omelet, and returned the smiles of encouragement from Cécile and Colette and Jacqueline. Meantime Clifford in a bland whisper was telling Rowden what an ass he was. Poor Rowden looked miserable until Elliott, divining how affairs were turning, frowned on Clifford and found a moment to let Rowden know that they were all going to make the best of it.

"You shut up," he observed to Clifford, "it's fate, and that settles it."

"It's Rowden, and that settles it," murmured Clifford, concealing a grin. For after all he was not Hastings' wet nurse. So it came about that the train which left the Gare St. Lazare at 9.15 a.m. stopped a moment in its career towards Havre and deposited at the red-roofed station

of La Roche a merry party, armed with sunshades, trout-rods, and one cane, carried by the non-combatant, Hastings. Then, when they had established their camp in a grove of sycamores which bordered the little river Ept, Clifford, the acknowledged master of all that pertained to sportsmanship, took command.

“You, Rowden,” he said, “divide your flies with Elliott and keep an eye on him or else he’ll be trying to put on a float and sinker. Prevent him by force from grubbing about for worms.”

Elliott protested, but was forced to smile in the general laugh.

“You make me ill,” he asserted; “do you think this is my first trout?”

“I shall be delighted to see your first trout,” said Clifford, and dodging a fly hook, hurled with intent to hit, proceeded to sort and equip three slender rods destined to bring joy and fish to Cécile, Colette, and Jacqueline. With perfect gravity he ornamented each line with four split shot, a small hook, and a brilliant quill float.

“*I shall never touch the worms,*” announced Cécile with a shudder.

Jacqueline and Colette hastened to sustain her, and Hastings pleasantly offered to act in the capacity of general baiter and taker-off of fish. But Cécile, doubtless fascinated by the gaudy flies in Clifford’s book, decided to accept lessons from him in the true art, and presently disappeared up the Ept with Clifford in tow.

Elliott looked doubtfully at Colette.

“I prefer gudgeons,” said that damsel with decision, “and you and Monsieur Rowden may go away when you please; may they not, Jacqueline?”

“Certainly,” responded Jacqueline.

Elliott, undecided, examined his rod and reel.

"You've got your reel on wrong side up," observed Rowden.

Elliott wavered, and stole a glance at Colette.

"I—I—have almost decided to—er—not to flip the flies about just now," he began. "There's the pole that Cécile left—"

"Don't call it a pole," corrected Rowden.

"*Rod*, then," continued Elliott, and started off in the wake of the two girls, but was promptly collared by Rowden.

"No, you don't! Fancy a man fishing with a float and sinker when he has a fly rod in his hand! You come along!"

Where the placid little Ept flows down between its thickets to the Seine, a grassy bank shadows the haunt of the gudgeon, and on this bank sat Colette and Jacqueline and chattered and laughed and watched the swerving of the scarlet quills, while Hastings, his hat over his eyes, his head on a bank of moss, listened to their soft voices and gallantly unhooked the small and indignant gudgeon when a flash of a rod and a half-suppressed scream announced a catch. The sunlight filtered through the leafy thickets awaking to song the forest birds. Magpies in spotless black and white flirted past, alighting near by with a hop and bound and twitch of the tail. Blue and white jays with rosy breasts shrieked through the trees, and a low-sailing hawk wheeled among the fields of ripening wheat, putting to flight flocks of twittering hedge birds.

Across the Seine a gull dropped on the water like a plume. The air was pure and still. Scarcely a leaf moved. Sounds from a distant farm came faintly, the shrill cock-crow and dull baying. Now and then a steam-tug with

big raking smoke-pipe, bearing the name "Guêpe 27," ploughed up the river dragging its interminable train of barges, or a sailboat dropped down with the current toward sleepy Rouen.

A faint fresh odour of earth and water hung in the air, and through the sunlight, orange-tipped butterflies danced above the marsh grass, soft velvety butterflies flapped through the mossy woods.

Hastings was thinking of Valentine. It was two o'clock when Elliott strolled back, and frankly admitting that he had eluded Rowden, sat down beside Colette and prepared to doze with satisfaction.

"Where are your trout?" said Colette severely.

"They still live," murmured Elliott, and went fast asleep.

Rowden returned shortly after, and casting a scornful glance at the slumbering one, displayed three crimson-flecked trout.

"And that," smiled Hastings lazily, "that is the holy end to which the faithful plod,—the slaughter of these small fish with a bit of silk and feather."

Rowden disdained to answer him. Colette caught another gudgeon and awoke Elliott, who protested and gazed about for the lunch baskets, as Clifford and Cécile came up demanding instant refreshment. Cécile's skirts were soaked, and her gloves torn, but she was happy, and Clifford, dragging out a two-pound trout, stood still to receive the applause of the company.

"Where the deuce did you get that?" demanded Elliott.

Cécile, wet and enthusiastic, recounted the battle, and then Clifford eulogized her powers with the fly, and, in proof, produced from his creel a defunct chub, which, he observed, just missed being a trout.

They were all very happy at luncheon, and Hastings

was voted "charming." He enjoyed it immensely,—only it seemed to him at moments that flirtation went further in France than in Millbrook, Connecticut, and he thought that Cécile might be a little less enthusiastic about Clifford, that perhaps it would be quite as well if Jacqueline sat further away from Rowden, and that possibly Colette could have, for a moment at least, taken her eyes from Elliott's face. Still he enjoyed it—except when his thoughts drifted to Valentine, and then he felt that he was very far away from her. La Roche is at least an hour and a half from Paris. It is also true that he felt a happiness, a quick heart-beat when, at eight o'clock that night the train which bore them from La Roche rolled into the Gare St. Lazare and he was once more in the city of Valentine.

"Good-night," they said, pressing around him. "You must come with us next time!"

He promised, and watched them, two by two, drift into the darkening city, and stood so long that, when again he raised his eyes, the vast Boulevard was twinkling with gas-jets through which the electric lights stared like moons.

VI

It was with another quick heart-beat that he awoke next morning, for his first thought was of Valentine.

The sun already gilded the towers of Notre Dame, the clatter of workmen's sabots awoke sharp echoes in the street below, and across the way a blackbird in a pink almond tree was going into an ecstasy of trills.

He determined to awake Clifford for a brisk walk in the country, hoping later to beguile that gentleman into the American church for his soul's sake. He found Alfred

the gimlet-eyed washing the asphalt walk which led to the studio.

“Monsieur Elliott?” he replied to the perfunctory inquiry, “*je ne sais pas.*”

“And Monsieur Clifford,” began Hastings, somewhat astonished.

“Monsieur Clifford,” said the concierge with fine irony, “will be pleased to see you, as he retired early; in fact he has just come in.”

Hastings hesitated while the concierge pronounced a fine eulogy on people who never stayed out all night and then came battering at the lodge gate during hours which even a gendarme held sacred to sleep. He also discoursed eloquently upon the beauties of temperance, and took an ostentatious draught from the fountain in the court.

“I do not think I will come in,” said Hastings.

“Pardon, monsieur,” growled the concierge, “perhaps it would be well to see Monsieur Clifford. He possibly needs aid. Me he drives forth with hair-brushes and boots. It is a mercy if he has not set fire to something with his candle.”

Hastings hesitated for an instant, but swallowing his dislike of such a mission, walked slowly through the ivy-covered alley and across the inner garden to the studio. He knocked. Perfect silence. Then he knocked again, and this time something struck the door from within with a crash.

“That,” said the concierge, “was a boot.” He fitted his duplicate key into the lock and ushered Hastings in. Clifford, in disordered evening dress, sat on the rug in the middle of the room. He held in his hand a shoe, and did not appear astonished to see Hastings.

“Good-morning, do you use Pears’ soap?” he inquired with a vague wave of his hand and a vaguer smile.

Hastings’ heart sank. “For Heaven’s sake,” he said, “Clifford, go to bed.”

“Not while that—that Alfred pokes his shaggy head in here an’ I have a shoe left.”

Hastings blew out the candle, picked up Clifford’s hat and cane, and said, with an emotion he could not conceal, “This is terrible, Clifford,—I—never knew you did this sort of thing.”

“Well, I do,” said Clifford.

“Where is Elliott?”

“Ole chap,” returned Clifford, becoming maudlin, “Providence which feeds—feeds—er—sparrows an’ that sort of thing watcheth over the intemperate wanderer—”

“Where is Elliott?”

But Clifford only wagged his head and waved his arm about. “He’s out there,—somewhere about.” Then suddenly feeling a desire to see his missing chum, lifted up his voice and howled for him.

Hastings, thoroughly shocked, sat down on the lounge without a word. Presently, after shedding several scalding tears, Clifford brightened up and rose with great precaution.

“Ole chap,” he observed, “do you want to see er—er miracle? Well, here goes. I’m goin’ to begin.”

He paused, beaming at vacancy.

“Er miracle,” he repeated.

Hastings supposed he was alluding to the miracle of his keeping his balance, and said nothing.

“I’m goin’ to bed,” he announced, “poor ole Clifford’s goin’ to bed, an’ that’s er miracle!”

And he did with a nice calculation of distance and

equilibrium which would have rung enthusiastic yells of applause from Elliott had he been there to assist *en connaisseur*. But he was not. He had not yet reached the studio. He was on his way, however, and smiled with magnificent condescension on Hastings, who, half an hour later, found him reclining upon a bench in the Luxembourg. He permitted himself to be aroused, dusted and escorted to the gate. Here, however, he refused all further assistance, and bestowing a patronizing bow upon Hastings, steered a tolerably true course for the rue Vavin.

Hastings watched him out of sight, and then slowly retraced his steps toward the fountain. At first he felt gloomy and depressed, but gradually the clear air of the morning lifted the pressure from his heart, and he sat down on the marble seat under the shadow of the winged god.

The air was fresh and sweet with perfume from the orange flowers. Everywhere pigeons were bathing, dashing the water over their iris-hued breasts, flashing in and out of the spray or nestling almost to the neck along the polished basin. The sparrows, too, were abroad in force, soaking their dust-coloured feathers in the limpid pool and chirping with might and main. Under the sycamores which surrounded the duck-pond opposite the fountain of Marie de Medici, the water-fowl cropped the herbage, or waddled in rows down the bank to embark on some solemn aimless cruise.

Butterflies, somewhat lame from a chilly night's repose under the lilac leaves, crawled over and over the white phlox, or took a rheumatic flight toward some sun-warmed shrub. The bees were already busy among the heliotrope, and one or two grey flies with brick-coloured

eyes sat in a spot of sunlight beside the marble seat, or chased each other about, only to return again to the spot of sunshine and rub their fore-legs, exulting.

The sentries paced briskly before the painted boxes, pausing at times to look toward the guard-house for their relief.

They came at last, with a shuffle of feet and click of bayonets, the word was passed, the relief fell out, and away they went, crunch, crunch, across the gravel.

A mellow chime floated from the clock-tower of the palace, the deep bell of St. Sulpice echoed the stroke. Hastings sat dreaming in the shadow of the god, and while he mused somebody came and sat down beside him. At first he did not raise his head. It was only when she spoke that he sprang up.

“You! At this hour?”

“I was restless, I could not sleep.” Then in a low, happy voice—“And *you!* at this hour?”

“I—I slept, but the sun awoke me.”

“I could not sleep,” she said, and her eyes seemed, for a moment, touched with an indefinable shadow. Then, smiling, “I am so glad—I seemed to know you were coming. Don’t laugh, I believe in dreams.”

“Did you really dream of,—of my being here?”

“I think I was awake when I dreamed it,” she admitted. Then for a time they were mute, acknowledging by silence the happiness of being together. And after all their silence was eloquent, for faint smiles, and glances born of their thoughts, crossed and recrossed, until lips moved and words were formed, which seemed almost superfluous. What they said was not very profound. Perhaps the most valuable jewel that fell from Hastings’ lips bore direct reference to breakfast.

"I have not yet had my chocolate," she confessed, "but what a material man you are."

"Valentine," he said impulsively, "I wish,—I do wish that you would,—just for this once,—give me the whole day,—just for this once."

"Oh dear," she smiled, "not only material, but selfish!"

"Not selfish, hungry," he said, looking at her.

"A cannibal too; oh dear!"

"Will you, Valentine?"

"But my chocolate—"

"Take it with me."

"But *déjeuner*—"

"Together, at St. Cloud."

"But I can't—"

"Together,—all day,—all day long; will you, Valentine?"

She was silent.

"Only for this once."

Again that indefinable shadow fell across her eyes, and when it was gone she sighed. "Yes,—together, only for this once."

"All day?" he said, doubting his happiness.

"All day," she smiled; "and oh, I am so hungry!"

He laughed, enchanted.

"What a material young lady it is."

On the Boulevard St. Michel there is a *Crémérie* painted white and blue outside, and neat and clean as a whistle inside. The auburn-haired young woman who speaks French like a native, and rejoices in the name of Murphy, smiled at them as they entered, and tossing a fresh napkin over the zinc *tête-à-tête* table, whisked before them two cups of chocolate and a basket full of crisp, fresh *croissons*.

The primrose-coloured pats of butter, each stamped

with a shamrock in relief, seemed saturated with the fragrance of Normandy pastures.

“How delicious!” they said in the same breath, and then laughed at the coincidence.

“With but a single thought,” he began.

“How absurd!” she cried with cheeks all rosy. “I’m thinking I’d like a croisson.”

“So am I,” he replied triumphant, “that proves it.”

Then they had a quarrel; she accusing him of behaviour unworthy of a child in arms, and he denying it, and bringing counter charges, until Mademoiselle Murphy laughed in sympathy, and the last croisson was eaten under a flag of truce. Then they rose, and she took his arm with a bright nod to Mile. Murphy, who cried them a merry: “*Bonjour, madame! bonjour, monsieur!*” and watched them hail a passing cab and drive away. “*Dieu! qu’il est beau,*” she sighed, adding after a moment, “Do they be married, I dunno,—*ma foi ils ont bien l’air.*”

The cab swung around the rue de Medici, turned into the rue de Vaugirard, followed it to where it crosses the rue de Rennes, and taking that noisy thoroughfare, drew up before the Gare Montparnasse. They were just in time for a train and scampered up the stairway and out to the cars as the last note from the starting-gong rang through the arched station. The guard slammed the door of their compartment, a whistle sounded, answered by a screech from the locomotive, and the long train glided from the station, faster, faster, and sped out into the morning sunshine. The summer wind blew in their faces from the open window, and sent the soft hair dancing on the girl’s forehead.

“We have the compartment to ourselves,” said Hastings.

She leaned against the cushioned window-seat, her

eyes bright and wide open, her lips parted. The wind lifted her hat, and fluttered the ribbons under her chin. With a quick movement she untied them, and, drawing a long hat-pin from her hat, laid it down on the seat beside her. The train was flying.

The colour surged in her cheeks, and, with each quick-drawn breath, her breath rose and fell under the cluster of lilies at her throat. Trees, houses, ponds, danced past, cut by a mist of telegraph poles.

“Faster! faster!” she cried.

His eyes never left her, but hers, wide open, and blue as the summer sky, seemed fixed on something far ahead,—something which came no nearer, but fled before them as they fled.

Was it the horizon, cut now by the grim fortress on the hill, now by the cross of a country chapel? Was it the summer moon, ghost-like, slipping through the vaguer blue above?

“Faster! faster!” she cried.

Her parted lips burned scarlet.

The car shook and shivered, and the fields streamed by like an emerald torrent. He caught the excitement, and his faced glowed.

“Oh,” she cried, and with an unconscious movement caught his hand, drawing him to the window beside her. “Look! lean out with me!”

He only saw her lips move; her voice was drowned in the roar of a trestle, but his hand closed in hers and he clung to the sill. The wind whistled in their ears. “Not so far out, Valentine, take care!” he gasped.

Below, through the ties of the trestle, a broad river flashed into view and out again, as the train thundered along a tunnel, and away once more through the freshest

of green fields. The wind roared about them. The girl was leaning far out from the window, and he caught her by the waist, crying, "Not too far!" but she only murmured, "Faster! faster! away out of the city, out of the land, faster, faster! away out of the world!"

"What are you saying all to yourself?" he said, but his voice was broken, and the wind whirled it back into his throat.

She heard him, and, turning from the window looked down at his arm about her. Then she raised her eyes to his. The car shook and the windows rattled. They were dashing through a forest now, and the sun swept the dewy branches with running flashes of fire. He looked into her troubled eyes; he drew her to him and kissed the half-parted lips, and she cried out, a bitter, hopeless cry, "Not that—not that!"

But he held her close and strong, whispering words of honest love and passion, and when she sobbed—"Not that—not that—I have promised! You must—you must know—I am—not—worthy—" In the purity of his own heart her words were, to him, meaningless then, meaningless for ever after. Presently her voice ceased, and her head rested on his breast. He leaned against the window, his ears swept by the furious wind, his heart in a joyous tumult. The forest was passed, and the sun slipped from behind the trees, flooding the earth again with brightness. She raised her eyes and looked out into the world from the window. Then she began to speak, but her voice was faint, and he bent his head close to hers and listened. "I cannot turn from you; I am too weak. You were long ago my master—master of my heart and soul. I have broken my word to one who trusted me, but I have told you all;—what matters the rest?" He smiled at

her innocence and she worshipped his. She spoke again: "Take me or cast me away;—what matters it? Now with a word you can kill me, and it might be easier to die than to look upon happiness as great as mine."

He took her in his arms, "Hush, what are you saying? Look,—look out at the sunlight, the meadows and the streams. We shall be very happy in so bright a world."

She turned to the sunlight. From the window, the world below seemed very fair to her.

Trembling with happiness, she sighed: "Is this the world? Then I have never known it."

"Nor have I, God forgive me," he murmured.

Perhaps it was our gentle Lady of the Fields who forgave them both.

RUE BARRÉE

“For let Philosopher and Doctor preach
Of what they will and what they will not,—each
Is but one link in an eternal chain
That none can slip nor break nor over-reach.”

“Crimson nor yellow roses nor
The savour of the mounting sea
Are worth the perfume I adore
That clings to thee.
The languid-headed lilies tire,
The changeless waters weary me;
I ache with passionate desire
Of thine and thee.
There are but these things in the world—
Thy mouth of fire,
Thy breasts, thy hands, thy hair upcurled
And my desire.”

I

One morning at Julian's, a student said to Selby, “That is Foxhall Clifford,” pointing with his brushes at a young man who sat before an easel, doing nothing.

Selby, shy and nervous, walked over and began: “My name is Selby,—I have just arrived in Paris, and bring a letter of introduction—” His voice was lost in the crash of a falling easel, the owner of which promptly assaulted his neighbour, and for a time the noise of battle rolled through the studios of MM. Boulanger and Lefebvre, presently subsiding into a scuffle on the stairs outside.

Selby, apprehensive as to his own reception in the studio, looked at Clifford, who sat serenely watching the fight.

“It’s a little noisy here,” said Clifford, “but you will like the fellows when you know them.” His unaffected manner delighted Selby. Then with a simplicity that won his heart, he presented him to half a dozen students of as many nationalities. Some were cordial, all were polite. Even the majestic creature who held the position of Massier, unbent enough to say: “My friend, when a man speaks French as well as you do, and is also a friend of Monsieur Clifford, he will have no trouble in this studio. You expect, of course, to fill the stove until the next new man comes?”

“Of course.”

“And you don’t mind chaff?”

“No,” replied Selby, who hated it.

Clifford, much amused, put on his hat, saying, “You must expect lots of it at first.”

Selby placed his own hat on his head and followed him to the door.

As they passed the model stand there was a furious cry of “Chapeau! Chapeau!” and a student sprang from his easel menacing Selby, who reddened but looked at Clifford.

“Take off your hat for them,” said the latter, laughing.

A little embarrassed, he turned and saluted the studio.

“Et moi?” cried the model.

“You are charming,” replied Selby, astonished at his own audacity, but the studio rose as one man, shouting: “He has done well! he’s all right!” while the model, laughing, kissed her hand to him and cried: “À demain beau jeune homme!”

All that week Selby worked at the studio unmolested.

The French students christened him "l'Enfant Prodigue," which was freely translated, "The Prodigious Infant," "The Kid," "Kid Selby," and "Kidby." But the disease soon ran its course from "Kidby" to "Kidney," and then naturally to "Tidbits," where it was arrested by Clifford's authority and ultimately relapsed to "Kid."

Wednesday came, and with it M. Boulanger. For three hours the students writhed under his biting sarcasms,—among the others Clifford, who was informed that he knew even less about a work of art than he did about the art of work. Selby was more fortunate. The professor examined his drawing in silence, looked at him sharply, and passed on with a non-committal gesture. He presently departed arm in arm with Bouguereau, to the relief of Clifford, who was then at liberty to jam his hat on his head and depart.

The next day he did not appear, and Selby, who had counted on seeing him at the studio, a thing which he learned later it was vanity to count on, wandered back to the Latin Quarter alone.

Paris was still strange and new to him. He was vaguely troubled by its splendour. No tender memories stirred his American bosom at the Place du Châtelet, nor even by Notre Dame. The Palais de Justice with its clock and turrets and stalking sentinels in blue and vermilion, the Place St. Michel with its jumble of omnibuses and ugly water-spitting griffins, the hill of the Boulevard St. Michel, the tooting trams, the policemen dawdling two by two, and the table-lined terraces of the Café Vacehett were nothing to him, as yet, nor did he even know, when he stepped from the stones of the Place St. Michel to the asphalt of the Boulevard, that he had crossed the frontier and entered the student zone,—the famous Latin Quarter.

A cabman hailed him as "bourgeois," and urged the superiority of driving over walking. A gamin, with an appearance of great concern, requested the latest telegraphic news from London, and then, standing on his head, invited Selby to feats of strength. A pretty girl gave him a glance from a pair of violet eyes. He did not see her, but she, catching her own reflection in a window, wondered at the colour burning in her cheeks. Turning to resume her course, she met Foxhall Clifford, and hurried on. Clifford, open-mouthed, followed her with his eyes; then he looked after Selby, who had turned into the Boulevard St. Germain toward the rue de Seine. Then he examined himself in the shop window. The result seemed to be unsatisfactory.

"I'm not a beauty," he mused, "but neither am I a hobgoblin. What does she mean by blushing at Selby? I never before saw her look at a fellow in my life,—neither has any one in the Quarter. Anyway, I can swear she never looks at me, and goodness knows I have done all that respectful adoration can do."

He sighed, and murmuring a prophecy concerning the salvation of his immortal soul swung into that graceful lounge which at all times characterized Clifford. With no apparent exertion, he overtook Selby at the corner, and together they crossed the sunlit Boulevard and sat down under the awning of the Café du Cercle. Clifford bowed to everybody on the terrace, saying, "You shall meet them all later, but now let me present you to two of the sights of Paris, Mr. Richard Elliott and Mr. Stanley Rowden."

The "sights" looked amiable, and took vermouth.

"You cut the studio to-day," said Elliott, suddenly turning on Clifford, who avoided his eyes.

"To commune with nature?" observed Rowden.

“What’s her name this time?” asked Elliott, and Rowden answered promptly, “Name, Yvette; nationality, Breton—”
“Wrong,” replied Clifford blandly, “it’s Rue Barrée.”

The subject changed instantly, and Selby listened in surprise to names which were new to him, and eulogies on the latest Prix de Rome winner. He was delighted to hear opinions boldly expressed and points honestly debated, although the vehicle was mostly slang, both English and French. He longed for the time when he too should be plunged into the strife for fame.

The bells of St. Sulpice struck the hour, and the Palace of the Luxembourg answered chime on chime. With a glance at the sun, dipping low in the golden dust behind the Palais Bourbon, they rose, and turning to the east, crossed the Boulevard St. Germain and sauntered toward the École de Médecine. At the corner a girl passed them, walking hurriedly. Clifford smirked, Elliott and Rowden were agitated, but they all bowed, and, without raising her eyes, she returned their salute. But Selby, who had lagged behind, fascinated by some gay shop window, looked up to meet two of the bluest eyes he had ever seen. The eyes were dropped in an instant, and the young fellow hastened to overtake the others.

“By Jove,” he said, “do you fellows know I have just seen the prettiest girl—” An exclamation broke from the trio, gloomy, foreboding, like the chorus in a Greek play.

“Rue Barrée!”

“What!” cried Selby, bewildered.

The only answer was a vague gesture from Clifford.

Two hours later, during dinner, Clifford turned to Selby and said, “You want to ask me something; I can tell by the way you fidget about.”

“Yes, I do,” he said, innocently enough; “it’s about that girl. Who is she?”

In Rowden’s smile there was pity, in Elliott’s bitterness.

“Her name,” said Clifford solemnly, “is unknown to any one, at least,” he added with much conscientiousness, “as far as I can learn. Every fellow in the Quarter bows to her and she returns the salute gravely, but no man has ever been known to obtain more than that. Her profession, judging from her music-roll, is that of a pianist. Her residence is in a small and humble street which is kept in a perpetual process of repair by the city authorities, and from the black letters painted on the barrier which defends the street from traffic, she has taken the name by which we know her,—Rue Barrée. Mr. Rowden, in his imperfect knowledge of the French tongue, called our attention to it as Roo Barry—”

“I didn’t,” said Rowden hotly.

“And Roo Barry, or Rue Barrée, is to-day an object of adoration to every rapin in the Quarter—”

“We are not rapins,” corrected Elliott.

“I am not,” returned Clifford, “and I beg to call to your attention, Selby, that these two gentlemen have at various and apparently unfortunate moments, offered to lay down life and limb at the feet of Rue Barrée. The lady possesses a chilling smile which she uses on such occasions and,” here he became gloomily impressive, “I have been forced to believe that neither the scholarly grace of my friend Elliott nor the buxom beauty of my friend Rowden have touched that heart of ice.”

Elliott and Rowden, boiling with indignation, cried out, “And you!”

“I,” said Clifford blandly, “do fear to tread where you rush in.”

II

Twenty-four hours later Selby had completely forgotten Rue Barrée. During the week he worked with might and main at the studio, and Saturday night found him so tired that he went to bed before dinner and had a nightmare about a river of yellow ochre in which he was drowning. Sunday morning, apropos of nothing at all, he thought of Rue Barrée, and ten seconds afterwards he saw her. It was at the flower-market on the marble bridge. She was examining a pot of pansies. The gardener had evidently thrown heart and soul into the transaction, but Rue Barrée shook her head.

It is a question whether Selby would have stopped then and there to inspect a cabbage-rose had not Clifford unwound for him the yarn of the previous Tuesday. It is possible that his curiosity was piqued, for with the exception of a hen-turkey, a boy of nineteen is the most openly curious biped alive. From twenty until death he tries to conceal it. But, to be fair to Selby, it is also true that the market was attractive. Under a cloudless sky the flowers were packed and heaped along the marble bridge to the parapet. The air was soft, the sun spun a shadowy lacework among the palms and glowed in the hearts of a thousand roses. Spring had come,—was in full tide. The watering carts and sprinklers spread freshness over the Boulevard, the sparrows had become vulgarly obtrusive, and the credulous Seine angler anxiously followed his gaudy quill floating among the soapsuds of the lavoirs. The white-spiked chestnuts clad in tender green vibrated with the hum of bees. Shoddy butterflies flaunted their winter rags among the heliotrope. There was a smell of fresh earth in the air, an echo of the woodland brook in

the ripple of the Seine, and swallows soared and skimmed among the anchored river craft. Somewhere in a window a caged bird was singing its heart out to the sky.

Selby looked at the cabbage-rose and then at the sky. Something in the song of the caged bird may have moved him, or perhaps it was that dangerous sweetness in the air of May.

At first he was hardly conscious that he had stopped, then he was scarcely conscious why he had stopped, then he thought he would move on, then he thought he wouldn't, then he looked at Rue Barrée.

The gardener said, "Mademoiselle, this is undoubtedly a fine pot of pansies."

Rue Barrée shook her head.

The gardener smiled. She evidently did not want the pansies. She had bought many pots of pansies there, two or three every spring, and never argued. What did she want then? The pansies were evidently a feeler toward a more important transaction. The gardener rubbed his hands and gazed about him.

"These tulips are magnificent," he observed, "and these hyacinths—" He fell into a trance at the mere sight of the scented thickets.

"That," murmured Rue, pointing to a splendid rose-bush with her furred parasol, but in spite of her, her voice trembled a little. Selby noticed it, more shame to him that he was listening, and the gardener noticed it, and, burying his nose in the roses, scented a bargain. Still, to do him justice, he did not add a centime to the honest value of the plant, for after all, Rue was probably poor, and any one could see she was charming.

"Fifty francs, Mademoiselle."

The gardener's tone was grave. Rue felt that argument

would be wasted. They both stood silent for a moment. The gardener did not eulogize his prize,—the rose-tree was gorgeous and any one could see it.

“I will take the pansies,” said the girl, and drew two francs from a worn purse. Then she looked up. A tear-drop stood in the way refracting the light like a diamond, but as it rolled into a little corner by her nose a vision of Selby replaced it, and when a brush of the handkerchief had cleared the startled blue eyes, Selby himself appeared, very much embarrassed. He instantly looked up into the sky, apparently devoured with a thirst for astronomical research, and as he continued his investigations for fully five minutes, the gardener looked up too, and so did a policeman. Then Selby looked at the tips of his boots, the gardener looked at him and the policeman slouched on. Rue Barrée had been gone some time.

“What,” said the gardener, “may I offer Monsieur?”

Selby never knew why, but he suddenly began to buy flowers. The gardener was electrified. Never before had he sold so many flowers, never at such satisfying prices, and never, never with such absolute unanimity of opinion with a customer. But he missed the bargaining, the arguing, the calling of Heaven to witness. The transaction lacked spice.

“These tulips are magnificent!”

“They are!” cried Selby warmly.

“But alas, they are dear.”

“I will take them.”

“Dieu!” murmured the gardener in a perspiration, “he’s madder than most Englishmen.”

“This cactus—”

“Is gorgeous!”

“Alas—”

“Send it with the rest.”

The gardener braced himself against the river wall.

“That splendid rose-bush,” he began faintly.

“That is a beauty. I believe it is fifty francs—”

He stopped, very red. The gardener relished his confusion. Then a sudden cool self-possession took the place of his momentary confusion and he held the gardener with his eye, and bullied him.

“I’ll take that bush. Why did not the young lady buy it?”

“Mademoiselle is not wealthy.”

“How do you know?”

“*Dame*, I sell her many pansies; pansies are not expensive.”

“Those are the pansies she bought?”

“These, Monsieur, the blue and gold.”

“Then you intend to send them to her?”

“At mid-day after the market.”

“Take this rose-bush with them, and”—here he glared at the gardener—“don’t you dare say from whom they came.” The gardener’s eyes were like saucers, but Selby, calm and victorious, said: “Send the others to the Hôtel du Sénat, 7 rue de Tournon. I will leave directions with the concierge.”

Then he buttoned his glove with much dignity and stalked off, but when well around the corner and hidden from the gardener’s view, the conviction that he was an idiot came home to him in a furious blush. Ten minutes later he sat in his room in the Hôtel du Sénat repeating with an imbecile smile: “What an ass I am, what an ass!”

An hour later found him in the same chair, in the same position, his hat and gloves still on, his stick in his hand, but he was silent, apparently lost in contemplation of his

boot toes, and his smile was less imbecile and even a bit retrospective.

III

About five o'clock that afternoon, the little sad-eyed woman who fills the position of concierge at the Hôtel du Sénat held up her hands in amazement to see a wagon-load of flower-bearing shrubs draw up before the doorway. She called Joseph, the intemperate garçon, who, while calculating the value of the flowers in *petits verres*, gloomily disclaimed any knowledge as to their destination.

"*Voyons,*" said the little concierge, "*cherchons la femme!*"

"You?" he suggested.

The little woman stood a moment pensive and then sighed. Joseph caressed his nose, a nose which for gaudiness could vie with any floral display.

Then the gardener came in, hat in hand, and a few minutes later Selby stood in the middle of his room, his coat off, his shirt-sleeves rolled up. The chamber originally contained, besides the furniture, about two square feet of walking room, and now this was occupied by a cactus. The bed groaned under crates of pansies, lilies and heliotrope, the lounge was covered with hyacinths and tulips, and the washstand supported a species of young tree warranted to bear flowers at some time or other.

Clifford came in a little later, fell over a box of sweet peas, swore a little, apologized, and then, as the full splendour of the floral *fête* burst upon him, sat down in astonishment upon a geranium. The geranium was a wreck, but Selby said, "Don't mind," and glared at the cactus.

“Are you going to give a ball?” demanded Clifford.

“N—no,—I’m very fond of flowers,” said Selby, but the statement lacked enthusiasm.

“I should imagine so.” Then, after a silence, “That’s a fine cactus.”

Selby contemplated the cactus, touched it with the air of a connoisseur, and pricked his thumb.

Clifford poked a pansy with his stick. Then Joseph came in with the bill, announcing the sum total in a loud voice, partly to impress Clifford, partly to intimidate Selby into disgorging a *pourboire* which he would share, if he chose, with the gardener. Clifford tried to pretend that he had not heard, while Selby paid bill and tribute without a murmur. Then he lounged back into the room with an attempt at indifference which failed entirely when he tore his trousers on the cactus.

Clifford made some commonplace remark, lighted a cigarette and looked out of the window to give Selby a chance. Selby tried to take it, but getting as far as—“Yes, spring is here at last,” froze solid. He looked at the back of Clifford’s head. It expressed volumes. Those little perked-up ears seemed tingling with suppressed glee. He made a desperate effort to master the situation, and jumped up to reach for some Russian cigarettes as an incentive to conversation, but was foiled by the cactus, to whom again he fell a prey. The last straw was added.

“Damn the cactus.” This observation was wrung from Selby against his will,—against his own instinct of self-preservation, but the thorns on the cactus were long and sharp, and at their repeated prick his pent-up wrath escaped. It was too late now; it was done, and Clifford had wheeled around.

“See here, Selby, why the deuce did you buy those flowers?”

“I’m fond of them,” said Selby.

“What are you going to do with them? You can’t sleep here.”

“I could, if you’d help me take the pansies off the bed.”

“Where can you put them?”

“Couldn’t I give them to the concierge?”

As soon as he said it he regretted it. What in Heaven’s name would Clifford think of him! He had heard the amount of the bill. Would he believe that he had invested in these luxuries as a timid declaration to his concierge? And would the Latin Quarter comment upon it in their own brutal fashion? He dreaded ridicule and he knew Clifford’s reputation.

Then somebody knocked.

Selby looked at Clifford with a hunted expression which touched that young man’s heart. It was a confession and at the same time a supplication. Clifford jumped up, threaded his way through the floral labyrinth, and putting an eye to the crack of the door, said, “Who the devil is it?”

This graceful style of reception is indigenous to the Quarter.

“It’s Elliott,” he said, looking back, “and Rowden too, and their bulldogs.” Then he addressed them through the crack.

“Sit down on the stairs; Selby and I are coming out directly.”

Discretion is a virtue. The Latin Quarter possesses few, and discretion seldom figures on the list. They sat down and began to whistle.

Presently Rowden called out, "I smell flowers. They feast within!"

"You ought to know Selby better than that," growled Clifford behind the door, while the other hurriedly exchanged his torn trousers for others.

"*We* know Selby," said Elliott with emphasis.

"Yes," said Rowden, "he gives receptions with floral decorations and invites Clifford, while we sit on the stairs."

"Yes, while the youth and beauty of the Quarter revel," suggested Rowden; then, with sudden misgiving; "Is Odette there?"

"See here," demanded Elliott, "is Colette there?"

Then he raised his voice in a plaintive howl, "Are you there, Colette, while I'm kicking my heels on these tiles?"

"Clifford is capable of anything," said Rowden; "his nature is soured since Rue Barrée sat on him."

Elliott raised his voice: "I say, you fellows, we saw some flowers carried into Rue Barrée's house at noon."

"Posies and roses," specified Rowden.

"Probably for her," added Elliott, caressing his bulldog.

Clifford turned with sudden suspicion upon Selby. The latter hummed a tune, selected a pair of gloves and, choosing a dozen cigarettes, placed them in a case. Then walking over to the cactus, he deliberately detached a blossom, drew it through his buttonhole, and picking up hat and stick, smiled upon Clifford, at which the latter was mightily troubled.

IV

Monday morning at Julian's, students fought for places; students with prior claims drove away others who had been anxiously squatting on coveted tabourets since the

door was opened in hopes of appropriating them at roll-call; students squabbled over palettes, brushes, portfolios, or rent the air with demands for Ciceri and bread. The former, a dirty ex-model, who had in palmier days posed as Judas, now dispensed stale bread at one sou and made enough to keep himself in cigarettes. Monsieur Julian walked in, smiled a fatherly smile and walked out. His disappearance was followed by the apparition of the clerk, a foxy creature who flitted through the battling hordes in search of prey.

Three men who had not paid dues were caught and summoned. A fourth was scented, followed, outflanked, his retreat towards the door cut off, and finally captured behind the stove. About that time, the revolution assuming an acute form, howls rose for "Jules!"

Jules came, umpired two fights with a sad resignation in his big brown eyes, shook hands with everybody and melted away in the throng, leaving an atmosphere of peace and good-will. The lions sat down with the lambs, the massiers marked the best places for themselves and friends, and, mounting the model stands, opened the roll-calls.

The word was passed, "They begin with C this week."

They did.

"Clisson!"

Clisson jumped like a flash and marked his name on the floor in chalk before a front seat.

"Caron!"

Caron galloped away to secure his place. Bang! went an easel. "*Nom de Dieu!*" in French,— "Where in h—l are you goin'!" in English. Crash! a paintbox fell with brushes and all on board. "*Dieu de Dieu de—*" spat! A blow, a short rush,

a clinch and scuffle, and the voice of the massier, stern and reproachful:

“Cochon!”

Then the roll-call was resumed.

“Clifford!”

The massier paused and looked up, one finger between the leaves of the ledger.

“Clifford!”

Clifford was not there. He was about three miles away in a direct line and every instant increased the distance. Not that he was walking fast,—on the contrary, he was strolling with that leisurely gait peculiar to himself. Elliott was beside him and two bulldogs covered the rear. Elliott was reading the “Gil Blas,” from which he seemed to extract amusement, but deeming boisterous mirth unsuitable to Clifford’s state of mind, subdued his amusement to a series of discreet smiles. The latter, moodily aware of this, said nothing, but leading the way into the Luxembourg Gardens installed himself upon a bench by the northern terrace and surveyed the landscape with disfavour. Elliott, according to the Luxembourg regulations, tied the two dogs and then, with an interrogative glance toward his friend, resumed the “Gil Blas” and the discreet smiles.

The day was perfect. The sun hung over Notre Dame, setting the city in a glitter. The tender foliage of the chestnuts cast a shadow over the terrace and flecked the paths and walks with tracery so blue that Clifford might here have found encouragement for his violent “impressions” had he but looked; but as usual in this period of his career, his thoughts were anywhere except in his profession. Around about, the sparrows quarrelled and chattered their courtship songs, the big rosy pigeons

sailed from tree to tree, the flies whirled in the sunbeams and the flowers exhaled a thousand perfumes which stirred Clifford with languorous wistfulness. Under this influence he spoke.

“Elliott, you are a true friend—”

“You make me ill,” replied the latter, folding his paper. “It’s just as I thought,—you are tagging after some new petticoat again. And,” he continued wrathfully, “if this is what you’ve kept me away from Julian’s for,—if it’s to fill me up with the perfections of some little idiot—”

“Not idiot,” remonstrated Clifford gently.

“See here,” cried Elliott, “have you the nerve to try to tell me that you are in love again?”

“Again?”

“Yes, again and again and again and—by George have you?”

“This,” observed Clifford sadly, “is serious.”

For a moment Elliott would have laid hands on him, then he laughed from sheer helplessness. “Oh, go on, go on; let’s see, there’s Clémence and Marie Tellec and Cosette and Fifine, Colette, Marie Verdier—”

“All of whom are charming, most charming, but I never was serious—”

“So help me, Moses,” said Elliott, solemnly, “each and every one of those named have separately and in turn torn your heart with anguish and have also made me lose my place at Julian’s in this same manner; each and every one, separately and in turn. Do you deny it?”

“What you say may be founded on facts—in a way—but give me the credit of being faithful to one at a time—”

“Until the next came along.”

“But this,—this is really very different. Elliott, believe me, I am all broken up.”

Then there being nothing else to do, Elliott gnashed his teeth and listened.

"It's—it's Rue Barrée."

"Well," observed Elliott, with scorn, "if you are moping and moaning over *that* girl,—the girl who has given you and myself every reason to wish that the ground would open and engulf us,—well, go on!"

"I'm going on,—I don't care; timidity has fled—"

"Yes, your native timidity."

"I'm desperate, Elliott. Am I in love? Never, never did I feel so d—n miserable. I can't sleep; honestly, I'm incapable of eating properly."

"Same symptoms noticed in the case of Colette."

"Listen, will you?"

"Hold on a moment, I know the rest by heart. Now let me ask you something. Is it your belief that Rue Barrée is a pure girl?"

"Yes," said Clifford, turning red.

"Do you love her,—not as you dangle and tiptoe after every pretty inanity—I mean, do you honestly love her?"

"Yes," said the other doggedly, "I would—"

"Hold on a moment; would you marry her?"

Clifford turned scarlet. "Yes," he muttered.

"Pleasant news for your family," growled Elliott in suppressed fury. "Dear father, I have just married a charming grisette whom I'm sure you'll welcome with open arms, in company with her mother, a most estimable and cleanly washlady.' Good heavens! This seems to have gone a little further than the rest. Thank your stars, young man, that my head is level enough for us both. Still, in this case, I have no fear. Rue Barrée sat on your aspirations in a manner unmistakably final."

"Rue Barrée," began Clifford, drawing himself up, but

he suddenly ceased, for there where the dappled sunlight glowed in spots of gold, along the sun-flecked path, tripped Rue Barrée. Her gown was spotless, and her big straw hat, tipped a little from the white forehead, threw a shadow across her eyes.

Elliott stood up and bowed. Clifford removed his head-covering with an air so plaintive, so appealing, so utterly humble that Rue Barrée smiled.

The smile was delicious and when Clifford, incapable of sustaining himself on his legs from sheer astonishment, toppled slightly, she smiled again in spite of herself. A few moments later she took a chair on the terrace and drawing a book from her music-roll, turned the pages, found the place, and then placing it open downwards in her lap, sighed a little, smiled a little, and looked out over the city. She had entirely forgotten Foxhall Clifford.

After a while she took up her book again, but instead of reading began to adjust a rose in her corsage. The rose was big and red. It glowed like fire there over her heart, and like fire it warmed her heart, now fluttering under the silken petals. Rue Barrée sighed again. She was very happy. The sky was so blue, the air so soft and perfumed, the sunshine so caressing, and her heart sang within her, sang to the rose in her breast. This is what it sang: "Out of the throng of passers-by, out of the world of yesterday, out of the millions passing, one has turned aside to me."

So her heart sang under his rose on her breast. Then two big mouse-coloured pigeons came whistling by and alighted on the terrace, where they bowed and strutted and bobbed and turned until Rue Barrée laughed in delight, and looking up beheld Clifford before her. His hat was in his hand and his face was wreathed in a series

of appealing smiles which would have touched the heart of a Bengal tiger.

For an instant Rue Barrée frowned, then she looked curiously at Clifford, then when she saw the resemblance between his bows and the bobbing pigeons, in spite of herself, her lips parted in the most bewitching laugh. Was this Rue Barrée? So changed, so changed that she did not know herself; but oh! that song in her heart which drowned all else, which trembled on her lips, struggling for utterance, which rippled forth in a laugh at nothing,—at a strutting pigeon,—and Mr. Clifford.

“And you think, because I return the salute of the students in the Quarter, that you may be received in particular as a friend? I do not know you, Monsieur, but vanity is man’s other name;—be content, Monsieur Vanity, I shall be punctilious—oh, most punctilious in returning your salute.”

“But I beg—I implore you to let me render you that homage which has so long—”

“Oh dear; I don’t care for homage.”

“Let me only be permitted to speak to you now and then,—occasionally—very occasionally.”

“And if *you*, why not another?”

“Not at all,—I will be discretion itself.”

“Discretion—why?”

Her eyes were very clear, and Clifford winced for a moment, but only for a moment. Then the devil of recklessness seizing him, he sat down and offered himself, soul and body, goods and chattels. And all the time he knew he was a fool and that infatuation is not love, and that each word he uttered bound him in honour from which there was no escape. And all the time Elliott was scowling down on the fountain plaza and savagely

checking both bulldogs from their desire to rush to Clifford's rescue,—for even they felt there was something wrong, as Elliott stormed within himself and growled maledictions.

When Clifford finished, he finished in a glow of excitement, but Rue Barrée's response was long in coming and his ardour cooled while the situation slowly assumed its just proportions. Then regret began to creep in, but he put that aside and broke out again in protestations. At the first word Rue Barrée checked him.

"I thank you," she said, speaking very gravely. "No man has ever before offered me marriage." She turned and looked out over the city. After a while she spoke again. "You offer me a great deal. I am alone, I have nothing, I am nothing." She turned again and looked at Paris, brilliant, fair, in the sunshine of a perfect day. He followed her eyes.

"Oh," she murmured, "it is hard,—hard to work always—always alone with never a friend you can have in honour, and the love that is offered means the streets, the boulevard—when passion is dead. I know it,—we know it,—we others who have nothing,—have no one, and who give ourselves, unquestioning—when we love,—yes, unquestioning—heart and soul, knowing the end."

She touched the rose at her breast. For a moment she seemed to forget him, then quietly—"I thank you, I am very grateful." She opened the book and, plucking a petal from the rose, dropped it between the leaves. Then looking up she said gently, "I cannot accept."

V

It took Clifford a month to entirely recover, although at the end of the first week he was pronounced convalescent by Elliott, who was an authority, and his convalescence

was aided by the cordiality with which Rue Barrée acknowledged his solemn salutes. Forty times a day he blessed Rue Barrée for her refusal, and thanked his lucky stars, and at the same time, oh, wondrous heart of ours!—he suffered the tortures of the blighted.

Elliott was annoyed, partly by Clifford's reticence, partly by the unexplainable thaw in the frigidity of Rue Barrée. At their frequent encounters, when she, tripping along the rue de Seine, with music-roll and big straw hat would pass Clifford and his familiars steering an easterly course to the Café Vachette, and at the respectful uncovering of the band would colour and smile at Clifford, Elliott's slumbering suspicions awoke. But he never found out anything, and finally gave it up as beyond his comprehension, merely qualifying Clifford as an idiot and reserving his opinion of Rue Barrée. And all this time Selby was jealous. At first he refused to acknowledge it to himself, and cut the studio for a day in the country, but the woods and fields of course aggravated his case, and the brooks babbled of Rue Barrée and the mowers calling to each other across the meadow ended in a quavering "Rue Bar-rée-e!" That day spent in the country made him angry for a week, and he worked sulkily at Julian's, all the time tormented by a desire to know where Clifford was and what he might be doing. This culminated in an erratic stroll on Sunday which ended at the flower-market on the Pont au Change, began again, was gloomily extended to the morgue, and again ended at the marble bridge. It would never do, and Selby felt it, so he went to see Clifford, who was convalescing on mint juleps in his garden.

They sat down together and discussed morals and human happiness, and each found the other most

entertaining, only Selby failed to pump Clifford, to the other's unfeigned amusement. But the juleps spread balm on the sting of jealousy, and trickled hope to the blighted, and when Selby said he must go, Clifford went too, and when Selby, not to be outdone, insisted on accompanying Clifford back to his door, Clifford determined to see Selby back half way, and then finding it hard to part, they decided to dine together and "flit." To flit, a verb applied to Clifford's nocturnal prowls, expressed, perhaps, as well as anything, the gaiety proposed. Dinner was ordered at Mignon's, and while Selby interviewed the chef, Clifford kept a fatherly eye on the butler. The dinner was a success, or was of the sort generally termed a success. Toward the dessert Selby heard some one say as at a great distance, "Kid Selby, drunk as a lord."

A group of men passed near them; it seemed to him that he shook hands and laughed a great deal, and that everybody was very witty. There was Clifford opposite swearing undying confidence in his chum Selby, and there seemed to be others there, either seated beside them or continually passing with the swish of skirts on the polished floor. The perfume of roses, the rustle of fans, the touch of rounded arms and the laughter grew vaguer and vaguer. The room seemed enveloped in mist. Then, all in a moment each object stood out painfully distinct, only forms and visages were distorted and voices piercing. He drew himself up, calm, grave, for the moment master of himself, but very drunk. He knew he was drunk, and was as guarded and alert, as keenly suspicious of himself as he would have been of a thief at his elbow. His self-command enabled Clifford to hold his head safely under some running water, and repair to the street considerably the worse for wear, but never

suspecting that his companion was drunk. For a time he kept his self-command. His face was only a bit paler, a bit tighter than usual; he was only a trifle slower and more fastidious in his speech. It was midnight when he left Clifford peacefully slumbering in somebody's arm-chair, with a long suede glove dangling in his hand and a plummy boa twisted about his neck to protect his throat from drafts. He walked through the hall and down the stairs, and found himself on the sidewalk in a quarter he did not know. Mechanically he looked up at the name of the street. The name was not familiar. He turned and steered his course toward some lights clustered at the end of the street. They proved farther away than he had anticipated, and after a long quest he came to the conclusion that his eyes had been mysteriously removed from their proper places and had been reset on either side of his head like those of a bird. It grieved him to think of the inconvenience this transformation might occasion him, and he attempted to cock up his head, hen-like, to test the mobility of his neck. Then an immense despair stole over him,—tears gathered in the tear-ducts, his heart melted, and he collided with a tree. This shocked him into comprehension; he stifled the violent tenderness in his breast, picked up his hat and moved on more briskly. His mouth was white and drawn, his teeth tightly clinched. He held his course pretty well and strayed but little, and after an apparently interminable length of time found himself passing a line of cabs. The brilliant lamps, red, yellow, and green annoyed him, and he felt it might be pleasant to demolish them with his cane, but mastering this impulse he passed on. Later an idea struck him that it would save fatigue to take a cab, and he started back with that intention, but the cabs seemed already so far

away and the lanterns were so bright and confusing that he gave it up, and pulling himself together looked around.

A shadow, a mass, huge, undefined, rose to his right. He recognized the Arc de Triomphe and gravely shook his cane at it. Its size annoyed him. He felt it was too big. Then he heard something fall clattering to the pavement and thought probably it was his cane but it didn't much matter. When he had mastered himself and regained control of his right leg, which betrayed symptoms of insubordination, he found himself traversing the Place de la Concorde at a pace which threatened to land him at the Madeleine. This would never do. He turned sharply to the right and crossing the bridge passed the Palais Bourbon at a trot and wheeled into the Boulevard St. Germain. He got on well enough although the size of the War Office struck him as a personal insult, and he missed his cane, which it would have been pleasant to drag along the iron railings as he passed. It occurred to him, however, to substitute his hat, but when he found it he forgot what he wanted it for and replaced it upon his head with gravity. Then he was obliged to battle with a violent inclination to sit down and weep. This lasted until he came to the rue de Rennes, but there he became absorbed in contemplating the dragon on the balcony overhanging the Cour du Dragon, and time slipped away until he remembered vaguely that he had no business there, and marched off again. It was slow work. The inclination to sit down and weep had given place to a desire for solitary and deep reflection. Here his right leg forgot its obedience and attacking the left, outflanked it and brought him up against a wooden board which seemed to bar his path. He tried to walk around it, but found the street closed. He tried to push it over, and

found he couldn't. Then he noticed a red lantern standing on a pile of paving-stones inside the barrier. This was pleasant. How was he to get home if the boulevard was blocked? But he was not on the boulevard. His treacherous right leg had beguiled him into a detour, for there, behind him lay the boulevard with its endless line of lamps,—and here, what was this narrow dilapidated street piled up with earth and mortar and heaps of stone? He looked up. Written in staring black letters on the barrier was

RUE BARRÉE.

He sat down. Two policemen whom he knew came by and advised him to get up, but he argued the question from a standpoint of personal taste, and they passed on, laughing. For he was at that moment absorbed in a problem. It was, how to see Rue Barrée. She was somewhere or other in that big house with the iron balconies, and the door was locked, but what of that? The simple idea struck him to shout until she came. This idea was replaced by another equally lucid,—to hammer on the door until she came; but finally rejecting both of these as too uncertain, he decided to climb into the balcony, and opening a window politely inquire for Rue Barrée. There was but one lighted window in the house that he could see. It was on the second floor, and toward this he cast his eyes. Then mounting the wooden barrier and clambering over the piles of stones, he reached the sidewalk and looked up at the façade for a foothold. It seemed impossible. But a sudden fury seized him, a blind, drunken obstinacy, and the blood rushed to his head, leaping, beating in his ears like the dull thunder of an ocean. He set his teeth, and springing at a window-sill, dragged himself up and hung to the iron bars. Then

reason fled; there surged in his brain the sound of many voices, his heart leaped up beating a mad tattoo, and gripping at cornice and ledge he worked his way along the façade, clung to pipes and shutters, and dragged himself up, over and into the balcony by the lighted window. His hat fell off and rolled against the pane. For a moment he leaned breathless against the railing—then the window was slowly opened from within.

They stared at each other for some time. Presently the girl took two unsteady steps back into the room. He saw her face,—all crimsoned now,—he saw her sink into a chair by the lamplit table, and without a word he followed her into the room, closing the big door-like panes behind him. Then they looked at each other in silence.

The room was small and white; everything was white about it,—the curtained bed, the little wash-stand in the corner, the bare walls, the china lamp,—and his own face,—had he known it, but the face and neck of Rue were surging in the colour that dyed the blossoming rose-tree there on the hearth beside her. It did not occur to him to speak. She seemed not to expect it. His mind was struggling with the impressions of the room. The whiteness, the extreme purity of everything occupied him—began to trouble him. As his eye became accustomed to the light, other objects grew from the surroundings and took their places in the circle of lamplight. There was a piano and a coal-scuttle and a little iron trunk and a bath-tub. Then there was a row of wooden pegs against the door, with a white chintz curtain covering the clothes underneath. On the bed lay an umbrella and a big straw hat, and on the table, a music-roll unfurled, an ink-stand, and sheets of ruled paper. Behind him stood a wardrobe faced with a mirror, but

somehow he did not care to see his own face just then. He was sobering.

The girl sat looking at him without a word. Her face was expressionless, yet the lips at times trembled almost imperceptibly. Her eyes, so wonderfully blue in the daylight, seemed dark and soft as velvet, and the colour on her neck deepened and whitened with every breath. She seemed smaller and more slender than when he had seen her in the street, and there was now something in the curve of her cheek almost infantine. When at last he turned and caught his own reflection in the mirror behind him, a shock passed through him as though he had seen a shameful thing, and his clouded mind and his clouded thoughts grew clearer. For a moment their eyes met then his sought the floor, his lips tightened, and the struggle within him bowed his head and strained every nerve to the breaking. And now it was over, for the voice within had spoken. He listened, dully interested but already knowing the end,—indeed it little mattered;—the end would always be the same for him;—he understood now—always the same for him, and he listened, dully interested, to a voice which grew within him. After a while he stood up, and she rose at once, one small hand resting on the table. Presently he opened the window, picked up his hat, and shut it again. Then he went over to the rose-bush and touched the blossoms with his face. One was standing in a glass of water on the table and mechanically the girl drew it out, pressed it with her lips and laid it on the table beside him. He took it without a word and crossing the room, opened the door. The landing was dark and silent, but the girl lifted the lamp and gliding past him slipped down the polished stairs to

the hallway. Then unchaining the bolts, she drew open the iron wicket.

Through this he passed with his rose.

THE END

PART IV.

**REVOLUTION, LIBERTY,
AND JUSTICE PART I:
1776-1863**

CHAPTER 14.

THE AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

drafted by Thomas Jefferson, ratified In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient

causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for

opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment

for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political

connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

CHAPTER 15.

LETTER FROM THOMAS JEFFERSON TO ROGER C. WEIGHTMAN

Monticello, June 24, 1826

Respected Sir-

The kind invitation I receive from you, on the part of the citizens of the city of Washington, to be present with them at their celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of American Independence, as one of the surviving signers of an instrument pregnant with our own, and the fate of the world, is most flattering to myself, and heightened by the honorable accompaniment proposed for the comfort of such a journey. It adds sensibly to the sufferings of sickness, to be deprived by it of a personal participation in the rejoicings of that day. But acquiescence is a duty, under circumstances not placed among those we are permitted to control. I should, indeed, with peculiar delight, have met and exchanged there congratulations personally with the small band, the remnant of that host of worthies, who joined with us on that day, in the bold and doubtful election we were to make for our country, between submission or the sword; and to have enjoyed with them the consolatory fact, that our fellow citizens, after half a century of experience and prosperity, continue to approve the choice we made. May it be to the world, what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all,) the signal of arousing men

to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted, restores the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them.

I will ask permission here to express the pleasure with which I should have met my ancient neighbors of the city of Washington and its vicinities, with whom I passed so many years of a pleasing social intercourse; an intercourse which so much relieved the anxieties of the public cares, and left impressions so deeply engraved in my affections, as never to be forgotten. With my regret that ill health forbids me the gratification of an acceptance, be pleased to receive for yourself, and those for whom you write, the assurance of my highest respect and friendly attachments.

Th. Jefferson

CHAPTER 16.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S FINAL SPEECH AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONGRESS

Written by Franklin, Read aloud by Wilson, September 17, 1787

The Constitutional Convention met from May to September of 1787. Its members debated the structure of the United States' new government. At 81 years old, Benjamin Franklin was the oldest delegate to attend. September 17, 1787, was the last day of the convention and the day the Constitution was signed. Before the signing, Franklin presented the following speech about the Constitution. James Wilson, a delegate from Pennsylvania, read the speech due to Franklin's failing health.

I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present, but Sir, I am not sure I shall never approve it: For having lived long, I have experienced many Instances of being oblig'd, by better Information or fuller Consideration, to change Opinions even on important Subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow the more apt I am to doubt my own Judgment and to pay more Respect to the Judgment of others. Most Men indeed as well as most Sects in Religion, think themselves in Possession of all Truth, and that wherever others differ from them it is so far Error. [Sir Richard]

Steele, a Protestant, in a Dedication tells the Pope, that the only Difference between our two Churches in their Opinions of the Certainty of their Doctrine, is, the Romish Church is infallible, and the Church of England is never in the Wrong. But tho' many private Persons think almost as highly of their own Infallibility, as that of their Sect, few express it so naturally as a certain French lady, who in a little Dispute with her Sister, said, I don't know how it happens, Sister, but I meet with no body but myself that's always in the right.

In these Sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution, with all its Faults, if they are such: because I think a General Government necessary for us, and there is no Form of Government but what may be a Blessing to the People if well administred; and I believe farther that this is likely to be well administred for a Course of Years, and can only end in Despotism as other Forms have done before it, when the People shall become so corrupted as to need Despotic Government, being incapable of any other. I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution: For when you assemble a Number of Men to have the Advantage of their joint Wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those Men all their Prejudices, their Passions, their Errors of Opinion, their local Interests, and their selfish Views. From such an Assembly can a perfect Production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this System approaching so near to Perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our Enemies, who are waiting with Confidence to hear that our Councils are confounded, like those of the Builders of Babel, and that our States are on the Point of Separation, only to meet hereafter for the Purpose of cutting one another's Throats. Thus I consent,

Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The Opinions I have had of its Errors, I sacrifice to the Public Good. I have never whisper'd a Syllable of them abroad. Within these Walls they were born, & here they shall die. If every one of us in returning to our Constituents were to report the Objections he has had to it, and endeavour to gain Partizans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary Effects & great Advantages resulting naturally in our favour among foreign Nations, as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent Unanimity. Much of the Strength and Efficiency of any Government, in procuring & securing Happiness to the People depends on Opinion, on the general Opinion of the Goodness of that Government as well as of the Wisdom & Integrity of its Governors. I hope therefore that for our own Sakes, as a Part of the People, and for the Sake of our Posterity, we shall act heartily & unanimously in recommending this Constitution, wherever our Influence may extend, and turn our future Thoughts and Endeavours to the Means of having it well administred.

On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a Wish, that every Member of the Convention, who may still have Objections to it, would with me on this Occasion doubt a little of his own Infallibility, and to make manifest our Unanimity, put his Name to this Instrument.

CHAPTER 17.

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

by Francis Scott Key

Complete version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” showing spelling and punctuation from Francis Scott Key’s manuscript in the Maryland Historical Society collection.

O say can you see, by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hail’d at the twilight’s last
gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the
perilous fight

O’er the ramparts we watch’d were so gallantly
streaming?

And the rocket’s red glare, the bomb bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still
there,

O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O’er the
land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep
Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?

Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream, ‘

Tis the star-spangled banner – O long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,

That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a Country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps'
pollution.

No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation!
Blest with vict'ry and peace may the heav'n rescued
land

Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a
nation!

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto – "In God is our trust,"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

CHAPTER 18.

**TO THOMAS JEFFERSON FROM BENJAMIN
BANNEKER, 19 AUGUST 1791**

Maryland. Baltimore County. Near Ellicotts Lower Mills
August 19th: 1791

Sir

I am fully sensible of the greatness of that freedom which I take with you on the present occasion; a liberty which Seemed to me scarcely allowable, when I reflected on that distinguished, and dignified station in which you Stand; and the almost general prejudice and prepossession which is so prevalent in the world against those of my complexion.

I suppose it is a truth too well attested to you, to need a proof here, that we are a race of Beings who have long laboured under the abuse and censure of the world, that we have long been looked upon with an eye of contempt, and 1 that we have long been considered rather as brutish than human, and Scarcely capable of mental endowments.

Sir I hope I may Safely admit, in consequence of that report which hath reached me, that you are a man far less inflexible in Sentiments of this nature, than many others, that you are measurably friendly and well disposed toward us, and that you are willing and ready to Lend your aid and assistance to our relief from those many

distresses and numerous calamities to which we are reduced.

Now Sir if this is founded in truth, I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions which so generally prevails with respect to us, and that your Sentiments are concurrent with mine, which are that one universal Father hath given being to us all, and that he hath not only made us all of one flesh, but that he hath also without partiality afforded us all the Same Sensations, and endued us all with the same faculties, and that however variable we may be in Society or religion, however diversified in Situation or colour, we are all of the Same Family, and Stand in the Same relation to him.

Sir, if these are Sentiments of which you are fully persuaded, I hope you cannot but acknowledge, that it is the indispensable duty of those who maintain for themselves the rights of human nature, and who profess the obligations of Christianity, to extend their power and influence to the relief of every part of the human race, from whatever burthen or oppression they may unjustly labour under, and this I apprehend a full conviction of the truth and obligation of these principles should lead all to.

Sir, I have long been convinced, that if your love for your Selves, and for those inestimable laws which preserve to you the rights of human nature, was founded on Sincerity, you could not but be Solicitous, that every Individual of whatsoever rank or distinction, might with you equally enjoy the blessings thereof, neither could you rest Satisfied, short of the most active diffusion of your exertions, in order to their promotion from any State of degradation, to which the unjustifiable cruelty and barbarism of men may have reduced them.

Sir I freely and Chearfully acknowledge, that I am of the African race, and in that colour which is natural to them of the deepest dye,* and it is under a Sense of the most profound gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, that I now confess to you, that I am not under that State of tyrannical thraldom, and inhuman captivity, to which too many of my brethren are doomed; but that I have abundantly tasted of the fruition of those blessings which proceed from that free and unequalled liberty with which you are favoured and which I hope you will willingly allow you have received from the immediate hand of that Being, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift.

Sir, Suffer me to recall to your mind that time in which the Arms and tyranny of the British Crown were exerted with every powerful effort in order to reduce you to a State of Servitude, look back I intreat you on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed, reflect on that time in which every human aid appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the Conflict, and you cannot but be led to a Serious and grateful Sense of your miraculous and providential preservation; you cannot but acknowledge, that the present freedom and tranquility which you enjoy you have mercifully received, and that it is the peculiar blessing of Heaven.

This Sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into the injustice of a State of Slavery, and in which you had just apprehensions of the horrors of its condition, it was now Sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so excited, that you publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remember'd in all Succeeding ages. "We hold these truths to be Self evident,

that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Here Sir, was a time in which your tender feelings for your selves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great valuation of liberty, and the free possession of those blessings to which you were entitled by nature; but Sir how pitiable is it to reflect, that altho you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the Same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the Same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves.

Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here; neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by which they may be relieved; otherwise than by recommending to you and all others, to wean yourselves from these narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them, and as Job proposed to his friends “Put your Souls in their Souls stead,” thus shall your hearts be enlarged with kindness and benevolence toward them, and thus shall you need neither the direction of myself or others in what manner to proceed herein.

And now, Sir, altho my Sympathy and affection for my brethren hath caused my enlargement thus far, I ardently hope that your candour and generosity will plead with

you in my behalf, when I make known to you, that it was not originally my design; but that having taken up my pen in order to direct to you as a present, a copy of an Almanack which I have calculated for the Succeeding year, I was unexpectedly and unavoidably led thereto.

This calculation, Sir, is the production of my arduous Study in this my advanced Stage of life; for having long had unbounded desires to become acquainted with the Secrets of nature, I have had to gratify my curiosity herein thro my own assiduous application to Astronomical Study, in which I need not to recount to you the many difficulties and disadvantages which I have had to encounter.

And altho I had almost declined to make my calculation for the ensuing year, in consequence of that time which I had allotted therefor being taking up at the Federal Territory by the request of Mr. Andrew Ellicott, yet finding myself under Several engagements to printers of this state to whom I had communicated my design, on my return to my place of residence, I industriously apply'd myself thereto, which I hope I have accomplished with correctness and accuracy, a copy of which I have taken the liberty to direct to you, and which I humbly request you will favourably receive, and altho you may have the opportunity of perusing it after its publication, yet I chose to send it to you in manuscript previous thereto, that thereby you might not only have an earlier inspection, but that you might also view it in my own hand writing.—And now Sir, I shall conclude and Subscribe my Self with the most profound respect your most Obedient humble Servant,
Benjamin Banneker

NB any communication to me may be had by a direction to Mr. Elias Ellicott merchant in Baltimore Town.

B B

As an Essay of my calculation is put into the hand of Mr. Cruckshank of philadelphia, for publication I would wish that you might neither have this Almanack copy published nor give any printer an opportunity thereof, as it might tend to disappoint Mr. Joseph Cruckshank in his sale.3

B B

* MY FATHER WAS BROUGHT HERE A S[LAV]E FROM AFRICA.2

CHAPTER 19.

A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE BRETHREN OF THE AFRICAN LODGE

Dearly and well beloved Brethren of the African Lodge, as through the goodness and mercy of God, we are once more met together, in order to celebrate the Festival of St. John the Baptist; it is requisite that we should on these public days, and when we appear in form, give some reason as a foundation for our so doing, but as this has been already done, in a discourse delivered in substance by our late Reverend Brother John Marrant, and now in print,

I shall at this time endeavour to raise part of the superstructure, for howsoever good the foundation may be, yet without this it will only prove a Babel. I shall therefore endeavour to shew the duty of a Mason; and the first thing is, that he believes in one Supreme Being, that he is the great Architect of this visible world, and that he governs all things here below by his almighty power, and his watchful eye is over all our works. Again we must be good subjects to the laws of the land in which we dwell, giving honour to our lawful Governors and Magistrates, giving honour to whom honour is due; and that we have no hand in any plots or conspiracies or rebellion, or side or assist in them: for when we consider the blood shed, the devastation of towns and cities that hath been done by them, what heart can be so hard as not to pity those our

distrest brethren, and keep at the greatest distance from them. However just it may be on the side of the opprest, yet it doth not in the least, or rather ought not, abate that love and fellow-feeling which we ought to have for our brother fellow men.

The next thing is love and benevolence to all the whole family of mankind, as God's make and creation, therefore we ought to love them all, for love or hatred is of the whole kind, for if I love a man for the sake of the image of God which is on him, I must love all, for he made all, and upholds all, and we are dependant upon him for all we do enjoy and expect to enjoy in this world and that which is to come.—Therefore he will help and assist all his fellow-men in distress, let them be of what colour or nation they may, yea even our very enemies, much more a brother Mason. I shall therefore give you a few instances of this from Holy Writ, and first, how did Abraham prevent the storm, or rebellion that was rising between Lot's servants and his? Saith Abraham to Lot, let there be no strife I pray thee between me and thee, for the land is before us, if you will go to the left, then I will go to the right, and if you will go to the right, then I will go to the left. They divided and peace was restored. I will mention the compassion of a blackman to a Prophet of the Lord, Ebedmelech, when he heard that Jeremiah was cast into the dungeon, he made intercession for him to the King, and got liberty to take him out from the jaws of death. See Jer. xxxviii, 7-13.

Also the prophet Elisha after he had led the army of the Eramites blindfold into Samaria, when the King in a deriding manner said, my Father (not considering that he was as much their Father as his) shall I smite, or rather kill them out of the way, as not worthy to live on the same earth, or draw the same air with himself; so eager was he

to shed his brethren's blood, that he repeats his blood-thirsty demand, but the Prophet after reproaching him therefore, answers him no, but set bread and water before them; or in other words, give them a feast and let them go home in peace. See 2 Kings vi, 22-23.

I shall just mention the good deeds of the Samaritan, though at that time they were looked upon as unworthy to eat, drink or trade with their fellowmen, at least by the Jews; see the pity and compassion he had on a poor distress and half dead stranger, see Luke x. from 30 to 37. See that you endeavour to do so likewise.—But when we consider the amazing condescending love and pity our blessed Lord had on such poor worms as we are, as not only to call us his friends, but his brothers, we are lost and can go no further in holy writ for examples to excite us to the love of our fellow-men.—But I am aware of an objection that may arise (for some men will catch at any thing) that is that they were not all Masons; we allow it, and I say that they were not all Christians, and their benevolence to strangers ought to shame us both, that there is so little, so very little of it to be seen in these enlightened days.

Another thing which is the duty of a Mason is, that he pays a strict regard to the stated meetings of the Lodge, for masonry is of a progressive nature, and must be attended to if ever he intends to be a good Mason; for the man that thinks that because he hath been made a Mason, and is called so, and at the same time will wilfully neglect to attend his Lodge, he may be assured he will never make a good Mason, nor ought he to be looked upon as a good member of the craft. For if his example was followed, where would be the Lodge; and besides what a disgrace is it, when we are at our set meetings,

to hear that one of our members is at a drinking house, or at a card table, or in some worse company, this brings disgrace on the Craft: Again there are some that attend the Lodge in such a manner that sometimes their absence would be better than their Company (I would not here be understood a brother in disguise, for such an one hath no business on a level floor) for if he hath been displeased abroad or at home, the least thing that is spoken that he thinks not right, or in the least offends him, he will raise his temper to such a height as to destroy the harmony of the whole Lodge; but we have a remedy and every officer ought to see it put in execution. Another thing a Mason ought to observe, is that he should lend his helping hand to a brother in distress, and relieve him; this we may do various ways—for we may sometimes help him to a cup of cold water, and it may be better to him than a cup of wine. Good advice may be sometimes better than feeding his body, helping him to some lawful employment, better than giving him money; so defending his case and standing by him when wrongfully accused, may be better than clothing him; better to save a brother's house when on fire, than to give him one. Thus much may suffice.

I shall now cite some of our fore-fathers, for our imitation: and the first shall be Tertullian, who defended the Christians against their heathen false accusations, whom they charged with treason against the empire and the Emperor, because of their silent meetings: he proved that to be false for this reason, for in their meetings, they were wont to pray for the prosperity of the Empire, of Rome, and him also; and they were accused of being enemies to mankind, how can that be, said he, when their office is to love and pray for all mankind. When they were charged with worshipping the Sun, because they

looked towards the East when they prayed; he defended them against this slander also, and proved that they were slandered, slighted and ill-treated, not for any desert of theirs, but only out of hatred of them and their profession. This friend of the distrest was born in Carthage in Africa, and died Anno Christi 202.

Take another of the same city, Cyprian, for his fidelity to his profession was such, that he would rather suffer death than betray his trust and the truth of the gospel, or approve of the impious worship of the Gentiles: He was not only Bishop of Carthage, but of Spain and the east, west and northern churches, who died Anno Christi 259.

But I have not time to cite but one more (out of hundreds that I could count of our Fathers, who were not only examples to us, but to many of their nobles and learned); that is, Augustine, who had engraven on his table these words

He that doth love an absent Friend to jeer,
May hence depart, no room is for him here.

His saying was that sincere and upright Prayer pierceth heaven, and returns not empty. That it was a shelter to the soul. A sacrifice to God and a scourge to the Devil. There is nothing, said he, more abateth pride and sin than the frequent meditation on death; he cannot die ill, that lives well, and seldom doth he die well, that lives ill: Again, if men want wealth, it is not to be unjustly gotten, if they have it they ought by good works to lay it up in heaven: And again he that hath tasted the sweetness of divine love will not care for temporal sweetness. The reasonable soul made in the likeness of God may here find much distraction, but no full satisfaction; not to be without afflictions, but to overcome them, is blessedness. Love is as strong as death; as death kills the body, so love of

eternal life kills worldly desires and affections. He called Ingratitude the Devil's sponge, wherewith he wipes out all the favours of the Almighty. His prayer was: Lord give first what thou requirest, and then require of me what thou wilt. This good man died Anno Christi 430.

The next is Fulgentius, his speech was, why travel I in the world which can yield me no future, nor durable reward answerable to my pains? Thought it better to weep well, than to rejoice ill, yet if joy be our desire, how much more excellent is their joy, who have a good conscience before God, who dread nothing but sin, study to do nothing but to accomplish the precepts of Christ. Now therefore let me change my course, and as before I endeavoured amongst my noble friends to prove more noble, so now let my care and employment be among the humble and poor servants of Christ, and become more humble that I may help and instruct my poor and distressed brethren.

Thus, my brethren, I have quoted a few of your reverend fathers for your imitation, which I hope you will endeavour to follow, so far as your abilities will permit in your present situation and the disadvantages you labour under on account of your being deprived of the means of education in your younger days, as you see it is at this day with our children, for we see notwithstanding we are rated for that, and other Town charges, we are deprived of that blessing. But be not discouraged, have patience, and look forward to a better day; Hear what the great Architect of the universal world saith, Aethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto me. Hear also the strange but bold and confident language of J. Husk, who just before the executioner gave the last stroke, said, I challenge you to meet me an hundred years hence. But

in the mean time let us lay by our recreations, and all superfluities, so that we may have that to educate our rising generation, which was spent in those follies. Make you this beginning, and who knows but God may raise up some friend or body of friends, as he did in Philadelphia, to open a School for the blacks here, as that friendly city has done there.

I shall now shew you what progress Masonry hath made since the siege and taking of Jerusalem in the year 70, by Titus Vespasian; after a long and bloody siege, a million of souls having been slain or had perished in the city, it was taken by storm and the city set on fire. There was an order of men called the order of St. John, who besides their other engagements, subscribed to another, by which they bound themselves to keep up the war against the Turks. These men defended the temple when on fire, in order to save it, so long, that Titus was amazed and went to see the reason of it; but when he came so near as to behold the Sanctum Sanctorum, he was amazed, and shed tears, and said, no wonder these men should so long to save it. He honored them with many honors, and large contributions were made to that order from many kingdoms; and were also knighted. They continued 88 years in Jerusalem, till that city was again retaken by the Turks, after which they resided 104 years in the Cyrean city of Ptolemy, till the remains of the Holy Conquest were lost. Whereupon they settled on the Island of Cyprus, where they continued 18 years, till they found an opportunity to take the Island Rhodes; being masters of that, they maintained it for 213 years, and from thence they were called knights of Rhodes, till in the year 1530 they took their residence in the Island of Malta, where they have continued to this day, and are distinguished

by the name of the knights of Malta. Their first Master was Villaret in the year 1099. Fulco Villaret in the year 1322, took the Island of Rhodes, and was after that distinguished by the title of Grand Master, which hath devolved to his Successors to this day.

Query, Whether at that day, when there was an African church, and perhaps the largest Christian church on earth, whether there was no African of that order; or whether, if they were all whites, they would refuse to accept them as their fellow Christians and brother Masons; or whether there were any so weak, or rather so foolish, as to say, because they were blacks, that would make their lodge or army too common or too cheap? Sure this was not our conduct in the late war; for then they marched shoulder to shoulder, brother soldier and brother soldier, to the field of battle; let who will answer; he that despises a black man for the sake of his colour, reproacheth his Maker, and he hath resented it, in the case of Aaron and Miriam. See for this Numbers xii.

But to return: In the year 1787 (the year in which we received our charter) there were 489 lodges under charge of his late Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland; whose memory will always be esteemed by every good Mason.

And now, my African brethren, you see what a noble order you are members of. My charge to you is, that you make it your study to live up to the precepts of it, as you know that they are all good; and let it be known this day to the spectators that you have not been to a feast of Bacchus, but to a refreshment with Masons; and see to it that you behave as such, as well at home as abroad; always to keep in your minds the obligations you are under, both to God and your fellow men. And more so, you my dear

brethren of Providence, who are at a distance from, and cannot attend the Lodge here but seldom; yet I hope you will endeavour to communicate to us by letters of your welfare; and remember your obligations to each other, and live in peace and love as brethren.—We thank you for your attendance with us this day, and wish you a safe return.

If thus, we by the grace of God, live up to this our Profession; we may cheerfully go the rounds of the compass of this life, having lived according to the plumb line of uprightness, the square of justice, the level of truth and sincerity. And when we are come to the end of time, we may then bid farewell to that delightful Sun and Moon, and the other planets, that move so beautifully round her in their orbits, and all things here below, and ascend to that new Jerusalem, where we shall not want these tapers, for God is the Light thereof; where the Wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

Then shall we hear and see and know,
All we desir'd and wish'd below,
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.
Our flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound,
Then burst the chains with sweet surprize,
And in our Saviour's image rise.

PART V.

AMERICAN HUMOR

CHAPTER 20.

A WITCH TRIAL AT MOUNT HOLLY

printed in The Pennsylvania Gazette, October 22, 1730 (anonymous, possibly Franklin)

Burlington, Oct. 12. Saturday last at Mount-Holly, about 8 Miles from this Place, near 300 People were gathered together to see an Experiment or two tried on some Persons accused of Witchcraft. It seems the Accused had been charged with making their Neighbours Sheep dance in an uncommon Manner, and with causing Hogs to speak, and sing Psalms, &c. to the great Terror and Amazement of the King's good and peaceable Subjects in this Province; and the Accusers being very positive that if the Accused were weighed in Scales against a Bible, the Bible would prove too heavy for them; or that, if they were bound and put into the River, they would swim; the said Accused desirous to make their Innocence appear, voluntarily offered to undergo the said Trials, if 2 of the most violent of their Accusers would be tried with them. Accordingly the Time and Place was agreed on, and advertised about the Country; The Accusers were 1 Man and 1 Woman; and the Accused the same. The Parties being met, and the People got together, a grand Consultation was held, before they proceeded to Trial; in which it was agreed to use the Scales first; and a Committee of Men were appointed to search the Men, and a Committee of Women to search the Women, to see if they had any Thing of Weight about them, particularly

Pins. After the Scrutiny was over, a huge great Bible belonging to the Justice of the Place was provided, and a Lane through the Populace was made from the Justices House to the Scales, which were fixed on a Gallows erected for that Purpose opposite to the House, that the Justice's Wife and the rest of the Ladies might see the Trial, without coming amongst the Mob; and after the Manner of Moorfields, a large Ring was also made. Then came out of the House a grave tall Man carrying the Holy Writ before the supposed Wizard, &c. (as solemnly as the Sword-bearer of London before the Lord Mayor) the Wizard was first put in the Scale, and over him was read a Chapter out of the Books of Moses, and then the Bible was put in the other Scale, (which being kept down before) was immediately let go; but to the great Surprize of the Spectators, Flesh and Bones came down plump, and outweighed that great good Book by abundance. After the same Manner, the others were served, and their Lumps of Mortality severally were too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles. This being over, the Accusers and the rest of the Mob, not satisfied with this Experiment, would have the Trial by Water; accordingly a most solemn Procession was made to the Mill-pond; where both Accused and Accusers being stripp'd (saving only to the Women their Shifts) were bound Hand and Foot, and severally placed in the Water, lengthways, from the Side of a Barge or Flat, having for Security only a Rope about the Middle of each, which was held by some in the Flat. The Accuser Man being thin and spare, with some Difficulty began to sink at last; but the rest every one of them swam very light upon the Water. A Sailor in the Flat jump'd out upon the Back of the Man accused, thinking to drive him down to the Bottom, but the Person

bound, without any Help, came up some time before the other. The Woman Accuser, being told that she did not sink, would be duck'd a second Time; when she swam again as light as before. Upon which she declared, That she believed the Accused had bewitched her to make her so light, and that she would be duck'd again a Hundred Times, but she would duck the Devil out of her. The accused Man, being surpriz'd at his own Swimming, was not so confident of his Innocence as before, but said, If I am a Witch, it is more than I know. The more thinking Part of the Spectators were of Opinion, that any Person so bound and plac'd in the Water (unless they were mere Skin and Bones) would swim till their Breath was gone, and their Lungs fill'd with Water. But it being the general Belief of the Populace, that the Womens Shifts, and the Garters with which they were bound help'd to support them; it is said they are to be tried again the next warm Weather, naked.

CHAPTER 21.

THE HUMOROUS STORY AN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT.—ITS DIFFERENCE FROM COMIC AND WITTY STORIES.

The Humorous Story an American Development.----Its Difference from Comic and Witty Stories.

I do not claim that I can tell a story as it ought to be told. I only claim to know how a story ought to be told, for I have been almost daily in the company of the most expert story--tellers for many years.

There are several kinds of stories, but only one difficult kind----the humorous. I will talk mainly about that one. The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of the telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the matter.

The humorous story may be spun out to great length, and may wander around as much as it pleases, and arrive nowhere in particular; but the comic and witty stories must be brief and end with a point. The humorous story bubbles gently along, the others burst.

The humorous story is strictly a work of art----high and

delicate art---- and only an artist can tell it; but no art is necessary in telling the comic and the witty story; anybody can do it.

The art of telling a humorous story----understand, I mean by word of mouth, not print----

was created in America, and has remained at home.

The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he

even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it; but the teller of the comic

story tells you beforehand that it is one of the funniest things he has ever heard, then

tells it with eager delight, and is the first person to laugh when he gets through. And

sometimes, if he has had good success, he is so glad and happy that he will repeat the

“nub” of it and glance around from face to face, collecting applause, and then repeat it

again. It is a pathetic thing to see.

Very often, of course, the rambling and disjointed humorous story finishes with a nub,

point, snapper, or whatever you like to call it. Then the listener must be alert, for in

many cases the teller will divert attention----from that nub by dropping it in a carefully

casual and indifferent way, with the pretence that he does not know it is a nub.

Artemus Ward used that trick a good deal; then when the belated audience presently

caught the joke he would look up with innocent surprise, as if wondering what they had

found to laugh at. Dan Setchell used it before him, Nye

and Riley and others use it to--
day.

But the teller of the comic story does not slur the nub; he
shouts it at you----every time.

And when he prints it, in England, France, Germany, and
Italy, he italicizes it, puts some
whooping exclamation--points after it, and sometimes
explains it in a parenthesis. All of
which is very depressing, and makes one want to
renounce joking and lead a better life.

Let me set down an instance of the comic method, using
an anecdote which has been
popular all over the world for twelve or fifteen hundred
years. The teller tells it in this
way:

THE WOUNDED SOLDIER.

In the course of a certain battle a soldier whose leg had
been shot off appealed to
another soldier who was hurrying by to carry him to the
rear, informing him at the same
time of the loss which he had sustained; whereupon the
generous son of Mars,
shouldering the unfortunate, proceeded to carry out his
desire. The bullets and cannon--
balls were flying in all directions, and presently one of the
latter took the wounded
man's head off----without, however, his deliverer being
aware of it. In no--long time he
was hailed by an officer, who said:

“Where are you going with that carcass?”

“To the rear, sir----he's lost his leg!”

“His leg, forsooth?” responded the astonished officer;
“you mean his head, you booby.”

Whereupon the soldier dispossessed himself of his burden, and stood looking down upon it in great perplexity. At length he said: "It is true, sir, just as you have said." Then after a pause he added, "But he TOLD me IT WAS HIS LEG!!!!!"

Here the narrator bursts into explosion after explosion of thunderous horse--laughter, repeating that nub from time to time through his gaspings and shriekings and suffocatings.

It takes only a minute and a half to tell that in its comic--story form; and isn't worth the telling, after all. Put into the humorous--story form it takes ten minutes, and is about the funniest thing I have ever listened to----as James Whitcomb Riley tells it.

He tells it in the character of a dull--witted old farmer who has just heard it for the first time, thinks it is unspeakably funny, and is trying to repeat it to a neighbor. But he can't remember it; so he gets all mixed up and wanders helplessly round and round, putting in tedious details that don't belong in the tale and only retard it; taking them out conscientiously and putting in others that are just as useless; making minor mistakes now and then and stopping to correct them and explain how he came to make them; remembering things which he forgot to put in in their proper place and going back to put them in there; stopping his narrative a good while in order to try to recall the name

of the soldier that was hurt, and finally remembering that the soldier's name was not mentioned, and remarking placidly that the name is of no real importance, anyway---- better, of course, if one knew it, but not essential, after all---- and so on, and so on, and so on.

The teller is innocent and happy and pleased with himself, and has to stop every little while to hold himself in and keep from laughing outright; and does hold in, but his body quakes in a jelly--like way with interior chuckles; and at the end of the ten minutes the audience have laughed until they are exhausted, and the tears are running down their faces.

The simplicity and innocence and sincerity and unconsciousness of the old farmer are perfectly simulated, and the result is a performance which is thoroughly charming and delicious. This is art and fine and beautiful, and only a master can compass it; but a machine could tell the other story.

To string incongruities and absurdities together in a wandering and sometimes purposeless way, and seem innocently unaware that they are absurdities, is the basis of the American art, if my position is correct. Another feature is the slurring of the point. A third is the dropping of a studied remark apparently without knowing it, as if one were thinking aloud. The fourth and last is the pause.

Artemus Ward dealt in numbers three and four a good

deal. He would begin to tell with great animation something which he seemed to think was wonderful; then lose confidence, and after an apparently absent--minded pause add an incongruous remark in a soliloquizing way; and that was the remark intended to explode the mine----and it did.

For instance, he would say eagerly, excitedly, "I once knew a man in New Zealand who hadn't a tooth in his head"----here his animation would die out; a silent, reflective pause would follow, then he would say dreamily, and as if to himself, "and yet that man could beat a drum better than any man I ever saw."

The pause is an exceedingly important feature in any kind of story, and a frequently recurring feature, too. It is a dainty thing, and delicate, and also uncertain and treacherous; for it must be exactly the right length----no more and no less----or it fails of its purpose and makes trouble. If the pause is too short the impressive point is passed, and [and if too long] the audience have had time to divine that a surprise is intended----and then you can't surprise them, of course.

On the platform I used to tell a negro ghost story that had a pause in front of the snapper on the end, and that pause was the most important thing in the whole story. If I got it the right length precisely, I could spring the finishing ejaculation with effect enough to make some impressible girl deliver a startled little yelp and jump out of her

seat ----and that was what I was after. This story was called "The Golden Arm," and was told in this fashion. You can practise with it yourself----and mind you look out for the pause and get it right.

THE GOLDEN ARM.

Once 'pon a time dey wuz a monsus mean man, en he live 'way out in de prairie all 'lone by hissself, 'cep'n he had a wife. En bimeby she died, en he tuck en toted her way out dah in de prairie en buried her. Well, she had a golden arm---all solid gold, fum de shoulder down. He wuz pow'ful mean----pow'ful; en dat night he couldn't sleep, Gaze he want dat golden arm so bad.

When it come midnight he couldn't stan' it no mo'; so he git up, he did, en tuck his lantern en shoved out thoo de storm en dug her up en got de golden arm; en he bent his head down 'gin de win', en plowed en plowed en plowed thoo de snow. Den all on a sudden he stop (make a considerable pause here, and look startled, and take a listening attitude) en say: "My LAN', what's dat!"

En he listen----en listen----en de win' say (set your teeth together and imitate the wailing and wheezing singsong of the wind), "Bzzz--z--zzz"-----en den, way back yonder whah de grave is, he hear a voice! he hear a voice all mix' up in de win' can't hardly tell 'em 'part----

" Bzzz--zzz---- W--h--o----g--o--t----m--y----g--o--l--d--e--n arm? -----zzz-----zzz---- W--h--o g--o--t m--y g--o--l--d--e--n

arm!" (You must begin to shiver violently now.)
 En he begin to shiver en shake, en say, "Oh, my! OH, my
 lan'! "en de win' blow de
 lantern out, en de snow en sleet blow in his face en mos'
 choke him, en he start a--
 plowin' knee--deep towards home mos' dead, he so
 sk'yerd----en pooty soon he hear de
 voice agin, en (pause) it 'us comin' after him! "Bzzz----
 -zzz----zzz----W--h--o----g--o--t m--y----g--o--l--d--
 e--n----arm?"

When he git to de pasture he hear it agin closter now, en
 a--comin'!---- a--comin' back dah
 in de dark en de storm----(repeat the wind and the voice).
 When he git to de house he
 rush up--stairs en jump in de bed en kiver up, head and
 years, en lay dah shiverin' en
 shakin'----en den way out dah he hear it agin!----en a--
 -comin'! En bimeby he hear (pause----
 awed, listening attitude)----pat----pat----pat----hit's
 acomin' up--stairs! Den he hear de latch, en
 he know it's in de room!

Den pooty soon he know it's a--stannin' by de bed!
 (Pause.) Den----he know it's a--bendin'
 down over him----en he cain't skasely git his breath!
 Den---- den----he seem to feel someth' n
 c--o--l--d, right down 'most agin his head! (Pause.)
 Den de voice say, right at his year----"W--h--o g--o--t---
 -m--y----g--o--l--d--e--n arm?" (You must wail
 it out very plaintively and accusingly; then you stare
 steadily and impressively into the
 face of the farthest--gone auditor----a girl, preferably----
 -and let that awe--inspiring pause
 begin to build itself in the deep hush. When

it has reached exactly the right length, jump
suddenly at that girl and yell, "You've got it!")
If you've got the pause right, she'll fetch a dear little yelp
and spring right out of her
shoes. But you must get the pause right; and you will find
it the most troublesome and
aggravating and uncertain thing you ever undertook

CHAPTER 22.

THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

1865 version published as "Jim Smiley and Jumping Frog" by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)

Mr. A. Ward,

Dear Sir: ---- Well, I called on good--natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after your friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as you requested me to do, and I hereunto append the result. If you can get any information out of it you are cordially welcome to it. I have a lurking suspicion that your Leonidas W. Smiley is a myth ---- that you never knew such a personage, and that you only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him it would remind him of his infamous Jim Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was your design, Mr. Ward, it will gratify you to know that it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar--room stove of the old, dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Boomerang, and I noticed that he was fat and bald--headed, and had an expression of winning

gentleness and simplicity upon his
tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good--
-day. I told him a friend of mine
had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a
cherished companion of his
boyhood named Leonidas W. Smiley ---- Rev. Leonidas
W. Smiley ---- a young minister of
the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident
of this village of Boomerang. I
added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me any thing about
this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I
would feel under many obligations to him.
Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded
me there with his chair ---- and
then sat me down and reeled off the monotonous
narrative which follows this
paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never
changed his voice from the
gentle--flowing key to which he tuned the initial
sentence, he never betrayed the
slightest suspicion of enthusiasm ---- but all through the
interminable narrative there ran
a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which
showed me plainly that, so far
from his imagining that there was any thing ridiculous or
funny about his story, he
regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its
two heroes as men of
transcendent genius in finesse. To me, the spectacle of a
man drifting serenely along
through such a queer yarn without ever smiling was
exquisitely absurd. As I said before,
I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev. Leonidas W.

Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once:

There was a feller here once by the name of Jim Smiley, in the winter of '49 ---- or maybe it was the spring of '50 ---- I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first came to the camp; but any way, he was the curiosest man about always betting on any thing that turned up you ever see, if he could get any body to bet on the other side, and if he couldn't he'd change sides ---- any way that suited the other man would suit him ---- any way just so's he got a bet, he was satisfied. But still, he was lucky ---- uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solitry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it ---- and take any side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse--race, you'd find him flush, or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog--fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat--fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken--fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first ---- or if there was a camp--meeting, he would be there reglar, to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was, too, and a

good man. If he even seen a straddle--bug start to go any
wheres, he would bet you how
long it would take him to get wherever he was going to,
and if you took him up, he
would foller that straddle--bug to Mexico but what he
would find out where he was
bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the
boys here has seen that Smiley,
and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no
difference to him ---- he would bet on
anything ---- the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife
laid very sick, once, for a good
while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her;
but one morning he come in,
and Smiley asked him how she was, and he said she was
considerable better ---- thank the
Lord for his inf'nit mercy ---- and coming on so smart
that, with the blessing of
Providence, she'd get well yet ---- and Smiley, before he
thought, says, "Well, I'll resk two--
and--a--half that she don't, anyway."
Thish--yer Smiley had a mare ---- the boys called her the
fifteen--minute nag, but that was
only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster
than that ---- and he used to win
money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always
had the asthma, or the
distemper, or the consumption, or something of that
kind. They used to give her two or
three hundred yards' start, and then pass her under way;
but always at the fag--end of
the race she'd get excited and desperate--like, and come
cavorting and straddling up,

and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the
air, and sometimes out to one
side amongst the fences, and kicking up m--o--r--e dust,
and raising m--o--r--e racket with
her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose ---- and
always fetch up at the stand just
about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.
And he had a little small bull pup, that to look at him
you'd think he warn't worth a cent,
but to set around and look ornery, and lay for a chance to
steal something. But as soon
as money was up on him, he was a different dog ---- his
underjaw'd begin to stick out like
the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover,
and shine savage like the
furnaces. And a dog might tackle him, and bully--rag him,
and bite him, and throw him
over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson
---- which was the name of the
pup ---- Andrew Jackson would never let on but what he
was satisfied, and hadn't
expected nothing else ---- and the bets being doubled and
doubled on the other side all
the time, till the money was all up ---- and then all of a
sudden he would grab that other
dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it ---- not
chaw, you understand, but only
jest grip and hang on till they thronged up the sponge, if
it was a year. Smiley always
come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once
that didn't have no hind legs,
because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when
the thing had gone along far

enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make
a snatch for his pet holt, he
saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the
other dog had him in the door,
so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked
sorter discouraged--like, and
didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked
out bad. He give Smiley a
look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was his
fault, for putting up a dog
that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was
his main dependence in a
fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and
died. It was a good pup, was
that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for
hissself if he'd lived, for the stuff
was in him, and he had genius ---- I know it, because he
hadn't had no opportunities to
speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could
make such a fight as he could
under them circumstances, if he hadn't no talent. It
always makes me feel sorry when I
think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.
Well, thish--yer Smiley had rat--tarriers, and chicken
cocks, and tom--cats, and all of them
kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't
fetch nothing for him to bet on but
he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him
home, and said he cal'klated
to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three
months but set in his back yard
and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he did learn
him, too. He'd give him a little

hunch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog
whirling in the air like a
doughnut ---- see him turn one summerset, or may be a
couple, if he got a good start, and
come down flat--footed and all right, like a cat. He got
him up so in the matter of
ketching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that
he'd nail a fly every time as far
as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was
education, and he could do most
anything ---- and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set
Dan'l Webster down here on this
floor ---- Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog ---- and
sing out, "Flies, Dan'l, flies!" and
quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and
snake a fly off'n the counter there,
and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud,
and fall to scratching the side
of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't
no idea he'd been doin' any
more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest
and straightfor'ard as he was,
for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair--and--
-square jumping on a dead level, he
could get over more ground at one straddle than any
animal of his breed you ever see.
Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you
understand, and when it come to that,
Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a
red. Smiley was monstrous
proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had
traveled and ben

everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever they see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town

sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller ---- a stranger in the camp, he was ---- come across him with his box, and says:

“What might it be that you’ve got in the box?”

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, “It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, may be, but it ain’t ---- it’s only just a frog.”

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and

says, “H’m ---- so ’tis. Well, what’s he good for?”

“Well,” Smiley says, easy and careless, “He’s good enough for one thing, I should judge ---- he can out--jump ary frog in Calaveras county.”

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to

Smiley, and says, very deliberate, “Well ---- I don’t see no p’int about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

“Maybe you don’t,” Smiley says. “Maybe you understand frogs, and maybe you don’t understand ’em; maybe you’ve had experience, and maybe you ain’t only a amature, as

it were. Anyways, I’ve got my opinion, and I’ll resk forty dollars that he can outjump ary frog in Calaveras county.”

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad, like, “Well, I’m only a

stranger here, and I ain’t got no frog ---- but if I had a frog, I’d bet you.”

And then Smiley says, "That's all right ---- that's all right
---- if you'll hold my box a minute,
I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box,
and put up his forty dollars
along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.
So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to
hisself, and then he got the frog
out and prized his mouth open and took a tea--spoon and
filled him full of quail shot ----
filled him pretty near up to his chin ---- and set him on
the floor. Smiley he went to the
swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time,
and finally he ketched a frog,
and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:
"Now if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his
fore--paws just even with
Dan'l's, and I'll give the word." Then he says, "One ----
two ---- three ---- jump!" and him and
the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new
frog hopped off, but Dan'l give
a heave, and hysted up his shoulders ---- so ---- like a
Frenchman, but it wasn't no use ---- he
couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he
couldn't no more stir than if
he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised,
and he was disgusted too, but
he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.
The feller took the money and started away; and when
he was going out at the door, he
sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders ---- this way
---- at Dan'l, and says again, very
deliberate, "Well, I don't see no p'int about that frog
that's any better'n any other

frog.”

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, “I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for ---- I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him ---- he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow” ---- and he ketchd Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, “Why, blame my cats, if he don't weigh five pound!” ---- and turned him upside down, and he belched out a double--handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man ---- he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketchd him. And-----

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to go and see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: “Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy ---- I an't going to be gone a second.”

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond Jim Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev.

Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he button--holed me and recommenced:

“Well, thish--yer Smiley had a yeller one--eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and “
“O, curse Smiley and his afflicted cow!” I muttered,

good--naturally, and bidding the old
gentleman good--day, I departed.

CHAPTER 23.

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS
OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

In the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of St. Nicholas when they crossed, there lies a small market town or rural port, which by some is called Greensburgh, but which is more generally and properly known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given, we are told, in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley or rather lap of land among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose; and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity.

I recollect that, when a stripling, my first exploit in squirrel-shooting was in a grove of tall walnut-trees that shades one side of the valley. I had wandered into it at noontime, when all nature is peculiarly quiet, and was

startled by the roar of my own gun, as it broke the Sabbath stillness around and was prolonged and reverberated by the angry echoes. If ever I should wish for a retreat whither I might steal from the world and its distractions, and dream quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know of none more promising than this little valley.

From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvellous beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure

on horseback, without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

Such is the general purport of this legendary superstition, which has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the visionary propensity I have mentioned is not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud, for it is in such little retired Dutch valleys, found here and there embosomed in the great State of New York, that

population, manners, and customs remain fixed, while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current. Though many years have elapsed since I trod the drowsy shades of Sleepy Hollow, yet I question whether I should not still find the same trees and the same families vegetating in its sheltered bosom.

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, "tarried," in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine

descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs; the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copybooks. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a withe twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out,—an idea most probably borrowed by the architect, Yost Van Houten, from the mystery of an eelpot. The schoolhouse stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch-tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive; interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, in the tone of menace or command, or, peradventure, by the appalling sound of the birch, as he urged some tardy loiterer along the flowery path of knowledge. Truth to say, he was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

I would not have it imagined, however, that he was one of those cruel potentates of the school who joy in the smart of their subjects; on the contrary, he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity; taking the burden off the backs of the weak, and laying it on those of the strong. Your mere puny stripling, that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence; but the claims of justice were satisfied by

inflicting a double portion on some little tough wrong-headed, broad-skirted Dutch urchin, who sulked and swelled and grew dogged and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents;" and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder, and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived successively a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

That all this might not be too onerous on the purses of his rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a grievous burden, and schoolmasters as mere drones, he had various ways of rendering himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity and absolute sway

with which he lorded it in his little empire, the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest; and like the lion bold, which whilom so magnanimously the lamb did hold, he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing-master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers; where, in his own mind, he completely carried away the palm from the parson. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation; and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the millpond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated "by hook and by crook," the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood; being considered a kind of idle, gentlemanlike personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is apt to occasion some little stir at the tea-table of a farmhouse, and the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats,

or, peradventure, the parade of a silver teapot. Our man of letters, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How he would figure among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays; gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering, with a whole bevy of them, along the banks of the adjacent millpond; while the more bashful country bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of travelling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's "History of New England Witchcraft," in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of small shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvellous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary; and both had been increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his schoolhouse, and there con over old Mather's direful tales, until the gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and awful woodland, to the farmhouse where he happened to be

quartered, every sound of nature, at that witching hour, fluttered his excited imagination,—the moan of the whip-poor-will from the hillside, the boding cry of the tree toad, that harbinger of storm, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, or the sudden rustling in the thicket of birds frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him, as one of uncommon brightness would stream across his path; and if, by chance, a huge blockhead of a beetle came winging his blundering flight against him, the poor varlet was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes and the good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors of an evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody, "in linked sweetness long drawn out," floating from the distant hill, or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives, as they sat spinning by the fire, with a row of apples roasting and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields, and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges, and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman, or Galloping Hessian of the Hollow, as they sometimes called him. He would delight them equally by his anecdotes of witchcraft, and of the direful omens and portentous sights and sounds in the air, which prevailed in the earlier times of Connecticut; and would frighten them woefully with speculations upon comets and shooting stars; and with the alarming fact that the world

did absolutely turn round, and that they were half the time topsy-turvy!

But if there was a pleasure in all this, while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner of a chamber that was all of a ruddy glow from the crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no spectre dared to show its face, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homewards. What fearful shapes and shadows beset his path, amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! With what wistful look did he eye every trembling ray of light streaming across the waste fields from some distant window! How often was he appalled by some shrub covered with snow, which, like a sheeted spectre, beset his very path! How often did he shrink with curdling awe at the sound of his own steps on the frosty crust beneath his feet; and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold some uncouth being tramping close behind him! And how often was he thrown into complete dismay by some rushing blast, howling among the trees, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian on one of his nightly scourings!

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, phantoms of the mind that walk in darkness; and though he had seen many spectres in his time, and been more than once beset by Satan in divers shapes, in his lonely perambulations, yet daylight put an end to all these evils; and he would have passed a pleasant life of it, in despite of the Devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was—a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in

psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her great-great-grandmother had brought over from Saardam; the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those everything was snug, happy and well-conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it; and piqued himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water, in a little well formed of a barrel; and then stole sparkling away through the grass, to a neighboring brook, that babbled along among alders and dwarf willows. Hard by

the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens, from whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard, and Guinea fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their peevish, discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart,—sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered.

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting-pig running about with a pudding in his belly, and an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes, like snug married

couples, with a decent competency of onion sauce. In the porkers he saw carved out the future sleek side of bacon, and juicy relishing ham; not a turkey but he beheld daintily trussed up, with its gizzard under its wing, and, peradventure, a necklace of savory sausages; and even bright chanticleer himself lay sprawling on his back, in a side dish, with uplifted claws, as if craving that quarter which his chivalrous spirit disdained to ask while living.

As the enraptured Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchards burdened with ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. Nay, his busy fancy already realized his hopes, and presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery, with pots and kettles dangling beneath; and he beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee,—or the Lord knows where!

When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of those spacious farmhouses, with high-ridged but lowly sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers; the low projecting eaves forming a piazza along the front, capable of being closed up in bad weather. Under this were hung flails, harness, various utensils of husbandry, and nets for fishing in the neighboring river. Benches were built along

the sides for summer use; and a great spinning-wheel at one end, and a churn at the other, showed the various uses to which this important porch might be devoted. From this piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the centre of the mansion, and the place of usual residence. Here rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool, ready to be spun; in another, a quantity of linsey-woolsey just from the loom; ears of Indian corn, and strings of dried apples and peaches, hung in gay festoons along the walls, mingled with the gaud of red peppers; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors; andirons, with their accompanying shovel and tongs, glistened from their covert of asparagus tops; mock-oranges and conch-shells decorated the mantelpiece; strings of various-colored birds eggs were suspended above it; a great ostrich egg was hung from the centre of the room, and a corner cupboard, knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to gain the affections of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had more real difficulties than generally fell to the lot of a knight-errant of yore, who seldom had anything but giants, enchanters, fiery dragons, and such like easily conquered adversaries, to contend with and had to make his way merely through gates of iron and brass, and walls of adamant to the castle keep, where the lady of his heart was confined; all which he achieved as easily as a man would carve his way to the centre of a

Christmas pie; and then the lady gave him her hand as a matter of course. Ichabod, on the contrary, had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments; and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood, the numerous rustic admirers, who beset every portal to her heart, keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor.

Among these, the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roystering blade, of the name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and great powers of limb he had received the nickname of BROM BONES, by which he was universally known. He was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar. He was foremost at all races and cock fights; and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes, setting his hat on one side, and giving his decisions with an air and tone that admitted of no gainsay or appeal. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic; but had more mischief than ill-will in his composition; and with all his overbearing roughness, there was a strong dash of waggish good humor at bottom. He had three or four boon companions, who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud

or merriment for miles round. In cold weather he was distinguished by a fur cap, surmounted with a flaunting fox's tail; and when the folks at a country gathering descried this well-known crest at a distance, whisking about among a squad of hard riders, they always stood by for a squall. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farmhouses at midnight, with whoop and halloo, like a troop of Don Cossacks; and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, "Ay, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!" The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will; and, when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity, always shook their heads, and warranted Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

This rantipole hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries, and though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses and endearments of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire, who felt no inclination to cross a lion in his amours; insomuch, that when his horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's paling, on a Sunday night, a sure sign that his master was courting, or, as it is termed, "sparking," within, all other suitors passed by in despair, and carried the war into other quarters.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend, and, considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like

a supple-jack—yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away—jerk!—he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness; for he was not a man to be thwarted in his amours, any more than that stormy lover, Achilles. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing-master, he made frequent visits at the farmhouse; not that he had anything to apprehend from the meddlesome interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling-block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy indulgent soul; he loved his daughter better even than his pipe, and, like a reasonable man and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His notable little wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry; for, as she sagely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus, while the busy dame bustled about the house, or plied her spinning-wheel at one end of the piazza, honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other, watching the achievements of a little wooden warrior, who, armed with a sword in each hand, was most valiantly fighting the wind on the pinnacle of the barn. In the mean time, Ichabod would carry on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. Some seem to have but one vulnerable

point, or door of access; while others have a thousand avenues, and may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph of skill to gain the former, but a still greater proof of generalship to maintain possession of the latter, for man must battle for his fortress at every door and window. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown; but he who keeps undisputed sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Certain it is, this was not the case with the redoubtable Brom Bones; and from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of the former evidently declined: his horse was no longer seen tied to the palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the preceptor of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of rough chivalry in his nature, would fain have carried matters to open warfare and have settled their pretensions to the lady, according to the mode of those most concise and simple reasoners, the knights-errant of yore,—by single combat; but Ichabod was too conscious of the superior might of his adversary to enter the lists against him; he had overheard a boast of Bones, that he would “double the schoolmaster up, and lay him on a shelf of his own schoolhouse;” and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. There was something extremely provoking in this obstinately pacific system; it left Brom no alternative but to draw upon the funds of rustic waggery in his disposition, and to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domains; smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the schoolhouse at night, in spite of its formidable fastenings of withe and window stakes,

and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody.

In this way matters went on for some time, without producing any material effect on the relative situations of the contending powers. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little literary realm. In his hand he swayed a ferule, that sceptre of despotic power; the birch of justice reposed on three nails behind the throne, a constant terror to evil doers, while on the desk before him might be seen sundry contraband articles and prohibited weapons, detected upon the persons of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs, fly-cages, and whole legions of rampant little paper gamecocks. Apparently there had been some appalling act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the schoolroom. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a negro in tow-cloth jacket and trowsers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt, which he managed with a rope by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making or "quilting frolic," to be held that

evening at Mynheer Van Tassel's; and having delivered his message with that air of importance, and effort at fine language, which a negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear, to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves, inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed only suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the schoolhouse. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plow-horse, that had outlived almost everything but its viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck, and a head

like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favorite steed of his master's, the choleric Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight.

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day; the sky was clear and serene, and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming files of wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of beech and hickory-

nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighboring stubble field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry, they fluttered, chirping and frolicking from bush to bush, and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock robin, the favorite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the cedar bird, with its red-tipt wings and yellow-tipt tail and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light blue coat and white underclothes, screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast store of apples; some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees; some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market; others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty-pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields breathing the odor of the beehive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well

buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and “sugared suppositions,” he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disk down in the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, excepting that here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple green, and from that into the deep blue of the mid-heaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark gray and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast; and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Heer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk, withered little dames, in close-crimped caps, long-waisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pincushions, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock, gave symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square-

skirted coats, with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair.

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit.

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlor of Van Tassel's mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table, in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! There was the doughty doughnut, the tender oly koek, and the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple pies, and peach pies, and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst—Heaven

bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer, and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old schoolhouse; snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper, and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good humor, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to "fall to, and help themselves."

And now the sound of the music from the common room, or hall, summoned to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as

upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought St. Vitus himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighborhood, stood forming a pyramid of shining black faces at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eyeballs, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings; while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with Old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighborhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding and infested with refugees, cowboys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and, in the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork,

only that his gun burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of White Plains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade, and glance off at the hilt; in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighborhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long-settled retreats; but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities.

The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts, was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people

were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the great tree where the unfortunate Major André was taken, and which stood in the neighborhood. Some mention was made also of the woman in white, that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the Headless Horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in the churchyard.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to have made it a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust-trees and lofty elms, from among which its decent, whitewashed walls shine modestly forth, like Christian purity beaming through the shades of retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet of water, bordered by high trees, between which, peeps may be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its grass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly, one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night. Such was one of the favorite haunts of the Headless

Horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the Horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp, until they reached the bridge; when the Horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous adventure of Brom Bones, who made light of the Galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that on returning one night from the neighboring village of Sing Sing, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native State of Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on pillions behind their favorite swains, and their light-

hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter, until they gradually died away,—and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a tête-à-tête with the heiress; fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success. What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chapfallen. Oh, these women! these women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a henroost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth, on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop, riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of midnight, he could even hear

the barking of the watchdog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farmhouse away among the hills—but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bullfrog from a neighboring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip-tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighborhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major André's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake, and partly from the tales of strange sights, and doleful lamentations, told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle was answered; it was but

a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white, hanging in the midst of the tree: he paused and ceased whistling but, on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan—his teeth chattered, and his knees smote against the saddle: it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another, as they were swayed about by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly-wooded glen, known by the name of Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape-vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal made a lateral movement, and ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked lustily with the contrary foot:

it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes. The schoolmaster now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge, with a suddenness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the

blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind,—the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless!—but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle! His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping by a sudden movement to give his companion the slip; but the spectre started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head, in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong downhill to the left. This road

leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story; and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in the chase, but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel, and endeavored to hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's wrath passed across his mind,—for it was his Sunday saddle; but this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches; and (unskilful rider that he was!) he had much ado to maintain his seat; sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's backbone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared. "If I can but reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding

planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash,—he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse, and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod, and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses' hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half; two stocks for the neck; a pair or two of worsted stockings; an old pair of corduroy small-clothes; a rusty razor; a book of psalm tunes full of dog's-ears; and

a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's "History of Witchcraft," a "New England Almanac," and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper; who, from that time forward, determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before, he must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the Galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him; the school was removed to a different quarter of the hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through fear

of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar; turned politician; electioneered; written for the newspapers; and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones, too, who, shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the neighborhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe; and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue and the plowboy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.

POSTSCRIPT.

FOUND IN THE HANDWRITING OF MR. KNICKERBOCKER.

The preceding tale is given almost in the precise words

in which I heard it related at a Corporation meeting at the ancient city of Manhattoes, at which were present many of its sagest and most illustrious burghers. The narrator was a pleasant, shabby, gentlemanly old fellow, in pepper-and-salt clothes, with a sadly humourous face, and one whom I strongly suspected of being poor—he made such efforts to be entertaining. When his story was concluded, there was much laughter and approbation, particularly from two or three deputy aldermen, who had been asleep the greater part of the time. There was, however, one tall, dry-looking old gentleman, with beetling eyebrows, who maintained a grave and rather severe face throughout, now and then folding his arms, inclining his head, and looking down upon the floor, as if turning a doubt over in his mind. He was one of your wary men, who never laugh but upon good grounds—when they have reason and law on their side. When the mirth of the rest of the company had subsided, and silence was restored, he leaned one arm on the elbow of his chair, and sticking the other akimbo, demanded, with a slight, but exceedingly sage motion of the head, and contraction of the brow, what was the moral of the story, and what it went to prove?

The story-teller, who was just putting a glass of wine to his lips, as a refreshment after his toils, paused for a moment, looked at his inquirer with an air of infinite deference, and, lowering the glass slowly to the table, observed that the story was intended most logically to prove—

“That there is no situation in life but has its advantages and pleasures—provided we will but take a joke as we find it:

“That, therefore, he that runs races with goblin troopers is likely to have rough riding of it.

“Ergo, for a country schoolmaster to be refused the hand of a Dutch heiress is a certain step to high preferment in the state.”

The cautious old gentleman knit his brows tenfold closer after this explanation, being sorely puzzled by the ratiocination of the syllogism, while, methought, the one in pepper-and-salt eyed him with something of a triumphant leer. At length he observed that all this was very well, but still he thought the story a little on the extravagant—there were one or two points on which he had his doubts.

“Faith, sir,” replied the story-teller, “as to that matter, I don’t believe one-half of it myself.” D. K.

THE END.

PART VI.

DEEP LIKE A RIVER

CHAPTER 24.

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

CHAPTER 25.

FROM THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK

The Forethought

Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here at the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.

I pray you, then, receive my little book in all charity, studying my words with me, forgiving mistake and foible for sake of the faith and passion that is in me, and seeking the grain of truth hidden there.

I have sought here to sketch, in vague, uncertain outline, the spiritual world in which ten thousand thousand Americans live and strive. First, in two chapters I have tried to show what Emancipation meant to them, and what was its aftermath. In a third chapter I have pointed out the slow rise of personal leadership, and criticized candidly the leader who bears the chief burden of his race to-day. Then, in two other chapters I have sketched in swift outline the two worlds within and without the Veil, and thus have come to the central problem of training men for life. Venturing now into deeper detail, I have in two chapters studied the struggles of the massed millions of the black peasantry, and in another have sought to make clear the present relations of the sons of master and man. Leaving, then, the white world, I have stepped within the Veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses,—the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls. All this I have ended with a tale twice told but seldom written, and a chapter of song.

Some of these thoughts of mine have seen the light before in other guise. For kindly consenting to their

republishing here, in altered and extended form, I must thank the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *The World's Work*, the *Dial*, *The New World*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Before each chapter, as now printed, stands a bar of the Sorrow Songs,—some echo of haunting melody from the only American music which welled up from black souls in the dark past. And, finally, need I add that I who speak here am bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of them that live within the Veil?

W.E.B. Du B.

Atlanta, Ga., Feb. 1, 1903.

Of Our Spiritual Strivings

O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand,
All night long crying with a mournful cry,
As I lie and listen, and cannot understand
The voice of my heart in my side or the voice of the sea,
O water, crying for rest, is it I, is it I?
All night long the water is crying to me.

Unresting water, there shall never be rest
Till the last moon droop and the last tide fail,
And the fire of the end begin to burn in the west;
And the heart shall be weary and wonder and cry like the
sea,
All life long crying without avail,
As the water all night long is crying to me.

ARTHUR SYMONS.



Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience,—peculiar even for one who has never been

anything else, save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe. It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first bursts upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghkanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads. Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the words I longed for, and all their dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head,—some way. With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white; or wasted itself in a bitter cry, Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The shades of the prison-house closed round about us all:

walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly on in resignation, or beat unavailing palms against the stone, or steadily, half hopelessly, watch the streak of blue above.

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and

isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius. These powers of body and mind have in the past been strangely wasted, dispersed, or forgotten. The shadow of a mighty Negro past flits through the tale of Ethiopia the Shadowy and of Egypt the Sphinx. Through history, the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness. Here in America, in the few days since Emancipation, the black man's turning hither and thither in hesitant and doubtful striving has often made his very strength to lose effectiveness, to seem like absence of power, like weakness. And yet it is not weakness,—it is the contradiction of double aims. The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan—on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde—could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause. By the poverty and ignorance of his people, the Negro minister or doctor was tempted toward quackery and demagogy; and by the criticism of the other world, toward ideals that made him ashamed of his lowly tasks. The would-be black savant was confronted by the paradox that the knowledge his people needed was a twice-told tale to his white neighbors, while the knowledge which would teach the white world was Greek to his own flesh and blood. The innate love of harmony and beauty that set the ruder souls of his people a-dancing and a-singing raised but confusion and doubt in the soul of the black artist; for the beauty revealed to him was the soul-beauty of a race which his larger audience despised, and he could not articulate the

message of another people. This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of ten thousand thousand people,—has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and at times has even seemed about to make them ashamed of themselves.

Away back in the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment; few men ever worshipped Freedom with half such unquestioning faith as did the American Negro for two centuries. To him, so far as he thought and dreamed, slavery was indeed the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice; Emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of wearied Israelites. In song and exhortation swelled one refrain—Liberty; in his tears and curses the God he implored had Freedom in his right hand. At last it came,—suddenly, fearfully, like a dream. With one wild carnival of blood and passion came the message in his own plaintive cadences:—

“Shout, O children!
Shout, you’re free!
For God has bought your liberty!”

Years have passed away since then,—ten, twenty, forty; forty years of national life, forty years of renewal and development, and yet the swarthy spectre sits in its accustomed seat at the Nation’s feast. In vain do we cry to this our vastest social problem:—

“Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble!”

The Nation has not yet found peace from its sins; the freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised

land. Whatever of good may have come in these years of change, the shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon the Negro people,—a disappointment all the more bitter because the unattained ideal was unbounded save by the simple ignorance of a lowly people.

The first decade was merely a prolongation of the vain search for freedom, the boon that seemed ever barely to elude their grasp,—like a tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp, maddening and misleading the headless host. The holocaust of war, the terrors of the Ku-Klux Klan, the lies of carpet-baggers, the disorganization of industry, and the contradictory advice of friends and foes, left the bewildered serf with no new watchword beyond the old cry for freedom. As the time flew, however, he began to grasp a new idea. The ideal of liberty demanded for its attainment powerful means, and these the Fifteenth Amendment gave him. The ballot, which before he had looked upon as a visible sign of freedom, he now regarded as the chief means of gaining and perfecting the liberty with which war had partially endowed him. And why not? Had not votes made war and emancipated millions? Had not votes enfranchised the freedmen? Was anything impossible to a power that had done all this? A million black men started with renewed zeal to vote themselves into the kingdom. So the decade flew away, the revolution of 1876 came, and left the half-free serf weary, wondering, but still inspired. Slowly but steadily, in the following years, a new vision began gradually to replace the dream of political power,—a powerful movement, the rise of another ideal to guide the unguided, another pillar of fire by night after a clouded day. It was the ideal of “book-learning”; the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic

letters of the white man, the longing to know. Here at last seemed to have been discovered the mountain path to Canaan; longer than the highway of Emancipation and law, steep and rugged, but straight, leading to heights high enough to overlook life.

Up the new path the advance guard toiled, slowly, heavily, doggedly; only those who have watched and guided the faltering feet, the misty minds, the dull understandings, of the dark pupils of these schools know how faithfully, how piteously, this people strove to learn. It was weary work. The cold statistician wrote down the inches of progress here and there, noted also where here and there a foot had slipped or some one had fallen. To the tired climbers, the horizon was ever dark, the mists were often cold, the Canaan was always dim and far away. If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting-place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect. In those sombre forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself,—darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another. For the first time he sought to analyze the burden he bore upon his back, that dead-weight of social degradation partially masked behind a half-named Negro problem. He felt his poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, he had entered into competition with rich, landed, skilled neighbors. To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. He felt the weight of his

ignorance,—not simply of letters, but of life, of business, of the humanities; the accumulated sloth and shirking and awkwardness of decades and centuries shackled his hands and feet. Nor was his burden all poverty and ignorance. The red stain of bastardy, which two centuries of systematic legal defilement of Negro women had stamped upon his race, meant not only the loss of ancient African chastity, but also the hereditary weight of a mass of corruption from white adulterers, threatening almost the obliteration of the Negro home.

A people thus handicapped ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But alas! while sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair. Men call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defence of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the “higher” against the “lower” races. To which the Negro cries Amen! and swears that to so much of this strange prejudice as is founded on just homage to civilization, culture, righteousness, and progress, he humbly bows and meekly does obeisance. But before that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this he stands helpless, dismayed, and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and the boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all-pervading desire to inculcate disdain for everything black, from Toussaint to the devil,—before this there rises a sickening despair that would disarm

and discourage any nation save that black host to whom "discouragement" is an unwritten word.

But the facing of so vast a prejudice could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals which ever accompany repression and breed in an atmosphere of contempt and hate. Whisperings and portents came home upon the four winds: Lo! we are diseased and dying, cried the dark hosts; we cannot write, our voting is vain; what need of education, since we must always cook and serve? And the Nation echoed and enforced this self-criticism, saying: Be content to be servants, and nothing more; what need of higher culture for half-men? Away with the black man's ballot, by force or fraud,—and behold the suicide of a race! Nevertheless, out of the evil came something of good,—the more careful adjustment of education to real life, the clearer perception of the Negroes' social responsibilities, and the sobering realization of the meaning of progress.

So dawned the time of *Sturm und Drang*: storm and stress to-day rocks our little boat on the mad waters of the world-sea; there is within and without the sound of conflict, the burning of body and rending of soul; inspiration strives with doubt, and faith with vain questionings. The bright ideals of the past,—physical freedom, political power, the training of brains and the training of hands,—all these in turn have waxed and waned, until even the last grows dim and overcast. Are they all wrong,—all false? No, not that, but each alone was over-simple and incomplete,—the dreams of a credulous race-childhood, or the fond imaginings of the other world which does not know and does not want to know our power. To be really true, all these ideals must be

melted and welded into one. The training of the schools we need to-day more than ever,—the training of deft hands, quick eyes and ears, and above all the broader, deeper, higher culture of gifted minds and pure hearts. The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defence,—else what shall save us from a second slavery? Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek,—the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think, the freedom to love and aspire. Work, culture, liberty,—all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward that vaster ideal that swims before the Negro people, the ideal of human brotherhood, gained through the unifying ideal of Race; the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to or contempt for other races, but rather in large conformity to the greater ideals of the American Republic, in order that some day on American soil two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack. We the darker ones come even now not altogether empty-handed: there are to-day no truer exponents of the pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence than the American Negroes; there is no true American music but the wild sweet melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales and folklore are Indian and African; and, all in all, we black men seem the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal dyspeptic blundering with light-hearted but determined Negro humility? or her coarse and cruel wit with loving jovial good-humor? or her vulgar music with the soul of the Sorrow Songs?

Merely a concrete test of the underlying principles of

the great republic is the Negro Problem, and the spiritual striving of the freedmen's sons is the travail of souls whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength, but who bear it in the name of an historic race, in the name of this the land of their fathers' fathers, and in the name of human opportunity.

And now what I have briefly sketched in large outline let me on coming pages tell again in many ways, with loving emphasis and deeper detail, that men may listen to the striving in the souls of black folk.

PART VII.

**HAUNTED: AMERICAN
GOTHIC**

CHAPTER 26.

THE LEGEND OF THE BELLS

This story, Señor—it is about the accursed bell that once was the clock-bell of the Palace—has so many beginnings that the only way really to get at the bones of it would be for a number of people, all talking at once, to tell the different first parts of it at the same time.

For, you see, the curse that was upon this bell—that caused it to be brought to trial before the Consejo of the Inquisition, and by the Consejo to be condemned to have its wicked tongue torn out and to be banished from Spain to this country—was made up of several curses which had been in use in other ways elsewhere previously: so that one beginning is with the Moor, and another with Don Gil de Marcadante, and another with the devil-forged armor, and still another with the loosing of all the curses from the cross (wherein for some hundreds of years they were imprisoned) and the fusing of them into the one great curse wherewith this unfortunate bell was afflicted—which happened when that holy emblem was refounded, and with the metal of it this bell was made.

Concerning the Moor, Señor, I can give you very little information. All that I know about him is that he had the bad name of Muslef; and that he was killed—as he deserved to be killed, being an Infidel—by a Christian knight; and that this knight cut his head off and brought it home with him as an agreeable memento of the occasion,

and was very pleased with what he had done. Unfortunately, this knight also brought home with him the Moor's armor—which was of bronze, and so curiously and so beautifully wrought that it evidently had been forged by devils, and which was farther charged with devilishness because it had been worn by an Infidel; and then, still more unfortunately, he neglected to have the armor purified by causing the devils to be exorcised out of it by a Christian priest. Therefore, of course, the devils remained in the armor—ready to make trouble whenever they got the chance.

How Don Gil de Marcadante came to be the owner of that accursed devil-possessed armor, Señor, I never have heard mentioned. Perhaps he bought it because it happened to fit him; and, certainly—he being a most unusually sinful young gentleman—the curse that was upon it and the devils which were a part of it fitted him to a hair.

This Don Gil was a student of law in Toledo; but his studies were the very last things to which he turned his attention, and the life that he led was the shame of his respectable brother and his excellent mother's despair. Habitually, he broke every law of the Decalogue, and so brazenly that all the city rang with the stories of his evil doings and his crimes. Moreover, he was of a blustering nature and a born brawler: ready at the slightest contradiction to burst forth with such a torrent of blasphemies and imprecations that his mouth seemed to be a den of snakes and toads and scorpions; and ever quick to snatch his sword out and to get on in a hurry from words to blows. As his nearest approach to good nature was after he had killed some one in a quarrel of his own making, and as even at those favorable times his

temper was of a brittleness, he was not looked upon as an agreeable companion and had few friends.

This Don Gil had most intimate relations with the devil, as was proved in various ways. Thus, a wound that he received in one of his duels instantly closed and healed itself; on a night of impenetrable darkness, as he went about his evil doings, he was seen to draw apart the heavy gratings of a window as though the thick iron bars had been silken threads; and a stone that he cast at a man in one of his rages—mercifully not hitting him—remained burning hot in the place where it had fallen for several days. Moreover, it was known generally that in the night time, in a very secret and hidden part of his dwelling, he gave himself up to hideous and most horrible sacrileges in which his master the devil had always a part. And so these facts—and others of a like nature—coming to the knowledge of the Holy Office, it was perceived that he was a sorcerer. Therefore he was marched off—wearing his devil-forged armor, to which fresh curses had come with his use of it—to a cell in the Inquisition; and to make sure of holding him fast until the next *auto de fé* came round, when he was to be burned properly and regularly, he was bound with a great chain, and the chain was secured firmly to a strong staple in the cell wall.

But the devil, Señor, sometimes saves his own. On a morning, the jailer went as usual to Don Gil's cell with the bread and the water for him; and when he had opened the cell door he saw, as he believed, Don Gil in his armor waiting as usual for his bread and his water: but in a moment he perceived that what he saw was not Don Gil in his armor, but only the accursed armor standing upright full of emptiness; and that the staple was torn out; and that the great chain was broken; and that Don Gil was

gone! And then—so much to the horror of the jailer that he immediately went mad of it—the empty armor began slowly to walk up and down the cell!

After that time Don Gil never was seen, nor was he heard of, again on earth; and so on earth, when the time came for burning him at the auto de fé, he had to be burned in effigy. However—as there could be no doubt about the place to which the devil had taken him—everybody was well satisfied that he got his proper personal burning elsewhere.

Then it was, Señor, that the Holy Office most wisely ordered that that devil-possessed and doubly accursed armor should be melted, and refounded into a cross: knowing that the sanctity of that blessed emblem would quiet the curses and would hold the devils still and fast. Therefore that order was executed; and the wisdom of it—which some had questioned, on the ground that devils and curses were unsuitable material to make a cross of—was apparent as soon as the bronze turned fluid in the furnace: because there came from the fiery seething midst of it—to the dazed terror of the workmen—shouts of devil-laughter, and imprecations horrible to listen to, and frightful blasphemies; and to these succeeded, as the metal was being poured into the mould, a wild outburst of defiant remonstrance; and then all this demoniac fury died away—as the metal hardened and became fixed as a cross—at first into half-choked cries of agony, and then into confused lamentations, and at the last into little whimpering moans. Thus the devils and the curses were disposed of: and then the cross—holding them imprisoned in its holy substance—was set up in a little townlet[Pg 75] not far from Madrid in which just then

a cross happened to be wanted; and there it remained usefully for some hundreds of years.

At the end of that period—by which time everybody was dead who knew what was inside of it—the cross was asked for by the Prior of a little convent in that townlet near Madrid, who desired it that he might have it refounded into a bell; and as the Prior was a worthy person, and as he really needed a bell, his request was granted. So they made out of the cross a very beautiful bell: having on one side of it the two-headed eagle; and having on the other side of it a calvario; and having at the top of it, for its hanging, two imperial lions supporting a cross-bar in the shape of a crown. Then it was hung in the tower of the little convent; and the Prior, and all the Brothers with him, were very much pleased. But that worthy Prior, and those equally worthy Brothers, were not pleased for long, Señor: because the curses and the devils all were loose again—and their chance to do new wickednesses had come!

On a night of blackness, without any warning whatever, the whole of the townlet was awakened by the prodigious clangor of a bell furiously ringing. In an instant—seeking the cause of this disturbance—everybody came out into the night's blackness: the Señor Cura, the Señor Alcalde, the alguaciles, the Prior, the Brothers, all the townsfolk to the very last one. And when they had looked about them they found that the cause of the disturbance was the new bell of the convent: which was ringing with such an excessive violence that the night's blackness was corrupted with its noise.

Terror was upon everyone; and greater terror was upon every one when it was found out that the door of the

bell-tower was locked, and that the bell was ringing of its lone self: because the bad fact then became evident that only devils could have the matter in hand. The Señor Alcalde alone—being a very valiant gentleman, and not much believing in devils—was not satisfied with that finding. Therefore the Señor Alcalde caused the door to be unlocked and, carrying a torch with him, entered the bell-tower; and there he found the bell-rope crazily flying up and down as though a dozen men were pulling it, and nobody was pulling it—which sight somewhat shook his nerves.

However, because of his valorousness, he only stopped to cross himself; and then he went on bravely up the belfry stair. But what he saw when he was come into the belfry fairly brought him to a stand. For there was the bell ringing tempestuously; and never a visible hand was near it; and the only living thing that he found in the belfry was a great black cat with its tail bushed out and its fur bristling—which evil animal for a moment leered at him malignantly, with its green eyes gleaming in the torch-light, and then sprang past him and dashed down the stair.

Then the Señor Alcalde, no longer doubting that the bell was being rung by devils, and himself not knowing how to manage devils, called down from the belfry to the Señor Cura to come up and take charge of the matter: whereupon the Señor Cura, holding his courage in both hands, did come up into the belfry, bringing his hisopo with him, and fell to sprinkling the bell with holy water—which seemed to him, so far as he could see his way into that difficult tangle, the best thing that he could do. But his doing it, of course, was the very worst thing that he could have done: because, you see,[Pg 78] Señor,

the devils were angered beyond all endurance by being scalded with the holy water (that being the effect that holy water has upon devils) and so only rang the bell the more furiously in their agony of pain. Then the Señor Alcalde and the Señor Cura perceived that they could not quiet the devils, and decided to give up trying to. Therefore they came down from the belfry together—and they, and everybody with them, went away through the night's blackness crossing themselves, and were glad to be safe again in their homes.

The next day the Señor Alcalde made a formal inquest into the whole matter: citing to appear before him all the townsfolk and all the Brothers, and questioning them closely every one. And the result of this inquest was to make certain that the bell-ringer of the convent had not rung the bell; nor had any other of the Brothers rung it; nor had any of the townsfolk rung it. Therefore the Señor Alcalde, and with him the Señor Cura—whose opinion was of importance in such a matter—decided that the devil had rung it: and their decision was accepted by everybody, because that was what everybody from the beginning had believed.

Therefore—because such devilish doings affected the welfare of the whole kingdom—a formal report of all that had happened was submitted to the Cortes; and the Cortes, after pondering the report seriously, perceived that the matter was ecclesiastical and referred it to the Consejo of the Inquisition; and the members of the Consejo, in due course, ordered that all the facts should be digested and regularized and an opinion passed upon them by their Fiscal.

Being a very painstaking person, the Fiscal went at his work with so great an earnestness that for more than a

year he was engaged upon it. First he read all that he could find to read about bells in all the Spanish law books, from the *Siete Partidas* of Alonzo the Wise downward; then he read all that he could find about bells in such law books of foreign countries as were accessible to him; then, in the light of the information so obtained, he digested and regularized the facts of the case presented for his consideration and applied himself to writing his opinion upon them; and then, at last, he came before the Consejo and read to that body his opinion from beginning to end. Through [Pg 80] the whole of a long day the Fiscal read his opinion; and through the whole of the next day, and the next, and the next; and at the end of the fourth day he finished the reading of his opinion and sat down. And the opinion of the Fiscal was that the devil had rung the bell.

Then the Consejo, after debating for three days upon what had been read by the Fiscal, gave formal approval to his opinion; and in conformity with it the Consejo came to these conclusions:

1. That the ringing of the bell was a matter of no importance to good Christians.
2. That the bell, being possessed of a devil, should have its tongue torn out: so that never again should it dare to ring of its lone devilish self, to the peril of human souls.
3. That the bell, being dangerous to good Christians, should be banished from the Spanish Kingdom to the Indies, and forever should remain tongueless and exiled over seas.

Thereupon, that wise sentence was executed. The devil-possessed bell was taken down from the belfry of the little convent, and its wicked tongue was torn out of it; then it was carried shamefully and with insults to the

coast; then[Pg 81] it was put on board of one of the ships of the flota bound for Mexico; and in Mexico, in due course, it arrived. Being come here, and no orders coming with it regarding its disposition, it was brought from Vera Cruz to the Capital and was placed in an odd corner of one of the corridors of the Palace: and there it remained quietly—everybody being shy of meddling with a bell that was known to be alive with witchcraft—for some hundreds of years.

In that same corner it still was, Señor, when the Conde de Revillagigedo—only a little more than a century ago—became Viceroy; and as soon as that most energetic gentleman saw it he wanted to know in a hurry—being indisposed to let anything or anybody rust in idleness—why a bell that needed only a tongue in it to make it serviceable was not usefully employed. For some time no one could tell him anything more about the bell than that there was a curse upon it; and that answer did not satisfy him, because curses did not count for much in his very practical mind. In the end a very old clerk in the Secretariat gave him the bell's true story; and proved the truth of it by bringing out from deep in the archives an[Pg 82] ancient yellowed parchment: which was precisely the royal order, following the decree of the Consejo, that the bell should have its tongue torn out, and forever should remain tongueless and exiled over seas.

With that order before him, even the Conde de Revillagigedo, Señor, did not venture to have a new tongue put into the bell and to set it to regular work again; but what he did do came to much the same thing. At that very time he was engaged in pushing to a brisk completion the repairs to the Palace—that had gone on for a hundred years languishingly, following the burning

of it in the time of the Viceroy Don Gaspar de la Cerda—and among his repairings was the replacement of the Palace clock. Now a clock-bell, Señor, does not need a tongue in it, being struck with hammers from the outside; and so the Conde, whose wits were of an alertness, perceived in a moment that by employing the bell as a clock-bell he could make it useful again without traversing the king's command. And that was what immediately he did with it—and that was how the Palace clock came to have foisted upon it this accursed bell.

But, so far as I have heard, Señor, this bell conducted itself as a clock-bell with a perfect regularity and propriety: probably because the devils which were in it had grown too old to be dangerously hurtful, and because the curse that was upon it had weakened with time. I myself, as a boy and as a young man, have heard it doing its duty always punctually; and no doubt it still would be doing its duty had not the busybodying French seen fit—during the period of the Intervention, when they meddled with everything—to put another bell in the place of it and to have it melted down. What was done with the metal when the bell was melted, Señor, I do not know; but I have been told by an old founder of my acquaintance that nothing was done with it: because, as he very positively assured me, when the bell was melted the metal of it went sour in the furnace and refused to be recast.

If that is true, Señor, it looks as though all those devils in the bell—which came to it from the Moor and from the devil-forged armor and from Don Gil de Marcadante—still had some strength for wickedness left to them even in their old age.

CHAPTER 27.

THE BELLS

I.

Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats

On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the Future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour

On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling.
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—

They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells—
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

CHAPTER 28.

SOMNAMBULISM A FRAGMENT

[The following fragment will require no other preface or commentary than an extract from the Vienna Gazette of June 14, 1784. "At Great Glogau, in Silesia, the attention of physicians, and of the people, has been excited by the case of a young man, whose behaviour indicates perfect health in all respects but one. He has a habit of rising in his sleep, and performing a great many actions with as much order and exactness as when awake. This habit for a long time showed itself in freaks and achievements merely innocent, or, at least, only troublesome and inconvenient, till about six weeks ago. At that period a shocking event took place about three leagues from the town, and in the neighbourhood where the youth's family resides. A young lady, travelling with her father by night, was shot dead upon the road, by some person unknown. The officers of justice took a good deal of pains to trace the author of the crime, and at length, by carefully comparing circumstances, a suspicion was fixed upon this youth. After an accurate scrutiny, by the tribunal of the circle, he has been declared author of the murder: but what renders the case truly extraordinary is, that there are good reasons for believing that the deed was perpetrated by the youth while asleep, and was entirely unknown to himself. The young woman was the object of

his affection, and the journey in which she had engaged had given him the ut most anxiety for her safety.”]

Our guests were preparing to retire for the night, when somebody knocked loudly at the gate. The person was immediately admitted, and presented a letter to Mr. Davis. This letter was from a friend, in which he informed our guest of cer tain concerns of great importance, on which the letter-writer was extremely anxious to have a personal conference with his friend; but knowing that he intended to set out from — four days previous to his writing, he was hindered from setting out

by the apprehension of missing him upon the way. Meanwhile, he had deemed it best to send a special message to quicken his motions, should he be able to find him.

The importance of this interview was such, that Mr. Davis declared his intention of setting out immediately. No solici tions could induce him to delay a moment. His daughter, con vinced of the urgency of his motives, readily consented to brave the perils and discomforts of a nocturnal journey.

This event had not been anticipated by me. The shock that it produced in me was, to my own apprehension, a subject of surprise. I could not help perceiving that it was greater than the occasion would justify. The pleasures of this intercourse were, in a moment, to be ravished from me. I was to part from my new friend, and when we should again meet it was impos sible to foresee. It was then that I recollected her expressions, that assured me that her choice was fixed upon another. If I saw her again, it would probably be as a wife. The claims of friendship, as well as those of love, would then be swallowed up by a superior and hateful obligation.

But, though betrothed, she was not wedded. That was yet to come; but why should it be considered as inevitable? Our dispositions and views must change with circumstances. Who was he that Constantia Davis had chosen? Was he born to outstrip all competitors in ardour and fidelity? We cannot fail of chusing that which appears to us most worthy of choice. He had hitherto been unrivalled; but was not this day destined to introduce to her one, to whose merits every competitor must yield? He that would resign this prize, without an arduous struggle, would, indeed, be of all wretches the most pusillanimous and feeble.

Why, said I, do I cavil at her present choice? I will maintain that it does honour to her discernment. She would not be that accomplished being which she seems, if she had acted otherwise. It would be sacrilege to question the rectitude of her conduct. The object of her choice was worthy. The engagement of her heart in his favour was unavoidable, because her experience had not hitherto produced one deserving to be placed in competition with him. As soon as his superior is found, his claims will be annihilated. Has not this propitious accident supplied the defects of her former observation? But soft! is she not be
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betrothed? If she be, what have I to dread? The engagement is accompanied with certain conditions. Whether they be openly expressed or not, they necessarily limit it. Her vows are binding on condition that the present situation continues, and that an other does not arise, previously to marriage, by whom claims those of the present lover will be justly superseded.

But how shall I contend with this unknown admirer? She is going whither it will not be possible for me to

follow her. An interview of a few hours is not sufficient to accomplish the important purpose that I meditate; but even this is now at an end. I shall speedily be forgotten by her. I have done nothing that entitles me to a place in her remembrance. While my rival will be left at liberty to prosecute his suit, I shall be abandoned to solitude, and have no other employment than to ruminate on the bliss that has eluded my grasp. If scope were allowed to my exertions, I might hope that they would ultimately be crowned with success; but, as it is, I am manacled and powerless. The good would easily be reached, if my hands were at freedom: now that they are fettered, the attainment is impossible.

But is it true that such is my forlorn condition? What is it that irrecoverably binds me to this spot? There are seasons of respite from my present occupations, in which I commonly indulge myself in journeys. This lady's habitation is not at an immeasurable distance from mine. It may be easily comprised within the sphere of my excursions. Shall I want a motive or excuse for paying her a visit? Her father has claimed to be better acquainted with my uncle. The lady has intimated, that the sight of me, at any future period, will give her pleasure. This will furnish ample apology for visiting their house. But why should I delay my visit? Why not immediately attend them on their way? If not on their whole journey, at least for a part of it? A journey in darkness is not unaccompanied with peril. What ever be the caution or knowledge of their guide, they cannot be supposed to surpass mine, who have trodden this part of the way so often, that my chamber floor is scarcely more familiar to me. Besides, there is danger, from which, I am persuaded,

my attendance would be a sufficient, an indispensable safeguard.

I am unable to explain why I conceived this journey to be attended with uncommon danger. My mind was, at first, occupied with the remoter consequences of this untimely departure,

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but my thoughts gradually returned to the contemplation of its immediate effects. There were twenty miles to a ferry, by which the travellers designed to cross the river, and at which they expected to arrive at sun-rise the next morning. I have said that the intermediate way was plain and direct. Their guide professed to be thoroughly acquainted with it.—From what quarter, then, could danger be expected to arise? It was easy to enumerate and magnify possibilities; that a tree, or ridge, or stone unobserved might overturn the carriage; that their horse might fail, or be urged, by some accident, to flight, were far from being impossible. Still they were such as justified caution. My vigilance would, at least, contribute to their security. But I could not for a moment divest myself of the belief, that my aid was indispensable. As I pondered on this image my emotions arose to terror.

All men are, at times, influenced by inexplicable sentiments. Ideas haunt them in spite of all their efforts to discard them. Prepossessions are entertained, for which their reason is unable to discover any adequate cause. The strength of a belief, when it is destitute of any rational foundation, seems, of itself, to furnish a new ground for credulity. We first admit a powerful persuasion, and then, from reflecting on the insufficiency of the ground

on which it is built, instead of being prompted to dismiss it, we become more forcibly attached to it.

I had received little of the education of design. I owed the formation of my character chiefly to accident. I shall not pretend to determine in what degree I was credulous or superstitious. A belief, for which I could not rationally account, I was sufficiently prone to consider as the work of some invisible agent; as an intimation from the great source of existence and knowledge. My imagination was vivid. My passions, when I allowed them sway, were incontrollable. My conduct, as my feelings, was characterised by precipitation and headlong energy.

On this occasion I was eloquent in my remonstrances. I could not suppress my opinion, that unseen danger lurked in their way. When called upon to state the reasons of my apprehensions, I could only enumerate possibilities of which they were already apprised, but which they regarded in their true light. I

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made bold enquiries into the importance of the motives that should induce them to expose themselves to the least hazard. They could not urge their horse beyond his real strength. They would be compelled to suspend their journey for some time the next day. A few hours were all that they could hope to save by their utmost expedition. Were a few hours of such infinite moment?

In these representations I was sensible that I had overleaped the bounds of rigid decorum. It was not my place to weigh his motives and inducements. My age and situation, in this family, rendered silence and submission my peculiar province. I had hitherto confined myself within bounds of scrupulous propriety, but now I had

suddenly lost sight of all regards but those which related to the safety of the travellers.

Mr. Davis regarded my vehemence with suspicion. He eyed me with more attention than I had hitherto received from him. The impression which this unexpected interference made upon him, I was, at the time, too much absorbed in other considerations to notice. It was afterwards plain that he suspected my zeal to originate in a passion for his daughter, which it was by no means proper for him to encourage. If this idea occurred to him, his humanity would not suffer it to generate indignation or resentment in his bosom. On the contrary, he treated my arguments with mildness, and assured me that I had overrated the inconveniences and perils of the journey. Some regard was to be paid to his daughter's ease and health. He did not believe them to be materially endangered. They should make suitable provision of cloaks and caps against the inclemency of the air. Had not the occasion been extremely urgent, and of that urgency he alone could be the proper judge, he should certainly not consent to endure even these trivial inconveniences. "But you seem," continued he, "chiefly anxious for my daughter's sake. There is, without doubt, a large portion of gallantry in your fears. It is natural and venial in a young man to take infinite pains for the service of the ladies; but, my dear, what say you? I will refer this important question to your decision. Shall we go, or wait till the morning?"

"Go, by all means," replied she. "I confess the fears that have been expressed appear to be groundless. I am bound to our

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young friend for the concern he takes in our welfare,

but certainly his imagination misleads him. I am not so much a girl as to be scared merely because it is dark.”

I might have foreseen this decision; but what could I say? My fears and my repugnance were strong as ever. The evil that was menaced was terrible. By remaining where they were till the next day they would escape it. Was no other method sufficient for their preservation? My attendance would effectually obviate the danger.

This scheme possessed irresistible attractions. I was thankful to the danger for suggesting it. In the fervour of my conceptions, I was willing to run to the world's end to show my devotion to the lady. I could sustain, with alacrity, the fatigue of many nights of travelling and watchfulness. I should unspeakably prefer them to warmth and ease, if I could thereby extort from this lady a single phrase of gratitude or approbation.

I proposed to them to bear them company, at least till the morning light. They would not listen to it. Half my purpose was indeed answered by the glistening eyes and affectionate looks of Miss Davis, but the remainder I was pertinaciously bent on likewise accomplishing. If Mr. Davis had not suspected my motives, he would probably have been less indisposed to compliance. As it was, however, his objections were insuperable. They earnestly insisted on my relinquishing my design. My uncle, also, not seeing any thing that justified extraordinary precautions, added his injunctions. I was conscious of my inability to show any sufficient grounds for my fears. As long as their representations rung in my ears, I allowed myself to be ashamed of my weakness, and conjured up a temporary persuasion that my attendance was, indeed, superfluous, and that I should show most wisdom in suffering them to depart alone.

But this persuasion was transient. They had no sooner placed themselves in their carriage, and exchanged the parting adieus, but my apprehensions returned upon me as forcibly as ever. No doubt part of my despondency flowed from the idea of separation, which, however auspicious it might prove to the lady, portended unspeakable discomforts to me. But this was not all. I was breathless with fear of some unknown and terrible disaster that awaited them. A hundred times I resolved to disregard their remonstrances, and hover near them till the

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morning. This might be done without exciting their displeasure. It was easy to keep aloof and be unseen by them. I should doubtless have pursued this method if my fears had assumed any definite and consistent form; if, in reality, I had been able distinctly to tell what it was that I feared. My guardianship would be of no use against the obvious sources of danger in the ruggedness and obscurity of the way. For that end I must have tendered them my services, which I knew would be refused, and, if pertinaciously obtruded on them, might justly excite displeasure. I was not insensible, too, of the obedience that was due to my uncle. My absence would be remarked. Some anger and much disquietude would have been the consequences with respect to him. And after all, what was this groundless and ridiculous persuasion that governed me? Had I profited nothing by experience of the effects of similar follies? Was I never to attend to the lessons of sobriety and truth? How ignominious to be thus the slave of a fortuitous and inexplicable impulse! To be the victim of terrors more chimerical than those which haunt the dreams of idiots

and children! They can describe clearly, and attribute a real existence to the object of their terrors. Not so can I.

Influenced by these considerations, I shut the gate at which I had been standing, and turned towards the house. After a few steps I paused, turned, and listened to the distant sounds of the carriage. My courage was again on the point of yielding, and new efforts were requisite before I could resume my first resolutions.

I spent a drooping and melancholy evening. My imagination continually hovered over our departed guests. I recalled every circumstance of the road. I reflected by what means they were to pass that bridge, or extricate themselves from this slough. I imagined the possibility of their guide's forgetting the position of a certain oak that grew in the road. It was an ancient tree, whose boughs extended, on all sides, to an extraordinary distance. They seemed disposed by nature in that way in which they would produce the most ample circumference of shade. I could not recollect any other obstruction from which much was to be feared. This indeed was several miles distant, and its appearance was too remarkable not to have excited attention.

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The family retired to sleep. My mind had been too powerfully excited to permit me to imitate their example. The incidents of the last two days passed over my fancy like a vision. The revolution was almost incredible which my mind had undergone, in consequence of these incidents. It was so abrupt and entire that my soul seemed to have passed into a new form. I pondered on every incident till the surrounding scenes disappeared, and I forgot my real situation. I mused upon the image of Miss Davis till my whole soul was dissolved in tenderness, and

my eyes overflowed with tears. There insensibly arose a sort of persuasion that destiny had irreversibly decreed that I should never see her more.

While engaged in this melancholy occupation, of which I can not say how long it lasted, sleep overtook me as I sat. Scarcely a minute had elapsed during this period without conceiving the design, more or less strenuously, of sallying forth, with a view to overtake and guard the travellers; but this design was embarrased with invincible objections, and was alternately formed and laid aside. At length, as I have said, I sunk into profound slumber, if that slumber can be termed profound, in which my fancy was incessantly employed in calling up the forms, into new combinations, which had constituted my waking reveries.—The images were fleeting and transient, but the events of the morrow recalled them to my remembrance with sufficient distinctness. The terrors which I had so deeply and unaccountably imbibed could not fail of retaining some portion of their influence, in spite of sleep.

In my dreams, the design which I could not bring myself to execute while awake I embraced without hesitation. I was summoned, methought, to defend this lady from the attacks of an assassin. My ideas were full of confusion and inaccuracy. All that I can recollect is, that my efforts had been unsuccessful to avert the stroke of the murderer. This, however, was not accomplished without drawing on his head a bloody retribution. I imagined myself engaged, for a long time, in pursuit of the guilty, and, at last, to have detected him in an artful disguise. I did not employ the usual preliminaries which honour prescribes, but, stimulated by rage, attacked him with a pistol, and terminated his career by a mortal wound.

I should not have described these phantoms had there not

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been a remarkable coincidence between them and the real events of that night. In the morning, my uncle, whose custom it was to rise first in the family, found me quietly reposing in the chair in which I had fallen asleep. His summons roused and startled me. This posture was so unusual that I did not readily recover my recollection, and perceive in what circumstances I was placed.

I shook off the dreams of the night. Sleep had refreshed and invigorated my frame, as well as tranquillized my thoughts. I still mused on yesterday's adventures, but my reveries were more cheerful and benign. My fears and bodements were dispersed with the dark, and I went into the fields, not merely to perform the duties of the day, but to ruminate on plans for the future.

My golden visions, however, were soon converted into visions of despair. A messenger arrived before noon, intreating my presence, and that of my uncle, at the house of Dr. Inglefield, a gentleman who resided at the distance of three miles from our house. The messenger explained the intention of this request. It appeared that the terrors of the preceding evening had some mysterious connection with truth. By some deplorable accident, Miss Davis had been shot on the road, and was still lingering in dreadful agonies at the house of this physician. I was in a field near the road when the messenger approached the house. On observing me, he called me. His tale was meagre and imperfect, but the substance of it it was easy to gather. I stood for a moment motionless and aghast. As soon as I recovered my

thoughts I set off full speed, and made not a moment's pause till I reached the house of Inglefield.

The circumstances of this mournful event, as I was able to collect them at different times, from the witnesses, were these. After they had parted from us, they proceeded on their way for some time without molestation. The clouds disappearing, the star-light enabled them with less difficulty to discern their path. They met not a human being till they came within less than three miles of the oak which I have before described. Here Miss Davis looked forward with some curiosity and said to her father, "Do you not see some one in the road before us? I saw him this moment move across from the fence on the right hand and stand still in the middle of the road."

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"I see nothing, I must confess," said the father: "but that is no subject of wonder; your young eyes will of course see far ther than my old ones."

"I see him clearly at this moment," rejoined the lady. "If he remain a short time where he is, or seems to be, we shall be able to ascertain his properties. Our horse's head will deter mine whether his substance be impassive or not."

The carriage slowly advancing, and the form remaining in the same spot, Mr. Davis at length perceived it, but was not allowed a clearer examination, for the person, having, as it seemed, ascertained the nature of the cavalcade, shot across the road, and disappeared. The behaviour of this unknown person furnished the travellers with a topic of abundant speculation.

Few possessed a firmer mind than Miss Davis; but whether she was assailed, on this occasion, with a mysterious foreboding of her destiny; whether the

eloquence of my fears had not, in spite of resolution, infected her; or whether she imagined evils that my incautious temper might draw upon me, and which might originate in our late interview, certain it was that her spirits were visibly depressed. This accident made no sensible alteration in her. She was still disconsolate and incommunicative. All the efforts of her father were insufficient to inspire her with cheerfulness. He repeatedly questioned her as to the cause of this unwonted despondency. Her answer was, that her spirits were indeed depressed, but she believed that the circumstance was casual. She knew of nothing that could justify despondency. But such is humanity. Cheerfulness and dejection will take their turns in the best regulated bosoms, and come and go when they will, and not at the command of reason. This observation was succeeded by a pause. At length Mr. Davis said, "A thought has just occurred to me. The person whom we just now saw is young Althorpe."

Miss Davis was startled: "Why, my dear father, should you think so? It is too dark to judge, at this distance, by resemblance of figure. Ardent and rash as he appears to be, I should scarcely suspect him on this occasion. With all the fiery qualities of youth, unchastised by experience, untamed by adversity, he is capable no doubt of extravagant adventures, but what could induce him to act in this manner?"

"You know the fears that he expressed concerning the issue

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of this night's journey. We know not what foundation he might have had for these fears. He told us of no danger that ought to deter us, but it is hard to conceive that he

should have been thus vehement without cause. We know not what motives might have induced him to conceal from us the sources of his terror. And since he could not obtain our consent to his attending us, he has taken these means, perhaps, of effecting his purpose. The darkness might easily conceal him from our observation. He might have passed us without our noticing him, or he might have made a circuit in the woods we have just passed, and come out before us."

"That I own," replied the daughter, "is not improbable. If it be true, I shall be sorry for his own sake, but if there be any danger from which his attendance can secure us, I shall be well pleased for all our sakes. He will reflect with some satisfaction, perhaps, that he has done or intended us a service. It would be cruel to deny him a satisfaction so innocent."

"Pray, my dear, what think you of this young man? Does his ardour to serve us flow from a right source?"

"It flows, I have no doubt, from a double source. He has a kind heart, and delights to oblige others: but this is not all. He is likewise in love, and imagines that he cannot do too much for the object of his passion."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Davis, in some surprise. "You speak very positively. That is no more than it suspected; but how came you to know it with so much certainty?"

"The information came to me in the directest manner. He told me so himself."

"So ho! why, the impertinent young rogue!"

"Nay, my dear father, his behavior did not merit that epithet. He is rash and inconsiderate. That is the utmost amount of his guilt. A short absence will show him the true state of his feelings. It was unavoidable, in one of his character, to fall in love with the first woman whose

appearance was in any degree specious. But attachments like these will be extinguished as easily as they are formed. I do not fear for him on this account."

"Have you reason to fear for him on any account?" "Yes. The period of youth will soon pass away. Overweening and fickle, he will go on committing one mistake after another, incapable of repairing his errors, or of profiting by the daily

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lessons of experience. His genius will be merely an implement of mischief. His greater capacity will be evinced merely by the greater portion of unhappiness that, by means of it, will accrue to others or rebound upon himself."

"I see, my dear, that your spirits are low. Nothing else, surely, could suggest such melancholy presages. For my part, I question not, but he will one day be a fine fellow and a happy one. I like him exceedingly. I shall take pains to be acquainted with his future adventures, and do him all the good that I can."

"That intention," said his daughter, "is worthy of the goodness of your heart. He is no less an object of regard to me than to you. I trust I shall want neither the power nor inclination to contribute to his welfare. At present, however, his welfare will be best promoted by forgetting me. Hereafter, I shall solicit a renewal of intercourse."

"Speak lower," said the father. "If I mistake not, there is the same person again." He pointed to the field that skirted the road on the left hand. The young lady's better eyes enabled her to detect his mistake. It was the trunk of a cherry-tree that he had observed.

They proceeded in silence. Contrary to custom, the lady was buried in musing. Her father, whose temper

and inclinations were moulded by those of his child, insensibly subsided into the same state.

The re-appearance of the same figure that had already excited their attention diverted them anew from their contemplations. "As I live," exclaimed Mr. Davis, "that thing, whatever it be, haunts us. I do not like it. This is strange conduct for young Althorpe to adopt. Instead of being our protector, the danger, against which he so pathetically warned us, may be, in some inscrutable way, connected with this personage. It is best to be upon our guard."

"Nay, my father," said the lady, "be not disturbed. What danger can be dreaded by two persons from one? This thing, I dare say, means us no harm. What is at present inexplicable might be obvious enough if we were better acquainted with this neighbourhood. It is not worth a thought. You see it is now gone." Mr. Davis looked again, but it was no longer discernible.

They were now approaching a wood. Mr. Davis called to the

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guide to stop. His daughter enquired the reason of this command. She found it arose from his uncertainty as to the propriety of proceeding.

"I know not how it is," said he, "but I begin to be affected with the fears of young Althorpe. I am half resolved not to enter this wood.—That light yonder informs that a house is near. It may not be unadvisable to stop. I cannot think of delaying our journey till morning; but, by stopping a few minutes, we may possibly collect some useful information. Perhaps it will be expedient and practicable to procure the attendance of another person. I

am not well pleased with myself for declining our young friend's offer."

To this proposal Miss Davis objected the inconveniences that calling at a farmer's house, at this time of night, when all were retired to rest, would probably occasion. "Besides," continued she, "the light which you saw is gone: a sufficient proof that it was nothing but a meteor."

At this moment they heard a noise, at a small distance behind them, as of shutting a gate. They called. Speedily an answer was returned in a tone of mildness. The person approached the chaise, and enquired who they were, whence they came, whither they were going, and, lastly, what they wanted.

Mr. Davis explained to this inquisitive person, in a few words, the nature of their situation, mentioned the appearance on the road, and questioned him, in his turn, as to what inconveniences were to be feared from prosecuting his journey. Satisfactory answers were returned to these enquiries.

"As to what you seed in the road," continued he, "I reckon it was nothing but a sheep or a cow. I am not more scary than some folks, but I never goes out a' nights without I sees some sich thing as that, that I takes for a man or woman, and am scared a little oftentimes, but not much. I'm sure after to find that it's not nothing but a cow, or hog, or tree, or something. If it wasn't some sich thing you seed, I reckon it was Nick Handyside."

"Nick Handyside! who was he?"

"It was a fellow that went about the country a' nights. A shocking fool to be sure, that loved to plague and frighten people. Yes. Yes. It couldn't be nobody, he reckoned, but Nick.

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Nick was a droll thing. He wondered they'd never heard of Nick. He reckoned they were strangers in these here parts." "Very true, my friend. But who is Nick? Is he a reptile to be shunned, or trampled on?"

"Why I don't know how as that. Nick is an odd soul to be sure; but he don't do nobody no harm, as ever I heard, except by scaring them. He is easily skeart though, for that matter, himself. He loves to frighten folks, but he's shocking apt to be frightened himself. I reckon you took Nick for a ghost. That's a shocking good story, I declare. Yet it's happened hundreds and hundreds of times, I guess, and more."

When this circumstance was mentioned, my uncle, as well as myself, was astonished at our own negligence. While enumerating, on the preceding evening, the obstacles and inconveniences which the travellers were likely to encounter, we entirely and unaccountably overlooked one circumstance, from which inquietude might reasonably have been expected. Near the spot where they now were, lived a Mr. Handyside, whose only son was an idiot. He also merited the name of monster, if a projecting breast, a mis-shapen head, features horrid and distorted, and a voice that resembled nothing that was ever before heard, could entitle him to that appellation. This being, besides the natural deformity of his frame, wore looks and practised gesticulations that were, in an inconceivable degree, uncouth and hideous. He was mischievous, but his freaks were subjects of little apprehension to those who were accustomed to them, though they were frequently occasions of alarm to strangers. He particularly delighted in imposing on the ignorance of strangers and the timidity of women. He

was a perpetual rover. Entirely bereft of reason, his sole employment consisted in sleeping, and eating, and roaming. He would frequently escape at night, and a thousand anecdotes could have been detailed respecting the tricks which Nick Handyside had played upon wayfarers.

Other considerations, however, had, in this instance, so much engrossed our minds, that Nick Handyside had never been once thought of or mentioned. This was the more remarkable, as there had very lately happened an adventure, in which this person had acted a principal part. He had wandered from home, and got bewildered in a desolate tract, known by the

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name of Norwood. It was a region, rude, sterile, and lonely, bestrewn with rocks, and embarrassed with bushes. He had remained for some days in this wilderness. Unable to extricate himself, and, at length, tormented with hunger, he manifested his distress by the most doleful shrieks. These were uttered with most vehemence, and heard at greatest distance, by night. At first, those who heard them were panic-struck; but, at length, they furnished a clue by which those who were in search of him were guided to the spot. Notwithstanding the recentness and singularity of this adventure, and the probability that our guests would suffer molestation from this cause, so strangely forgetful had we been, that no caution on this head had been given. This caution, indeed, as the event testified, would have been superfluous, and yet I cannot enough wonder that in hunting for some reason, by which I might justify my fears to them or to myself, I had totally overlooked this mischief-loving idiot.

After listening to an ample description of Nick, being warned to proceed with particular caution in a part of the road that was near at hand, and being assured that they had nothing to dread from human interference, they resumed their journey with new confidence.

Their attention was frequently excited by rustling leaves or stumbling footsteps, and the figure which they doubted not to belong to Nick Handyside, occasionally hovered in their sight. This appearance no longer inspired them with apprehension. They had been assured that a stern voice was sufficient to re pulse him, when most importunate. This antic being treated all others as children. He took pleasure in the effects which the sight of his own deformity produced, and betokened his satisfaction by a laugh, which might have served as a model to the poet who has depicted the ghastly risibilities of Death. On this occasion, however, the monster behaved with unusual moderation. He never came near enough for his peculiarities to be distinguished by star-light. There was nothing fantastic in his motions, nor any thing surprising, but the celerity of his transitions. They were unaccompanied by those howls, which reminded you at one time of a troop of hungry wolves, and had, at another, something in them inexpressibly wild and melancholy. This monster possessed a certain species of dexterity. His

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talents, differently applied, would have excited rational admiration. He was fleet as a deer. He was patient, to an incredible degree, of watchfulness, and cold, and hunger. He had improved the flexibility of his voice, till his cries, always loud and rueful, were capable of being diversified without end. Instances had been known, in which the stoutest heart was appalled by them; and some,

particularly in the case of women, in which they had been productive of consequences truly deplorable.

When the travellers had arrived at that part of the wood where, as they had been informed, it was needful to be particularly cautious, Mr. Davis, for their greater security, proposed to his daughter to alight. The exercise of walking, he thought, after so much time spent in a close carriage, would be salutary and pleasant. The young lady readily embraced the proposal. They forthwith alighted, and walked at a small distance before the chaise, which was now conducted by the servant. From this moment the spectre, which, till now, had been occasionally visible, entirely disappeared. This incident naturally led the conversation to this topic. So singular a specimen of the forms which human nature is found to assume could not fail of suggesting a variety of remarks.

They pictured to themselves many combinations of circumstances in which Handyside might be the agent, and in which the most momentous effects might flow from his agency, without its being possible for others to conjecture the true nature of the agent. The propensities of this being might contribute to realize, on an American road, many of those imaginary tokens and perils which abound in the wildest romance. He would be an admirable machine, in a plan whose purpose was to generate or foster, in a given subject, the frenzy of quixotism.—No theatre was better adapted than Norwood to such an exhibition. This part of the country had long been deserted by beasts of prey. Bears might still, perhaps, be found during a very rigorous season, but wolves which, when the country was a desert, were extremely numerous, had now, in consequence of increasing population, withdrawn to more savage haunts.

Yet the voice of Handyside, varied with the force and skill of which he was known to be capable, would fill these shades with outcries as ferocious as those which are to be heard in Siamese or Abyssinian forests. The tale of his recent elopement had been told

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by the man with whom they had just parted, in a rustic but picturesque style.

“But why,” said the lady, “did not our kind host inform us of this circumstance? He must surely have been well acquainted with the existence and habits of this Handyside. He must have perceived to how many groundless alarms our ignorance, in this respect, was likely to expose us. It is strange that he did not afford us the slightest intimation of it.”

Mr. Davis was no less surprised at this omission. He was at a loss to conceive how this should be forgotten in the midst of those minute directions, in which every cause had been laboriously recollected from which he might incur danger or suffer obstruction.

This person, being no longer an object of terror, began to be regarded with a very lively curiosity. They even wished for his appearance and near approach, that they might carry away with them more definite conceptions of his figure. The lady declared she should be highly pleased by hearing his outcries, and consoled herself with the belief, that he would not allow them to pass the limits which he had prescribed to his wanderings, without greeting them with a strain or two. This wish had scarcely been uttered, when it was completely gratified.

The lady involuntarily started, and caught hold of her father’s arm. Mr. Davis himself was disconcerted. A

scream, dismally loud, and piercingly shrill, was uttered by one at less than twenty paces from them.

The monster had shown some skill in the choice of a spot suitable to his design. Neighbouring precipices, and a thick umbrage of oaks, on either side, contributed to prolong and to heighten his terrible notes. They were rendered more awful by the profound stillness that preceded and followed them. They were able speedily to quiet the trepidations which this hideous outcry, in spite of preparation and foresight, had produced, but they had not foreseen one of its unhappy consequences.

In a moment Mr. Davis was alarmed by the rapid sound of footsteps behind him. His presence of mind, on this occasion, probably saved himself and his daughter from instant destruction. He leaped out of the path, and, by a sudden exertion, at the same moment, threw the lady to some distance from the tract. The horse that drew the chaise rushed by them with the

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celerity of lightning. Affrighted at the sounds which had been uttered at a still less distance from the horse than from Mr. Davis, possibly with a malicious design to produce this very effect, he jerked the bridle from the hands that held it, and rushed forward with headlong speed. The man, before he could provide for his own safety, was beaten to the earth. He was considerably bruised by the fall, but presently recovered his feet, and went in pursuit of the horse.

This accident happened at about a hundred yards from the oak, against which so many cautions had been given. It was not possible, at any time, without considerable caution, to avoid it. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that, in a few seconds, the carriage was shocked

against the trunk, overturned, and dashed into a thousand fragments. The noise of the crash sufficiently informed them of this event. Had the horse been inclined to stop, a repetition, for the space of some minutes, of the same savage and terrible shrieks would have added tenfold to his consternation and to the speed of his flight. After this dismal strain had ended, Mr. Davis raised his daughter from the ground. She had suffered no material injury. As soon as they recovered from the confusion into which this accident had thrown them, they began to consult upon the measures proper to be taken upon this emergency. They were left alone. The servant had gone in pursuit of the flying horse. Whether he would be able to retake him was extremely dubious. Meanwhile they were surrounded by darkness. What was the distance of the next house could not be known. At that hour of the night they could not hope to be directed, by the far-seen taper, to any hospitable roof. The only alternative, therefore, was to remain where they were, uncertain of the fate of their companion, or to go forward with the utmost expedition.

They could not hesitate to embrace the latter. In a few minutes they arrived at the oak. The chaise appeared to have been dashed against a knotty projection of the trunk, which was large enough for a person to be conveniently seated on it. Here they again paused.—Miss Davis desired to remain here a few minutes to recruit her exhausted strength. She proposed to her father to leave her here, and go forward in quest of the horse and the servant. He might return as speedily as he thought proper. She did not fear to be alone. The voice was still. Having

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accomplished his malicious purposes, the spectre had

probably taken his final leave of them. At all events, if the report of the rustic was true, she had no personal injury to fear from him.

Through some deplorable infatuation, as he afterwards deemed it, Mr. Davis complied with her intreaties, and went in search of the missing. He had engaged in a most unpromising undertaking. The man and horse were by this time at a considerable distance. The former would, no doubt, shortly return. Whether his pursuit succeeded or miscarried, he would surely see the propriety of hastening his return with what tidings he could obtain, and to ascertain his master's situation. Add to this, the impropriety of leaving a woman, single and unarmed, to the machinations of this demoniac. He had scarcely parted with her when these reflections occurred to him. His resolution was changed. He turned back with the intention of immediately seeking her. At the same moment, he saw the flash and heard the discharge of a pistol. The light proceeded from the foot of the oak. His imagination was filled with horrible forebodings. He ran with all his speed to the spot. He called aloud upon the name of his daughter, but, alas! she was unable to answer him. He found her stretched at the foot of the tree, senseless, and weltering in her blood. He lifted her in his arms, and seated her against the trunk. He found himself stained with blood, flowing from a wound, which either the darkness of the night, or the confusion of his thoughts, hindered him from tracing. Overwhelmed with a catastrophe so dreadful and unexpected, he was divested of all presence of mind. The author of his calamity had vanished. No human being was at hand to succour him in his uttermost distress. He beat his head

against the ground, tore away his venerable locks, and rent the air with his cries.

Fortunately there was a dwelling at no great distance from this scene. The discharge of a pistol produces a sound too loud not to be heard far and wide, in this lonely region. This house belonged to a physician. He was a man noted for his humanity and sympathy. He was roused, as well as most of his family, by a sound so uncommon. He rose instantly, and calling up his people proceeded with lights to the road. The lamentations of Mr. Davis directed them to the place. To the physician the scene was inexplicable. Who was the author of this distress; by whom the pistol was discharged; whether through some untoward chance or with design, he was as yet uninformed, nor could he gain any information from the incoherent despair of Mr. Davis.

Every measure that humanity and professional skill could suggest were employed on this occasion. The dying lady was removed to the house. The ball had lodged in her brain, and to extract it was impossible. Why should I dwell on the remaining incidents of this tale? She languished till the next morning, and then expired.

1805

CHAPTER 29.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was –but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me –upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain –upon the bleak walls –upon the vacant eye-like windows –upon a few rank sedges –and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees –with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium –the bitter lapse into everyday life –the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart –an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it –I paused to think –what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of

Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down –but with a shudder even more thrilling than before –upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray ledge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country –a letter from him –which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness –of a mental disorder which oppressed him –and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said –it the apparent heart that went with his request –which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly

obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognisable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honoured as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other –it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher” –an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment –that of looking down within the tarn –had

been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition –for why should I not so term it? –served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy –a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity-an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn –a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric

gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me –while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy –while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this –I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised

panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality –of the constrained effort of the ennuye man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And

now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence –an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy –an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision –that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation –that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy –a mere nervous affection, he

immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odours of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I must perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition—I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family

mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit-an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin –to the severe and long-continued illness –indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution-of a tenderly beloved sister –his sole companion for long years –his last and only relative on earth. “Her decease,” he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, “would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.” While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread –and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother –but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken

herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain –that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself: and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavours to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why; –from these

paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavour to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least –in the circumstances then surrounding me –there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendour.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid facility of his impromptus could not be so accounted for. They must

have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace," ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:

I.

In the greenest of our valleys,
By good angels tenanted,
Once fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace —reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion —
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

II.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow;
(This —all this —was in the olden
Time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odour went away.

III.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne, where sitting
(Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

IV.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

V.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And, round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

VI.

And travellers now within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows, see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a rapid ghastly river,

Through the pale door,
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh –but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men have thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest abandon of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones –in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many fungi which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around –above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence –the evidence of the sentience –was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke,) in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made him what I now saw him –what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books –the books which, for years, had formed

no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid –were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the Ververt et Chartreuse of Gresset; the Belphegor of Machiavelli; the Heaven and Hell of Swedenborg; the Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg; the Chiromancy of Robert Flud, of Jean D’Indagine, and of De la Chambre; the Journey into the Blue Distance of Tieck; and the City of the Sun of Campanella. One favourite volume was a small octavo edition of the Directorium Inquisitorum, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and AEgipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic –the manual of a forgotten church –the Vigilae Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiae Maguntinae.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when

I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the stair case, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our

glances, however, rested not long upon the dead –for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toll, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue –but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was labouring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night

of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch –while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavoured to believe that much, if not all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room –of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremour gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened –I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me –to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavoured to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognised it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped, with a gentle touch, at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan –but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes –an evidently

restrained hysteria in his whole demeanour. His air appalled me –but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

“And you have not seen it?” he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence –“you have not then seen it? –but, stay! you shall.” Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this –yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars –nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapour, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

“You must not –you shall not behold this!” said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him, with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat. “These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not

uncommon –or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; –the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favourite romances. I will read, and you shall listen; –and so we will pass away this terrible night together.”

The antique volume which I had taken up was the “Mad Trist” of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favourite of Usher’s more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild over-strained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

“And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of

the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling there-with sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest.

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me) —it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:

“But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanour, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten —

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;
Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win.

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears

with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.”

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement –for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound –the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon’s unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of the second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanour. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast –yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea –for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

“And now, the champion, having escaped from the

terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.”

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than –as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver, became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

“Not hear it? –yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Long –long –long –many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it –yet I dared not –oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am! –I dared not –I dared not speak! We have put her living in the tomb! Said I not that my senses were acute? I now tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them –many, many days ago –yet I dared not –I dared not speak! And now –to-night –Ethelred –ha! ha! –the breaking of the hermit’s door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the

clangour of the shield! –say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? MADMAN!” here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul –“MADMAN! I TELL YOU THAT SHE NOW STANDS WITHOUT THE DOOR!”

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell –the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed, threw slowly back, upon the instant, ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust –but then without those doors there DID stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold, then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely-

discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zig-zag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened –there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind –the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight –my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder –there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters –and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “HOUSE OF USHER.”

CHAPTER 30.

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.
We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –
We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –
Or rather – He passed Us –
The Dews drew quivering and Chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My Tippet – only Tulle –
We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground –
Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity –

CHAPTER 31.

**MUSHROOMS IN A TENNESSEE GRAVEYARD
BY GREGORY EMILIO**

For a moment, I'm tempted to believe
that the pumpkin-colored constellations
of chanterelles blossomed above a grave
possess in their ribbed, wavering tunics
and scalloped ridges, in their apricot scent,
some mineral trace of the long-gone bodies
below them, some fecund, far-off echo—
a little human afterlife in the spores.

After a hard rain, anything remains
possible, even the moist, cricketed idea
of the divine, a bright fungal miracle.
Elizabeth Anne Riley's bone-dust rising
up delicious, in spangled profusion—
an offering to eat, if not believe.

PART VIII.

**TESTIMONY AND
TRANSCENDENCE**

CHAPTER 32.

A DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL LIGHT

IMMEDIATELY IMPARTED TO THE SOUL BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, SHOWN TO BE BOTH A SCRIPTURAL AND RATIONAL DOCTRINE.°

Matt. xvi.—And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Christ says these words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of his disciples, who men said he was; not that he needed to be informed, but only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer, that some said he was John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. When they had thus given an account who others said he was, Christ asks them, who they said he was. Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: he readily replied to the question, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Upon this occasion, Christ says as he does *to* him, and *of* him in the text: in which we may observe,

1. That Peter is pronounced blessed on this account. *Blessed art Thou.*—“Thou art a happy man, that thou art not ignorant of this, that I am Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others

are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing, and some another; but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy[Pg 22] art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in this matter.”

2. The evidence of this his happiness declared; viz., that God, and he only, had *revealed it* to him. This is an evidence of his being *blessed*.

First, As it shows how peculiarly favored he was of God above others; q. d., “How highly favored art thou, that others that are wise and great men, the Scribes, Pharisees and Rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my Heavenly Father should thus set his love on thee, Simon Barjona. This argues thee blessed, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God’s distinguishing love.”

Secondly, It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above any that flesh and blood can reveal. “This is such knowledge as my Father which is in heaven only can give: it is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means as other knowledge is. Thou art blessed, that thou knowest that which God alone can teach thee.”

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. Positively, as God is here declared the author of it. Negatively, as it is declared, that flesh and blood had not revealed it. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of the knowledge that is obtained by human learning: he is the author of all moral prudence, and of the knowledge and skill that men have in their secular

business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were wise-hearted and skilful in embroidering, that God had filled them with the spirit of wisdom, Exod. xxviii. 3.

God is the author of such knowledge; but yet not so but that flesh and blood reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting the knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge by [Pg 23] those means: flesh and blood is made use of by God as the mediate or second cause of it; he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge, spoken of in the text, is what God is the author of, and none else: he reveals it, and flesh and blood reveals it not. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge.

What had passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this; because the disciples had been telling how others did not know him, but were generally mistaken about him, and divided and confounded in their opinions of him: but Peter had declared his assured faith, that he was the Son of God. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not flesh and blood that had revealed it to him, but God: for if this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they, a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth; while the Scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages, and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the

Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words is this

DOCTRINE

viz., *That there is such a thing as a Spiritual and Divine Light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.*

In what I say on this subject at this time I would

I. Show what this divine light is.

II. How it is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means.

[Pg 24]III. Show the truth of the doctrine.

And then conclude with a brief improvement.

I. I would show what this spiritual and divine light is. And in order to it, would show,

First, In a few things what it *is not*. And here,

1. *Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery, is not this spiritual and divine light.* Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from light or sensibleness of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; 'tis from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace,

or bestowing anything above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, though more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will, by mere nature, make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assists conscience to do this[Pg 25] work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves: he helps it against those things that tend to stupefy it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation for exercises in a continued course, as is called a principle of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin had made it as wholly destitute of, as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case from what he doth in the other. He may indeed

act upon the mind of a natural man, but he acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic, occasional agent; for in acting upon them, he doth not unite himself to them; notwithstanding all his influences that they may be the subjects of, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit, Jude 19. But he unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new, supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly by uniting himself to them, and living in them, and exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning of the creation; [Pg 26] so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, he may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, as upon an external object. But as he acts in his holy influences and spiritual operations, he acts in a way of peculiar communication of himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

2. *This spiritual and divine light don't consist in any impression made upon the imagination.* It is no impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the

bodily eyes: 'tis no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory, or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible lustre or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly impressed with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceeding different thing from it. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we can't determine but that the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

3. *This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God.* This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and [Pg 27] apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of, is quite a different thing from inspiration: it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.

4. *'Tis not every affecting view that men have of the things of religion that is this spiritual and divine light.* Men by

mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings he underwent, as well as by any other tragical story: he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it: yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blessed in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy-land, or the like. And that common belief of the truth of the things of religion that persons may have from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there represented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this: one man may give another an affecting view of divine things with but common assistance; but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.

But I proceed to show,

Secondly, Positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

[Pg 28]And it may be thus described: *a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.*

This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these, viz., a real sense and apprehension of the divine

excellency of things revealed in the word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

1. *A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion*; a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind and more sublime nature than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account, or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold understanding or knowledge of good that God has made the mind of man capable of. The first, that which is merely speculative or notional; as when a person only speculatively judges that anything is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz., that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitability, and the like. And the other is that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the [Pg 29] beauty, amiableness, or sweetness of a thing; so that

the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, strictly so called, or as spoken of in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart, are mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former, that knows not how honey tastes; but a man can't have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. There is a wide difference between mere speculative rational judging anything to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness and beauty. The former rests only in the head, speculation only is concerned in it; but the heart is concerned in the latter. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is sweet and pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

2. There arises from this sense of divine excellency of things contained in the word of God *a conviction of the truth and reality of them*; and that either indirectly or directly.

First, *Indirectly*, and that two ways.

1. As the *prejudices that are in the heart* against the truth of divine things *are hereby removed*; so that the mind becomes susceptible of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against [Pg 30] the truth of divine things: it is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity, removes those prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to lie open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

2. It not only removes the hinderances of reason, but *positively helps reason*. It makes even the speculative notions the more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with the more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects; which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure are by this means impressed with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them; so that the mind can better judge of them: as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon

them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and mutual relations than he that sees them in a dim starlight or twilight.

The mind having a sensibleness of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to the purpose. The beauty and sweetness of the objects draws on the faculties, and draws forth their exercises:[Pg 31] so that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion. But,

Secondly, A true sense of the divine excellency of the things of God's word doth more *directly* and *immediately* convince of the truth of them; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them that is so divine and godlike, that is greatly and evidently distinguishing of them from things merely human, or that men are the inventors and authors of; a glory that is so high and great that, when clearly seen, commands assent to their divinity and reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it won't allow of any such thought as that it is a human work, or the fruit of men's invention. This evidence that they that are spiritually enlightened have of the truth of the things of religion is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see divinity in them; i.e., they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truth of religion as this, arising, these ways, from a sense of the divine excellency of them, is that true spiritual conviction that there is in saving faith. And this original of it is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent which unregenerate men are capable of.

II. I proceed now to the second thing proposed, viz., to show *how this light is immediately given by God*, and not obtained by natural means. And here,

1. *'Tis not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it.* The natural faculties are the subject of this light: and they are the subject in such a manner that they are not merely passive, but active in it; the acts and exercises[Pg 32] of man's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; though the faculties are made use of, 'tis as the subject and not as the cause; and that acting of the faculties in it is not the cause, but is either implied in the thing itself (in the light that is imparted) or is the consequence of it: as the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.

2. *'Tis not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair.* As I have observed already, 'tis not in this affair, as it is in inspiration, where new truths are suggested: for here is by this light only given a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is made use of in this affair: this light is the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 4. The gospel is as a

glass, by which this light is conveyed to us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12: "Now we see through a glass."—But,

3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means, *hereby is intended, that 'tis given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force.* God makes use of means; but 'tis not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The word of God is no proper cause of this effect: it does not operate by any natural force in it. The word of God is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction: and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these and those doctrines; it is the cause of the notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of the [Pg 33] divine excellency of them in our hearts. Indeed a person can't have spiritual light without the word. But that don't argue that the word properly causes that light. The mind can't see the excellency of any doctrine, unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but the seeing of the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; though the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the word. So that the notions that are the subject matter of this light are conveyed to the mind by the word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, that notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the word of God: but the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.—I come now,

III. To show *the truth of the doctrine*; that is, to show that there is such a thing as that spiritual light that has been described, thus immediately let into the mind by God. And here I would show briefly, that this doctrine is both *scriptural* and *rational*.

First, 'Tis *scriptural*. My text is not only full to the purpose, but 'tis a doctrine that the Scripture abounds in. We are there abundantly taught that the saints differ from the ungodly in this, that they have the knowledge of God, and a sight of God, and of Jesus Christ. I shall mention but few texts of many. 1 John iii. 6, "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, nor known him." 3 John 11, "He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." John xiv. 19, "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me." John xvii. 3, "And this is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." This knowledge, or sight of God and Christ, can't be a mere speculative knowledge; because it is spoken of as a seeing and knowing wherein they differ from the ungodly. And by these [Pg 34] Scriptures it must not only be a different knowledge in degree and circumstances, and different in its effects; but it must be entirely different in nature and kind.

And this light and knowledge is always spoken of as immediately given of God, Matt. xi. 25, 26, 27: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here this effect

is ascribed alone to the arbitrary operation and gift of God, bestowing this knowledge on whom he will, and distinguishing those with it, that have the least natural advantage or means for knowledge, even babes, when it is denied to the wise and prudent. And the imparting of the knowledge of God is here appropriated to the Son of God as his sole prerogative. And again, 2 Cor. iv. 6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This plainly shows that there is such a thing as a discovery of the divine superlative glory and excellency of God and Christ, and that peculiar to the saints: and also, that 'tis as immediately from God, as light from the sun: and that 'tis the immediate effect of his power and will; for 'tis compared to God's creating the light by his powerful word in the beginning of the creation; and is said to be by the Spirit of the Lord, in the 18th verse of the preceding chapter. God is spoken of as giving the knowledge of Christ in conversion, as of what before was hidden and unseen in that, Gal. i. 15, 16: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." The Scripture also speaks plainly of such a knowledge of the word of God as has been [Pg 35]described, as the immediate gift of God, Psal. cxix. 18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." What could the Psalmist mean when he begged of God to open his eyes? Was he ever blind? Might he not have resort to the law and see every word and sentence in it when he pleased? And what could he mean by those "wondrous things"? Was it the wonderful stories of the creation and deluge, and Israel's passing through the Red Sea, and the like?

Were not his eyes open to read these strange things when he would? Doubtless by “wondrous things” in God’s law, he had respect to those distinguishing and wonderful excellencies, and marvellous manifestations of the divine perfections and glory, that there was in the commands and doctrines of the word, and those works and counsels of God that were there revealed. So the Scripture speaks of a knowledge of God’s dispensation, and covenant of mercy, and way of grace towards his people, as peculiar to the saints, and given only by God, Psal. xxv. 14: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.”

And that a true and saving belief of the truth of religion is that which arises from such a discovery, is also what the Scripture teaches. As John vi. 40: “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;” where it is plain that a true faith is what arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John xvii. 6, 7, 8: “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me;” where Christ’s manifesting God’s name to the disciples, or giving them the knowledge of God, was that whereby they knew that Christ’s doctrine was of God, and[Pg 36] that Christ himself was of him, proceeded from him, and was sent by him. Again, John xii. 44, 45, 46: “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come

a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” Their believing in Christ, and spiritually seeing him, are spoken of as running parallel.

Christ condemns the Jews, that they did not know that he was the Messiah, and that his doctrine was true, from an inward distinguishing taste and relish of what was divine, in Luke xii. 56, 57. He having there blamed the Jews, that though they could discern the face of the sky and of the earth, and signs of the weather, that yet they could not discern those times—or, as ’tis expressed in Matthew, the signs of those times—he adds, yea, and why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right? i.e., without extrinsic signs. Why have ye not that sense of true excellency, whereby ye may distinguish that which is holy and divine? Why have ye not that savor of the things of God, by which you may see the distinguishing glory and evident divinity of me and my doctrine?

The Apostle Peter mentions it as what gave them (the apostles) good and well grounded assurance of the truth of the gospel, that they had seen the divine glory of Christ, 2 Pet. i. 16: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” The apostle has respect to that visible glory of Christ which they saw in his transfiguration: that glory was so divine, having such an ineffable appearance and semblance of divine holiness, majesty and grace, that it evidently denoted him to be a divine person. But if a sight of Christ’s outward glory might give a rational assurance of his divinity, why may not an apprehension of his spiritual glory do so too? Doubtless Christ’s spiritual glory is in itself as distinguishing, and as plainly showing

his divinity,[Pg 37] as his outward glory; and a great deal more: for his spiritual glory is that wherein his divinity consists; and the outward glory of his transfiguration showed him to be divine, only as it was a remarkable image or representation of that spiritual glory. Doubtless, therefore, he that has had a clear sight of the spiritual glory of Christ, may say, I have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have been an eyewitness of his majesty, upon as good grounds as the apostle, when he had respect to the outward glory of Christ that he had seen.

But this brings me to what was proposed next, viz., to show that,

Secondly, This doctrine is *rational*.

1. 'Tis rational to suppose that *there is really such an excellency* in divine things, that is so transcendent and exceedingly different from what is in other things, that, if it were seen, would most evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt but that things that are divine, that appertain to the Supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are human; that there is that godlike, high and glorious excellency in them, that does most remarkably difference them from the things that are of men; insomuch that if the difference were but seen, it would have a convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are what they are, viz., divine. What reason can be offered against it? Unless we would argue, that God is not remarkably distinguished in glory from men.

If Christ should now appear to any one as he did on the mount at his transfiguration; or if he should appear to the world in the glory that he now appears in in heaven as he will do at the day of judgment; without doubt, the glory and majesty that he would appear in, would be such as would satisfy every one that he was a divine person, and

that religion was true: and it would be a most reasonable and well grounded conviction too. And why may there not be that stamp of divinity or divine glory on the word of God, on the scheme and [Pg 38] doctrine of the gospel, that may be in like manner distinguishing and as rationally convincing, provided it be but seen! 'Tis rational to suppose that when God speaks to the world, there should be something in his word or speech vastly different from men's word. Supposing that God never had spoken to the world, but we had noticed that he was about to do it; that he was about to reveal himself from heaven and speak to us immediately himself, in divine speeches or discourses, as it were from his own mouth, or that he should give us a book of his own inditing: after what manner should we expect that he would speak? Would it not be rational to suppose that his speech would be exceeding different from men's speech, that he should speak like a God; that is, that there should be such an excellency and sublimity in his speech or word, such a stamp of wisdom, holiness, majesty and other divine perfections, that the word of men, yea of the wisest of men, should appear mean and base in comparison of it? Doubtless it would be thought rational to expect this, and unreasonable to think otherwise. When a wise man speaks in the exercise of his wisdom, there is something in every thing he says that is very distinguishable from the talk of a little child. So, without doubt, and much more, is the speech of God (if there be any such thing as the speech of God) to be distinguished from that of the wisest of men; agreeable to Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. God having there been reproving the false prophets that prophesied in his name and pretended that what they spake was his word, when indeed it was their own word, says, "The prophet

that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

2. If there be such a distinguishing excellency in divine things, 'tis rational to suppose that *there may be such a thing as seeing it*. What should hinder but that it may be seen! [Pg 39] It is no argument, that there is no such thing as such a distinguishing excellency, or that, if there be, that it can't be seen, that some don't see it, though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. It is not rational to suppose, if there be any such excellency in divine things, that wicked men should see it. 'Tis not rational to suppose that those whose minds are full of spiritual pollution, and under the power of filthy lusts, should have any relish or sense of divine beauty or excellency; or that their minds should be susceptible of that light that is in its own nature so pure and heavenly. It need not seem at all strange that sin should so blind the mind, seeing that men's particular natural tempers and dispositions will so much blind them in secular matters; as when men's natural temper is melancholy, jealous, fearful, proud, or the like.

3. 'Tis rational to suppose that *this knowledge should be given immediately by God*, and not be obtained by natural means. Upon what account should it seem unreasonable, that there should be any immediate communication between God and the creature? It is strange that men should make any matter of difficulty of it. Why should not he that made all things, still have something immediately to do with the things that he has made? Where lies the great difficulty, if we own the being of a God, and that he created all things out of nothing, of allowing some

immediate influence of God on the creation still? And if it be reasonable to suppose it with respect to any part of the creation, it is especially so with respect to reasonable, intelligent creatures; who are next to God in the gradation of the different orders of beings, and whose business is most immediately with God; who were made on purpose for those exercises that do respect God and wherein they have nextly to do with God: for reason teaches, that man was made to serve and glorify his Creator. And if it be rational to suppose that God immediately communicates himself to man in any affair, it is in this. 'Tis rational to suppose [Pg 40] that God would reserve that knowledge and wisdom, that is of such a divine and excellent nature, to be bestowed immediately by himself, and that it should not be left in the power of second causes. Spiritual wisdom and grace is the highest and most excellent gift that ever God bestows on any creature: in this the highest excellency and perfection of a rational creature consists. 'Tis also immensely the most important of all divine gifts: 'tis that wherein man's happiness consists, and on which his everlasting welfare depends. How rational is it to suppose that God, however he has left meaner goods and lower gifts to second causes, and in some sort in their power, yet should reserve this most excellent, divine and important of all divine communications in his own hands, to be bestowed immediately by himself, as a thing too great for second causes to be concerned in! 'Tis rational to suppose that this blessing should be immediately from God; for there is no gift or benefit that is in itself so nearly related to the divine nature, there is nothing the creature receives that is so much of God, of his nature, so much a participation of the deity: 'tis a kind of emanation of God's beauty, and

is related to God as the light is to the sun. 'Tis therefore congruous and fit, that when it is given of God, it should be nextly from himself, and by himself, according to his own sovereign will.

'Tis rational to suppose that it should be beyond a man's power to obtain this knowledge and light by the mere strength of natural reason; for 'tis not a thing that belongs to reason, to see the beauty and loveliness of spiritual things; it is not a speculative thing, but depends on the sense of the heart. Reason, indeed, is necessary in order to it, as 'tis by reason only that we are become the subjects of the means of it; which means I have already shown to be necessary in order to it, though they have no proper causal influence in the affair. 'Tis by reason that we become possessed of a notion of those doctrines that are the subject matter of this divine light; and reason may[Pg 41] many ways be indirectly and remotely an advantage to it. And reason has also to do in the acts that are immediately consequent on this discovery: a seeing the truth of religion from hence is by reason; though it be but by one step, and the inference be immediate. So reason has to do in that accepting of, and trusting in Christ, that is consequent on it. But if we take reason strictly, not for the faculty of mental perception in general, but for ratiocination, or a power of inferring by arguments; I say, if we take reason thus, the perceiving of spiritual beauty and excellency no more belongs to reason than it belongs to the sense of feeling to perceive colors, or to the power of seeing to perceive the sweetness of food. It is out of reason's province to perceive the beauty or loveliness of any thing: such a perception don't belong to that faculty. Reason's work is to perceive truth and not excellency. It is not ratiocination that gives men

the perception of the beauty and amiableness of a countenance, though it may be many ways indirectly an advantage to it; yet 'tis no more reason that immediately perceives it than it is reason that perceives the sweetness of honey: it depends on the sense of the heart. Reason may determine that a countenance is beautiful to others, it may determine that honey is sweet to others; but it will never give me a perception of its sweetness.—I will conclude with a very brief

IMPROVEMENT

of what has been said.

First, This doctrine may lead us to reflect on the goodness of God, that has so ordered it, that a saving evidence of the truth of the gospel is such as is attainable by persons of mean capacities and advantages, as well as those that are of the greatest parts and learning. If the evidence of the gospel depended only on history, and such reasonings as learned men only are capable of, it would be above the reach of far the [Pg 42] greatest part of mankind. But persons with but an ordinary degree of knowledge are capable, without a long and subtile train of reasoning, to see the divine excellency of the things of religion: they are capable of being taught by the Spirit of God, as well as learned men. The evidence that is this way obtained is vastly better and more satisfying than all that can be obtained by the arguings of those that are most learned, and greatest masters of reason. And babes are as capable of knowing these things as the wise and prudent; and they are often hid from these when they are revealed to those: 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not

many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world..."

Secondly, This doctrine may well put us upon examining ourselves, whether we have ever had this divine light that has been described let into our souls. If there be such a thing indeed, and it be not only a notion or whimsey of persons of weak and distempered brains, then doubtless 'tis a thing of great importance, whether we have thus been taught by the Spirit of God; whether the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, hath shined unto us, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; whether we have seen the Son, and believed on him, or have that faith of gospel doctrines that arises from a spiritual sight of Christ.

Thirdly, All may hence be exhorted earnestly to seek this spiritual light. To influence and move to it, the following things may be considered.

1. This is the most *excellent and divine* wisdom that any creature is capable of. 'Tis more excellent than any human learning; 'tis far more excellent than all the knowledge of the greatest philosophers or statesmen. Yea, the least glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ doth more exalt and ennoble the soul than all the knowledge of those that have the [Pg 43] greatest speculative understanding in divinity without grace. This knowledge has the most noble object that is or can be, viz., the divine glory or excellency of God and Christ. The knowledge of these objects is that wherein consists the most excellent knowledge of the angels, yea, of God himself.

2. This knowledge is that which is above all others *sweet and joyful*. Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is

nothing to that joy which arises from this divine light shining into the soul. This light gives a view of those things that are immensely the most exquisitely beautiful, and capable of delighting the eye of the understanding. This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart. There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world.

3. This light is such as effectually influences the inclination, and *changes the nature of the soul*. It assimilates the nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld: 2 Cor. iii. 18, "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge will wean from the world and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed. It causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Saviour. It causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect, cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.

[Pg 44]4. This light, and this only, *has its fruit in an universal holiness of life*. No merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion will ever bring to this. But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to

an universal obedience. It shows God's worthiness to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious and universal obedience. And it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.

CHAPTER 33.

CHAPTER 5 FROM NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE (1845 EDITION)

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. My connection with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me, and was a sort of protector of me. He would not allow the older boys to impose upon me, and would divide his cakes with me.

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked—no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and

there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

We were not regularly allowanced. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called *mush*. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oyster-shells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy. I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld. I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation scurf, and preparing myself for my departure.

The pride of appearance which this would indicate was not my own. I spent the time in washing, not so much because I wished to, but because Mrs. Lucretia had told me I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly, and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trousers, which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trousers was

great indeed! It was almost a sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drovers the mange, but the skin itself. I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward.

The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure. My home was charmless; it was not home to me; on parting from it, I could not feel that I was leaving any thing which I could have enjoyed by staying. My mother was dead, my grandmother lived far off, so that I seldom saw her. I had two sisters and one brother, that lived in the same house with me; but the early separation of us from our mother had well nigh blotted the fact of our relationship from our memories. I looked for home elsewhere, and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. If, however, I found in my new home hardship, hunger, whipping, and nakedness, I had the consolation that I should not have escaped any one of them by staying. Having already had more than a taste of them in the house of my old master, and having endured them there, I very naturally inferred my ability to endure them elsewhere, and especially at Baltimore; for I had something of the feeling about Baltimore that is expressed in the proverb, that "being hanged in England is preferable to dying a natural death in Ireland." I had the strongest desire to see Baltimore. Cousin Tom, though not fluent in speech, had inspired me with that desire by his eloquent description of the place. I could never point out any thing at the Great House, no matter how beautiful or powerful, but that he had seen something at Baltimore far exceeding, both in beauty and strength, the object which I pointed out to him. Even the Great House itself, with all its pictures,

was far inferior to many buildings in Baltimore. So strong was my desire, that I thought a gratification of it would fully compensate for whatever loss of comforts I should sustain by the exchange. I left without a regret, and with the highest hopes of future happiness.

We sailed out of Miles River for Baltimore on a Saturday morning. I remember only the day of the week, for at that time I had no knowledge of the days of the month, nor the months of the year. On setting sail, I walked aft, and gave to Colonel Lloyd's plantation what I hoped would be the last look. I then placed myself in the bows of the sloop, and there spent the remainder of the day in looking ahead, interesting myself in what was in the distance rather than in things near by or behind.

In the afternoon of that day, we reached Annapolis, the capital of the State. We stopped but a few moments, so that I had no time to go on shore. It was the first large town that I had ever seen, and though it would look small compared with some of our New England factory villages, I thought it a wonderful place for its size—more imposing even than the Great House Farm!

We arrived at Baltimore early on Sunday morning, landing at Smith's Wharf, not far from Bowley's Wharf. We had on board the sloop a large flock of sheep; and after aiding in driving them to the slaughterhouse of Mr. Curtis on Louden Slater's Hill, I was conducted by Rich, one of the hands belonging on board of the sloop, to my new home in Alliciana Street, near Mr. Gardner's shipyard, on Fells Point.

Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home, and met me at the door with their little son Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the

most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I could describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it. It was a new and strange sight to me, brightening up my pathway with the light of happiness. Little Thomas was told, there was his Freddy,—and I was told to take care of little Thomas; and thus I entered upon the duties of my new home with the most cheering prospect ahead.

I look upon my departure from Colonel Lloyd's plantation as one of the most interesting events of my life. It is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, I should have to-day, instead of being here seated by my own table, in the enjoyment of freedom and the happiness of home, writing this Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery. Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all my subsequent prosperity. I have ever regarded it as the first plain manifestation of that kind providence which has ever since attended me, and marked my life with so many favors. I regarded the selection of myself as being somewhat remarkable. There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice.

I may be deemed superstitious, and even egotistical, in regarding this event as a special interposition of divine Providence in my favor. But I should be false to the earliest sentiments of my soul, if I suppressed the opinion. I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false,

and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, this living word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained like ministering angels to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise.

CHAPTER 34.

CONCLUSION FROM WALDEN; OR, A LIFE IN THE WOODS

CONCLUSION

To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery. Thank Heaven, here is not all the world. The buck-eye does not grow in New England, and the mocking-bird is rarely heard here. The wild-goose is more of a cosmopolite than we; he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Ohio, and plumes himself for the night in a southern bayou. Even the bison, to some extent, keeps pace with the seasons, cropping the pastures of the Colorado only till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone. Yet we think that if rail-fences are pulled down, and stone-walls piled up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided. If you are chosen town-clerk, forsooth, you cannot go to Tierra del Fuego this summer: but you may go to the land of infernal fire nevertheless. The universe is wider than our views of it.

Yet we should oftener look over the tafferel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum. The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing, and the doctors prescribe for diseases of the skin merely. One hastens to Southern

Africa to chase the giraffe; but surely that is not the game he would be after. How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self.—

“Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
Expert in home-cosmography.”

What does Africa,—what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes,—with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self*-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with

all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.—

“Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.

Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ.”

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.

I have more of God, they more of the road.

It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do this even till you can do better, and you may perhaps find some “Symmes’ Hole” by which to get at the inside at last. England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea; but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India. If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalized in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone, even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and Explore thyself. Herein are demanded the eye and the nerve. Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist. Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down too.

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery "to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society." He declared that "a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a foot-pad,"—"that honor and religion have never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve." This was manly, as the world goes; and yet it was idle, if not desperate. A saner man would have found himself often enough "in formal opposition" to what are deemed "the most sacred laws of society," through obedience to yet more sacred laws, and so have tested his resolution without going out of his way. It is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government, if he should chance to meet with such.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world,

for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

It is a ridiculous demand which England and America make, that you shall speak so that they can understand you. Neither men nor toad-stools grow so. As if that were important, and there were not enough to understand you without them. As if Nature could support but one order of understandings, could not sustain birds as well as quadrupeds, flying as well as creeping things, and *hush* and *who*, which Bright can understand, were the best English. As if there were safety in stupidity alone. I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extra-vagant* enough, may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced. *Extra vagance!* it depends on how you are yarded. The migrating buffalo, which seeks new pastures in another latitude, is not extravagant like the cow which kicks over the pail,

leaps the cow-yard fence, and runs after her calf, in milking time. I desire to speak somewhere *without* bounds; like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments; for I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression. Who that has heard a strain of music feared then lest he should speak extravagantly any more forever? In view of the future or possible, we should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side; as our shadows reveal an insensible perspiration toward the sun. The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual statement. Their truth is instantly *translated*; its literal monument alone remains. The words which express our faith and piety are not definite; yet they are significant and fragrant like frankincense to superior natures.

Why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring. Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half-witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit. Some would find fault with the morning-red, if they ever got up early enough. "They pretend," as I hear, "that the verses of Kabir have four different senses; illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas;" but in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation. While England endeavors to cure the potato-rot, will not any endeavor to cure the brain-rot, which prevails so much more widely and fatally?

I do not suppose that I have attained to obscurity, but

I should be proud if no more fatal fault were found with my pages on this score than was found with the Walden ice. Southern customers objected to its blue color, which is the evidence of its purity, as if it were muddy, and preferred the Cambridge ice, which is white, but tastes of weeds. The purity men love is like the mists which envelop the earth, and not like the azure ether beyond.

Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can? Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made.

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple-tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be

perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferrule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was

pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?

No face which we can give to a matter will stead us so well at last as the truth. This alone wears well. For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. Through an infinity of our natures, we suppose a case, and put ourselves into it, and hence are in two cases at the same time, and it is doubly difficult to get out. In sane moments we regard only the facts, the case that is. Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had anything to say. "Tell the tailors," said he, "to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch." His companion's prayer is forgotten.

However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor-house. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the alms-house as brightly as from the rich man's abode; the snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace. The town's poor seem to me often to live the most independent lives of any. May be they are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Most think that they are above being supported by the town; but it oftener happens that they are not above supporting themselves by dishonest means, which should be more disreputable. Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble yourself much to get new things,

whether clothes or friends. Turn the old; return to them. Things do not change; we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts. God will see that you do not want society. If I were confined to a corner of a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts about me. The philosopher said: "From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thought." Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject yourself to many influences to be played on; it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights. The shadows of poverty and meanness gather around us, "and lo! creation widens to our view." We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Cræsus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is sweetest. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses ever on a lower level by magnanimity on a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.

I live in the angle of a leaden wall, into whose composition was poured a little alloy of bell metal. Often, in the repose of my mid-day, there reaches my ears a confused *tintinnabulum* from without. It is the noise of my contemporaries. My neighbors tell me of their adventures with famous gentlemen and ladies, what notabilities they met at the dinner-table; but I am no more interested in

such things than in the contents of the Daily Times. The interest and the conversation are about costume and manners chiefly; but a goose is a goose still, dress it as you will. They tell me of California and Texas, of England and the Indies, of the Hon. Mr. — of Georgia or of Massachusetts, all transient and fleeting phenomena, till I am ready to leap from their court-yard like the Mameluke bey. I delight to come to my bearings,—not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may,—not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by. What are men celebrating? They are all on a committee of arrangements, and hourly expect a speech from somebody. God is only the president of the day, and Webster is his orator. I love to weigh, to settle, to gravitate toward that which most strongly and rightfully attracts me;—not hang by the beam of the scale and try to weigh less,—not suppose a case, but take the case that is; to travel the only path I can, and that on which no power can resist me. It affords me no satisfaction to commence to spring an arch before I have got a solid foundation. Let us not play at kittly-benders. There is a solid bottom every where. We read that the traveller asked the boy if the swamp before him had a hard bottom. The boy replied that it had. But presently the traveller's horse sank in up to the girths, and he observed to the boy, "I thought you said that this bog had a hard bottom." "So it has," answered the latter, "but you have not got half way to it yet." So it is with the bogs and quicksands of society; but he is an old boy that knows it. Only what is thought, said, or done at a certain rare coincidence is good. I would not be one of those who will foolishly drive a nail into mere lath

and plastering; such a deed would keep me awake nights. Give me a hammer, and let me feel for the furring. Do not depend on the putty. Drive a nail home and clinch it so faithfully that you can wake up in the night and think of your work with satisfaction,—a work at which you would not be ashamed to invoke the Muse. So will help you God, and so only. Every nail driven should be as another rivet in the machine of the universe, you carrying on the work.

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage; but I thought of an older, a newer, and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage, which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and “entertainment” pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes; and in the afternoon go forth to practise Christian meekness and charity with goodness aforethought! Consider the China pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind. This generation inclines a little to congratulate itself on being the last of an illustrious line; and in Boston and London

and Paris and Rome, thinking of its long descent, it speaks of its progress in art and science and literature with satisfaction. There are the Records of the Philosophical Societies, and the public Eulogies of *Great Men!* It is the good Adam contemplating his own virtue. "Yes, we have done great deeds, and sung divine songs, which shall never die,"—that is, as long as *we* can remember them. The learned societies and great men of Assyria,—where are they? What youthful philosophers and experimentalists we are! There is not one of my readers who has yet lived a whole human life. These may be but the spring months in the life of the race. If we have had the seven-years' itch, we have not seen the seventeen-year locust yet in Concord. We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface. Truly, we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits! As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, and endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight, and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts, and hide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I am reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me the human insect.

There is an incessant influx of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dulness. I need only suggest what kind of sermons are still listened to in the most enlightened countries. There are such words as joy and sorrow, but they are only the burden of a psalm, sung

with a nasal twang, while we believe in the ordinary and mean. We think that we can change our clothes only. It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power. We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip, if he should ever harbor it in his mind. Who knows what sort of seventeen-year locust will next come out of the ground? The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.

The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts,—from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the

semblance of its well-seasoned tomb,—heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board,—may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

CHAPTER 35.

JONATHAN EDWARDS'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change, by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my schoolmates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very secret and retired place, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and used to be from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element, when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with

such affections, and such a kind of delight, as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace. But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights, and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in ways of sin. Indeed, I was at some times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of the time of my being at college. Till it pleased God, in my last year at college, at a time when I was in the midst of many uneasy thoughts about the state of my soul, to seize me with a pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. But yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But

God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; but I had great and violent inward struggles: till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, and repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek my salvation, and practice the duties of religion: but without that kind of affection and delight, that I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner: which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking was ever succeeded. But yet I was brought to seek salvation, in a manner that I never was before. I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed, with many

exercising things and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express my concern that I had, by the name of terror. From my childhood up, my mind had been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining, in the time of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it: but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that I had till then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against God's sovereignty, in the most absolute sense, in showing mercy on whom he will show mercy, and hardening and eternally damning whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty, and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of anything that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have oftentimes since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty, than I had then. I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The

doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared, an exceeding pleasant, bright and sweet doctrine to me: and absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not with this. The first that I remember that ever I found anything of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, I Tim. 1:17. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was; and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapped up to God in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him. I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to prayer, to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was anything spiritual, or of a saving nature in this. From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him. I had an inward, sweet sense of these things, that at times came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged, to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ; and the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation, by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that

treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant. 2:1, used to be abundantly with me: "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys." The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent, the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. And the whole Book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me; and I used to be much in reading it, about that time. And found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that used, as it were, to carry me away in my contemplations; in what I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapped and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden as it were, kindle up a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of my soul, that I know not how to express. Not long after I first began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father, of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together. And when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looked up on the sky and clouds; there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction: majesty and meekness joined together: it was a sweet and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness. After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was

altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon, for a long time; and so in the daytime, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime, singing forth with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning. Formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder: and it used to strike me with terror, when I saw a thunderstorm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunderstorm. And used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder: which oftentimes was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. And while I viewed, used to spend my time, as it always seemed natural to me, to sing or chant forth my meditations; to speak my thoughts in soliloquies, and speak with a singing voice. I felt then a great satisfaction as to my good estate. But that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness; wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break: which often brought to my mind, the words of the Psalmist, Ps. 119:28, "My soul breaketh for the longing it hath." I often felt a mourning and lamenting

in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; I was almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. Spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year. And used to spend abundance of my time, in walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy and prayer, and converse with God. And it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. And was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me; as the breath, by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in things of religion, were of an exceeding different kind, from those forementioned, that I had when I was a boy. They were totally of another kind; and what I then had no more notion or idea of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights, never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying, and life-giving good, there is in them. My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, till I went to preach at New York; which was about a year and a half after they began. While I was there, I felt them, very sensibly, in a much higher degree, than I had done before. My longings after God and holiness, were much increased. Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceeding amiable to me. I felt in me a burning desire to be in everything a complete Christian; and conformed to the blessed image of Christ: and that I might live in all things, according to the pure, sweet and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an

eager thirsting after progress in these things. My longings after it, put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and disciple of Christ. I sought an increase of grace and holiness, and that I might live an holy life, with vastly more earnestness, than ever I sought grace, before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means, how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness, than ever I pursued anything in my life: but with too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the innumerable and bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit, that there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness; and sweet conformity to Christ. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven, and the enjoyments of those there; and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love. And it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and hindrance and burden to me, that what I felt within, I could not express to God, and give vent to, as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul, seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think, how in heaven, this sweet principle should freely and fully

vent and express itself. Heaven appeared to me exceeding delightful as a world of love. It appeared to me, that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love. I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness. I remember I then said sometimes to myself, I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes. It appeared to me, there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely. It appeared to me, to be the highest beauty and amiableness, above all other beauties: that it was a divine beauty; far purer than anything here upon earth; and that everything else, was like mire, filth and defilement, in comparison of it. Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature. It seemed to me, it brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and rapture to the soul: and that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; that is all pleasant, delightful and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower, as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom, to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature-holiness, that I then, and at other times, had so great a sense of the loveliness of, as humility, brokenness of heart and poverty of spirit: and there was nothing that I had such a spirit to long for. My heart as it were panted after this, to lie low

before God, and in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be all; that I might become as a little child.

While I was there at New York, I sometimes was much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was, before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then: and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together. On January 12, 1722-23, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were: and his law for the constant rule of my obedience: engaging to fight with all my might, against the world, the flesh and the devil, to the end of my life. But have reason to be infinitely humbled, when I consider, how much I have failed of answering my obligation. I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with Mr. John Smith, and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those, in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions, but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. My secret prayer used to be in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world, that appeared to me, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be earnest to read public newsletters, mainly for that end; to see

if I could not find some news favorable to the interest of religion in the world. I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's River, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse of the things of God; and our conversation used much to turn on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days.

I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt an harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light, exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing ravishing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading. Used oftentimes to dwell long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders. I came away from New York in the month of April 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me, at leaving the family and city, where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Wethersfield by water. As I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could; and when I was out of sight of it, it would affect me much to look that way, with a kind of melancholy mixed with sweetness. However, that night after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to lodge: and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think

of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge on Saturday, and there kept sabbath; where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, remained much in a like frame of my mind, as I had been in at New York; but only sometimes felt my heart ready to sink, with the thoughts of my friends at New York. And my refuge and support was in contemplations on the heavenly state; as I find in my Diary of May 1, 1723. It was my comfort to think of that state, where there is fullness of joy; where reigns heavenly, sweet, calm and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where these persons that appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely, and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How full will it fill us with joy, to think, that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises will never cease or come to an end; but will last to all eternity!

Continued much in the same frame in the general, that I had been in at New York, till I went to New Haven, to live there as tutor of the College; having one special season of uncommon sweetness: particularly once at Bolton, in a journey from Boston, walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New Haven, I sunk in religion; my mind being diverted from my eager and violent pursuits after holiness, by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my mind. In September 1725, was taken ill at New Haven; and endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village, that I could go no further: where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year.

And in this sickness, God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there on divine, pleasant contemplations, and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out for the morning, and seemed to wish for it. Which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, which my soul with sweetness made its own language. ““My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning”

[Ps. 130:6]. And when the light of the morning came, and the beams of the sun came in at the windows, it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to me to be some image of the sweet light of God’s glory. I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with. It seemed to me, I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But some time after this, I was again greatly diverted in my mind, with some temporal concerns, that exceedingly took up my thoughts, greatly to the wounding of my soul: and went on through various exercises, that it would be tedious to relate, that gave me much more experience of my own heart, than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town, I have often had sweet complacency in God in views of his glorious perfections, and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me, a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on the account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God’s absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy; and man’s

absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, as great part of his glory. It has often been sweet to me to go to God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel: they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me to be the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ, has appeared in a general way, glorious and excellent, and most pleasant and beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me, Is. 32:2, "A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." It has often appeared sweet to me, to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body: and also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think with sweetness and longings and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matt. 18, at the beginning, has often been sweet to me: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation of him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self; humbly exalting him alone; cut entirely off from my own root, and to grow into, and out of Christ: to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of

humble, unfeigned confidence in him. That Scripture has often been sweet to me, Ps. 115:1, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.” And those words of Christ, Luke 10:21, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” That sovereignty of God that Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me to be worthy to be rejoiced in; and that rejoicing of Christ, seemed to me to show the excellency of Christ, and the Spirit that he was of. Sometimes only mentioning a single word, causes my heart to burn within me: or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys of delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own safe estate. It seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious, pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate. My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ’s kingdom, have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have lotted upon

it all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted, with the Scripture promises and prophecies, of the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth. I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fullness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Savior; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. And his blood and atonement has appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which is always accompanied with an ardency of spirit, and inward strugglings and breathings and groanings, that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

Once, as I rid out into the woods for my health, anno 1737; and having lit from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer; I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God; as mediator between God and man; and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared to me so calm and sweet, appeared great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. Which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me, the bigger part of the time, in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt withal, an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be totally wrapped up in the fullness of Christ; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times, and views

very much of the same nature, and that have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of sanctifier; in his holy operations communicating divine light and life to the soul. God in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul: pouring forth itself in sweet communications, like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and Life. I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the Word of God, as a Word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving Word: accompanied with a thirsting after that Word, that it might dwell richly in my heart. I have often since I lived in this town, had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently so as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together: so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my heart, since my conversion, than ever I had before.

It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time: and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness. I thought I should wonder, that they should content themselves with

such expressions as these, if I had any reason to imagine, that their sin bore any proportion to mine. It seemed to me, I should wonder at myself, if I should express my wickedness in such feeble terms as they did. My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and infinitely swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or infinite mountains over my head. I know not how to express better, what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. I go about very often, for this many years, with these expressions in my mind, and in my mouth, "Infinite upon Infinite. Infinite upon Infinite!" When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fullness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth, in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty; I should appear sunk down in my sins infinitely below hell itself, far beyond sight of everything, but the piercing eye of God's grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth, and to the bottom of such an abyss. And yet, I ben't in the least inclined to think, that I have a greater conviction of sin than ordinary. It seems to me, my conviction of sin is exceeding small, and faint. It appears to me enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. That my sins appear to me so great, don't seem to me to be, because I have so much more conviction of sin than other Christians, but because I am so much worse, and have so much more wickedness to be convinced of. When

I have had these turns of weeping and crying for my sins, I thought I knew in the time of it, that my repentance was nothing to my sin. I have greatly longed of late, for a broken heart, and to lie low before God. And when I ask for humility of God, I can't bear the thoughts of being no more humble, than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them; yet it would be a vile self-exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be humbled to the dust. Though that may be a proper expression for them, I always think for myself, that I ought to be humbled down below hell. 'Tis an expression that it has long been natural for me to use in prayer to God. I ought to lie infinitely low before God. It is affecting to me to think, how ignorant I was, when I was a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart. I have vastly a greater sense, of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The thought of any comfort or joy, arising in me, on any consideration, or reflection on my own amiableness, or any of my performances or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit; much more sensibly, than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head, continually, everywhere, all around me. Though it seems to me, that in some respects I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure: yet of late years, I have had a more

full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a mediator, as revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night in particular, had a particular discovery of the excellency of the gospel of Christ, above all other doctrines; so that I could not but say to myself; "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine": and of Christ, "This is my chosen prophet." It appeared to me to be sweet beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught and enlightened and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him. Another Saturday night, January 1738-39, had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was, to walk in the way of duty, to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused me to break forth into a kind of a loud weeping, which held me some time; so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but as it were cry out, "'How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.

PART IX.

**REVOLUTION, LIBERTY,
AND JUSTICE PART II:
1862-PRESENT**

CHAPTER 36.

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Gettysburg Address

Delivered at Gettysburg, Pa.

Nov. 19th 1863.

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. “Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. “But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of

devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

CHAPTER 37.

BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC LYRICS

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of
wrath are stored

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift
sword

His truth is marching on

Glory, Glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

His truth is marching on

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling
camps

They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and
damps

I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring
lamps

His day is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

His day is marching on

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel
“As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace
shall deal”

Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his

heel

Since God is marching on

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Since God is marching on

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call
retreat

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-
seat

Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my
feet!

Our God is marching on

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Our God is marching on

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea

With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me

As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free

While God is marching on

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

Glory, glory, hallelujah!

While God is marching on

CHAPTER 38.

O CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is
won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and
daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle
trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the
shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces
turning;

Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed
and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object
won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

CHAPTER 39.

**THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION
JANUARY 1, 1863**

January 1, 1863

A Transcription

By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and

the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[]), and which excepted

parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.