

A STRANGE FELLOW

AND

OTHER CLUB PAPERS

BY

IRVING K. POND



Class PS3531

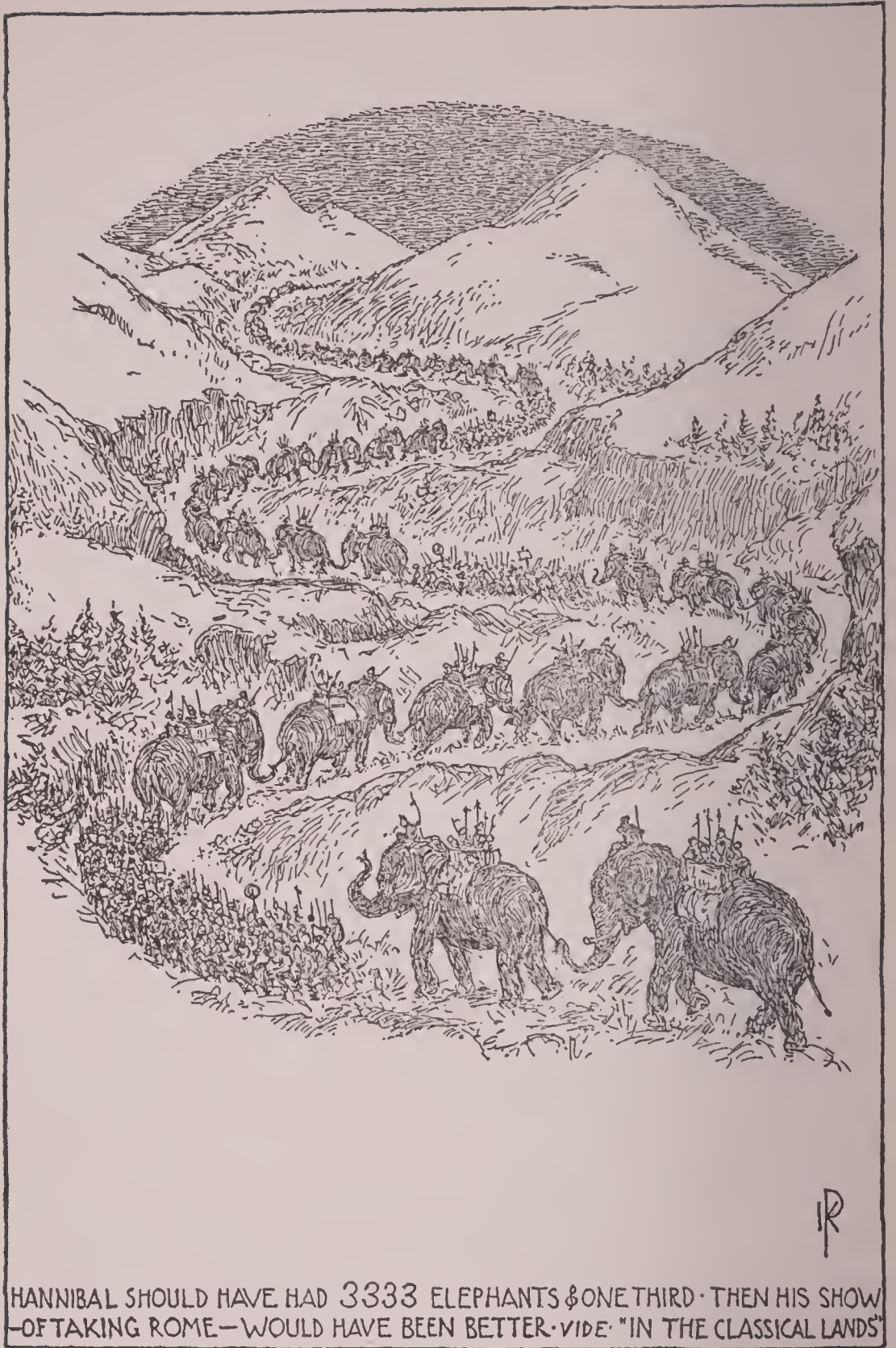
Book Q4758

1938

copy 2

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT

A STRANGE FELLOW
AND
OTHER CLUB PAPERS



HANNIBAL SHOULD HAVE HAD 3333 ELEPHANTS & ONE THIRD · THEN HIS SHOW
-OF TAKING ROME- WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER · VIDE · "IN THE CLASSICAL LANDS"

A STRANGE FELLOW
AND
OTHER CLUB PAPERS

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED
BY
IRVING K. ^{Kane} POND
C. E. ARCHT. A. M. hon. ARCH. D. hon.



Privately Printed by
Willett, Clark and Company
New York 1938 Chicago

PS 3531
O4758
1938
copy 2

Copyright 1938 by
IRVING K. POND

Manufactured in The U.S.A. by The Plimpton Press
Norwood, Mass.-LaPorte, Ind.

©CIA 142415

2

MAR -4 1940

To My
Patient Clubmates
especially those of
The Chicago Literary Club
who have borne with me
Lo!
these Fifty years

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TO BEGIN WITH	3
A STRANGE FELLOW	Nov. 11, 1889 9
My first appearance before the Club	
THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT	Mar. 2, 1891 47
Written while the incandes- cent light was still in its in- fancy	
THE PLEASURES OF TRAVEL	Apr. 16, 1894 83
Read in conjunction with a travel paper by my brother, Allen B. Pond, "Where Moses Stood"	
THE WHALE — A STUDY	Nov. 22, 1897 101
The Historic School of Jonah Fish stories by club members	
POETRY NIGHT	Mar. 5, 1917 107
Chapter Introductions	
The Heliogabali	
Sonnet: Immortality	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Vers Libre: A definition, a prelude, and a pome.	
BOOK NIGHT Such stuff as Dreams are made on — Reviewing the Haunted Book Shop	Mar. 15, 1920 121
AN ARCHITECT IN THE CLASSICAL LANDS Condensed from "I'm a Member of the Cruise"	Oct. 18, 1926 133
ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING An exposition of my own feelings	Oct. 15, 1928 157
ARTIST AND MODEL Excerpts from the essay entitled "Just One Thing After Another"	Oct. 22, 1934 191

ILLUSTRATIONS

HANNIBAL IN THE ALPS	FRONTISPIECE
VIGNETTE	2
ONE COULD HEAR A BUZZING SOUND	8
ARE YOU NOT AFRAID OF MENTAL DYSPEPSIA	46
WE CLIMBED UPWARD FOR HOURS	82
ONE PROPHET FROM MAKER TO CON- SUMER	100
AND SO, AS POETRY WILL NOT COME	106
THE HAND THAT ROUNDED PETER'S DOME	120
YE MEN OF ATHENS	132
SOME STILL PROFESS TO BELIEVE	156
INTO THIS CHAMBER OF THE IMAGI- NATION	190

TO BEGIN WITH



TO BEGIN WITH

THE Chicago Literary Club, composed of men from the various trades and professions, was founded in March of 1874 and still, in its sixty-third year, is a thriving and virile organization. It has been facetiously referred to as a literary club which never counted a professional literary man among its members. However that may be, its membership roll contained and contains the names of many men whose literary work in point of style and content will carry well down into the corridors of time. Collyer, Swing, Mason, Head, Payne, Cheney, Locke, Barrows, Salter, Paul Shorey are a few of the many.

I joined the Club in the fall of 1888 and at the time of this writing stand second in the resident list in length of membership. I was the fiftieth president of the Club, serving during the season of 1922-23. To date I have contributed to the Club's entertainment on thirty-one occasions for only one of which (an emergency call in 1893) preparation was not made in regular course.

The themes which I have handled were varied

CLUB PAPERS

ranging from the two stories which appear in this volume through architecture, acrobatics and art in general to ethics and literary criticism. The principles and philosophy underlying the architectural papers are set forth in my book "*The Meaning of Architecture*" (Boston, 1918; Kroch, Chicago, 1932) a work which is listed by the American Library Association. One of my three essays on Acrobatics was published as a club paper in 1924, and the ideas underlying all three are set forth in my recent book, "*Big Top Rhythms*" (Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago, 1937).

The first story, "*A Strange Fellow*," was written during a period of intense labor strife in Chicago when I was trying to determine to my own satisfaction on which side, if either, the right lay. At that time, too, the unsolved and spectacular Dr. Cronin murder case was holding a large share of the public interest. The genesis of "*The Mystery of the Light*" was amusing. Written originally for and read before the Saracen Club, it was a little later, upon request, given a place in the Literary Club's programme. The general scheme of the story came to me suddenly as I read in the funny column of a daily paper the following:

A farmer in a restaurant, seeing croquettes invitingly served at a neighboring table, ordered a portion for himself. He took a gen-

erous mouthful, his eyes bulged, and he ejaculated disgustedly — “ Gosh! Hash! ”

Perhaps an imaginative reader will be able to find a connection between this item and “ my ” experience in “ her father’s ” laboratory when I found “ myself ” partaking of Roast Duck and Burgundy! Around that laboratory incident the story was built.

I have placed the papers in the book in the order in which they were presented before the Club. Even so, the subject matter falls into three fairly distinct categories; first, the two stories and a lighter travel sketch; then, the excerpts and shorter pieces, some light and some not so light; and, third, a somewhat more philosophical travel essay and the two more serious papers. Readers who may seek entertainment will begin with the first and read onward; those who would seek enlightenment will begin with the last paper and relax as they read, as does the oriental, towards the front. Perhaps the wise reader will pursue a meandering course through the book, while the very, very wise will read it not at all.

A STRANGE FELLOW



R

ONE COULD HEAR A BUZZING SOUND FROM A DARK BOX ON THE CORNER

A STRANGE FELLOW

A STORY WITH AN IMMORAL

INTRODUCTION

IF THE DAILY papers had made the “scoop” our story probably would have come to us in different form. There would have been much more of sensationally imaginative detail and less of quiet truth. There would have been headlines — block letters, double leaded — like this:

MIDNIGHT ASSASSINS PUT TO ROUT!

A Band of Bloody Minded Robbers

Invade the Hallowed Precincts of a Wealthy Home on Michigan Avenue — and are nobly Repulsed by the Courageous Owner, Samuel Wheattop, Esquire. He engages one of the Murderers in Personal Combat and forces him to the Wall. Valuable papers Recovered! Loaded Weapons fall Undischarged! Where were the Police? Let Chief Hubbard Rise and Explain!

CLUB PAPERS

Then would have followed a diagram of the room in which the terrific conflict took place, made up of rules and dashes and uppercase letters, and underneath a descriptive reference such as must of necessity accompany any highly imaginative work of Art.

A — bed in which the intended victims were quietly sleeping — wholly unconscious of the unholy dangers breeding about them.

B — stand — a drawer of which contained valuable papers and a loaded revolver.

C — stand at Mr. Samuel Wheattop's bedside, on which lay a well filled pocketbook!

D — chiffonier — on which in a golden bowl, containing delicately scented water, reposed two rows of pearls in a gold setting — Mrs. Wheattop's artificial teeth!

E — door by which assassins entered the apartment!

F — toilet stand whereon lay frizzes, bangs, powder, etc., in fact all the delicacies necessary to the finished toilet of a lovely society leader.

Then would have followed a hatchet cut of Samuel Wheattop Esq. and his wife from life and a portrait of the assassins from the newspaper artist's comprehension of a confused description — giving the police a very tangible clue on which to base detective operations. Now, if the daily papers had made the scoop the story would have been exciting

and no doubt some family skeletons would have been exposed in a heartless way to public gaze. But the police did not hear of the case for some time and then their knowledge would not have been sufficient to found a newspaper lie on — how slight that knowledge must have been! — and we are at liberty now to hear and tell the truth about the matter!

THE STORY

Over nearly half the world the mantle of darkness was spread. In the depth of its folds the great city lay in slumber. The myriad chimneys had ceased for a time to belch out black smoke which made the darkness of the day more tangible if not more profound than the darkness of the night. The last of the suburban trains were sleepily dragging their slow lengths along. By some strange accident Bridgeport had closed its doors early in the evening and of all the vile odors Chicago knows so well, that of the river alone was loud enough to break the general stillness of the air!

Of the dust stirred up by the street sweeping machines, much had fallen quietly back into place, much had lodged in the lungs and on the clothes of those who were exposed and much had descended upon the roofs of the street cars to be carried out onto the prairie farms which had recently been annexed to the city, to be spread over them by the

gentle lake zephyrs that they might present on the surface, at least, an urban air, and take the keen edge off those numerous jokes that lifted their grinning faces above the heads of waving corn:

THESE CHOICE CITY LOTS
FOR SALE BY NARYGOLD
100 NEWBORN STREET, CHICAGO

Through the heart and along the main arteries of the city where, indeed, peace never comes, the blood was still noisily throbbing, but in the residence districts quiet reigned. However, sleepless ones and watchers by beds of pain could hear, now and then, the whack of the policeman's billy against the lamp-post and the answering whack in the distance; and at regular intervals they could hear, if they were in range, a buzzing sound, like a dentist's drill in a soft tooth, issuing from a dark box on the corner and could catch fragments of one side of the conversation which generally followed the buzz: "This is Murphy! — ach! — kim off — Cronin! — naw!" At least that was what Raymond Hope heard as he was passing the patrol box in an aristocratic neighborhood at about 1:30 A.M.

There were few or no lights to be seen in the windows round about, for sleep, with firm, though gentle hand, had temporarily throttled the gas trust and

stopped the flow of gold into its bottomless pocket. A gleam from a watchman's lantern showed now and then on the houses along the street and now and then again would be reflected from the star on an officer's breast.

The young man who overheard the fragment quoted wore a cheerful professional air and carried what the policeman, who had just issued from the box, took to be a case of surgeon's instruments. The two met face to face, and the young man asked, "What about Cronin? Have they caught him yet?" Supposing his questioner to be a clever young physician from a neighboring hospital, the officer sought to correct his slip.

"Ye mane Tascott!" said he. "Naw, and its mesilf" —

"No!" said the other, "It was the doctor I had in mind. I have paid no attention to the case since he was seen in Canada — in fact had forgotten about him till you mentioned his name just now."

"Why! he's dead! and they're thryin him!"

"No!"

"It's mesilf that's thinkin' whot an illegant jury you'd have made in this case!" exclaimed the officer.

"Well, why didn't they send around for me. I'm always willing to do my share for the public good."

CLUB PAPERS

“But you doctors is exempted,” said the officer, “perhaps that’s why ye didn’t kape up on the case!”

“Oh pshaw! I don’t care anything about that,” returned the young man. “I’d rather appear in Court as a juryman than in any capacity I am *likely* to appear in!” and with a light laugh which broke into a whistled air the young man with the case of instruments started off in the direction of the hospital — but he didn’t reach there that night.

Broker Samuel Wheattop had returned home from a meeting of the Sunset Club some hours before, ready to start out on a crusade and reform the world’s labor and criminal classes. The discussion at the Club dinner had touched on these classes, and although the dinner was served in courses, evidently the classes were not; at least, when, on his return home, he reported certain phases of the Club talk to his wife, the classes were as hopelessly jumbled in his mind as were the dinner courses in his stomach. He spoke of reform; what he really meant — if he could have read himself — was annihilation; for in his human instincts and sympathies he was altogether too narrow to be able to appreciate the standpoint of the reformer. Of course, there were speakers at the club who expressed strong sympathy with labor! but this, he told his wife, was merely for effect; they did not believe what they were saying, and to argue with them was to no purpose. As for

himself, he wanted to meet one of this labor class, this criminal class, in person and determine from him what his thoughts and ideas really were — and to convert him if might be.

So far as a part of his wish was concerned, it was granted that night and the broker found himself decidedly at a disadvantage.

The Wheattop residence was not far from the box at which Officer Murphy and the young man had chatted. It was what is termed an elegant mansion, and in all its appointments was exquisite for the Wheattops were, fortunately, people of taste as well as of great wealth.

As Mr. Wheattop's sentiment for the beautiful in nature and in art was profound and his judgments of technical work just, a lavish expenditure had procured to him a rare collection of paintings and objects of vertu. Moreover, he talked well on art matters and when he spoke of the Mystery of the Corot, the beautiful drawing of the Meissonier or of feeling or technique generally, evidently he knew whereof he spoke for he never belied himself by purchasing a chromo or a daub. It does seem, however, that beyond their high technical qualities the value of some of his poetical paintings must have been lost to him, he was so deficient on the side of his human sympathies, though he did not know it. But his wife did appreciate the fact, and it was more

than fortunate that she contributed to the common store a nature highly sensitive along those lines when the marriage vows made their two souls one! Their combined forces made their home an attractive point to a noble line of guests. Not the least notable of their callers, though perhaps the least noble, and again perhaps not, was the young man who had the few words with Officer Murphy.

Now that young man was in many ways as eminently respectable a fellow as one would be apt to meet with in a night's journey. His ear was never closed to the cry of the poor and his hand was stretched out to their needs. It would be easy enough to lionize him for in his way he was a genius. He was a burglar — but he was a genius!

There is a sickly sentimentality which will ask, does not the day-star of genius illumine the blackness of a stained character, of a ruined name? Doubtless this has been true of many who have walked along the most exalted plains of intellectual and moral life. Many a slip may be forgiven to him through whose heart rushes the impassioned, resistless tide of humanity, making him an inspired mouth-piece, making him to elevate and cheer and charm the race in poem and story, in song and in art.

But Raymond Hope's genius was not of this sort for, in spite of his real love for his fellows, he was a menace to society and placed himself beyond the

pale of sympathy by the continued acts of his daily, or rather nightly, life. Had he stolen — once — or twice — even, through hunger! But he was a burglar — by choice!

The reasons he once gave for making that choice, for placing himself in a position antagonistic to all recognized forms of law, might fall flat on staid old conservatives of a straitlaced school, but they would appeal, and not without force, to the sympathetic student of American life today.

“ Oh! no! ” he was heard to say, “ business is not degrading, but not every bright boy even has an aptitude for business. Can an American boy enter the trades? The professions are overcrowded. Oh, yes! there is room at the top! But that is cold comfort for one who, though ambitious, knows his limitations; and especially for one who scorns trickery and has not the patience to plod, while others are passing by him up the hill of public esteem by taking disgusting advantage of their fellowmen. However, there are members of one profession I have in mind, and which I admire, who do not jostle or crowd each other because there are too many to the square foot. I refer to the medical missionaries in the slums. It is a great field, that! But to invest one’s life in that way doesn’t bring sufficiently large or speedy returns for most of us. Art is not appreciated by the public sufficiently to make the life of

CLUB PAPERS

the artist more than drudgery and disappointment, and many a sensitive soul, capable of highest development under the genial sunshine of intelligent appreciation, has refused to prostitute his art, has fallen back into business lines for which he had no flair, and has failed — he may have made a good living but his life was a failure! All paths, smooth or rough, to honest toil seem to be guarded against the American boy today.

“As for politics, which should be in the hands of incorruptible men, surely no American father would want to see his boy embark in that rotten ship on the seething sea of demoralization. A few men have manned their own craft and by a kind fate have happened to sail through unharmed — but they are few. What is there in our local administrative departments which should not put a sensitive man with any idea whatsoever of justice in direct antipathy to the powers that be?

“I don't want to say anything against the police,” said he, “they don't bother me much, but is not their whole internal system a hollow mockery? They have to get the Irish murder cases worked up by German detectives! The German anarchists are hunted down by Irish policemen — and they are all dead against the American. A friendless young fellow has a hard pull in the great city today. My trial in

some of the so-called straight lines was not a brilliant success — consequently — I am here.”

His confreres, who had never an idea above the most improved methods of cracksmanship, looked on him as a strange fellow, and after one of his talks one asked him why he didn't preach for a living. Certainly his answer was strange for one in his branch of art — “ Well — I don't care to be responsible for more souls than one! ” A preacher responsible! — a ball like that once set rolling would knock down long rows of preachers!

And now we may view the direction in which Raymond Hope's genius lay. He planned his campaigns with all the clear sightedness of a general and almost always carried them out to the letter, for he usually caught the enemy napping. Late in the afternoon of the day on which broker Wheattop uttered his wish Raymond Hope, in the character of telephone company's lineman, ascended to the roof of a neighboring building and severed the wires which connected the Wheattop mansion with the district headquarters of the police and fire departments. This was a wise precaution in this day of delicate electrical apparatus. It is a high function of genius to note trifles and to use them to advantage. To many the fire alarm would have been an unimportant feature; not so to this man. He had known

CLUB PAPERS

men to be very warm when awakened to no good purpose from a sound sleep. He had heard, even, that the touch of a dainty feminine toe or a wife's cold foot against the small of the back would sometimes awaken in men such warm expressions of opinion that the fusible metal of the fire alarm would certainly burn with shame if it were as sensitive as it should be. Then, moreover, some occupant of a distant chamber might be awakened by a disturbance and take the fire alarm method of sending a call. It does not pay to take risks — so he always disconnected both systems.

Upon leaving the Officer, the supposed doctor went directly to the home he intended to honor with a call. He scanned it carefully for a moment to make sure all was well, then walked quietly to the back porch and with little or no inconvenience found himself on the roof. The bathroom window was unfastened as he had expected and raising the sash he entered. He had been in the house years before in another capacity and also but a few days before in still another capacity and he knew the lines. He descended to the porch door and undid all the fastenings but one thumb-bolt which could be quickly turned in case a hasty exit became necessary. He left this bolt undrawn to protect the house against watchmen and common thieves and, so guarded from interruption from without, he quietly got

down to business. The safe door responded to his magic touch and some valuable silver was placed conveniently near to the door through which he was to take his leave.

But the safe had not yielded up all he expected of it, and after an unsuccessful search through the drawers of the library he ascended to the sleeping apartments to see if they would not furnish the desired booty. This was no acceptable part of the mission to him for, in these undertakings, he always tried to avoid contact with human beings, even sleeping, and had never started on one of his expeditions with a murderous weapon in his possession. Tonight was no exception.

Why it should have happened just as it did, the fates alone can tell, but the injured capitalists and oppressive laborers had met in Samuel Wheattop's dream with a crash. He had awakened with a start, and was sitting bolt upright in bed, when the chamber door opened softly and Raymond Hope entered. The burglar had not expected this, but he took the situation by the horns.

"I beg your pardon!" he said.

"Pray don't mention it," returned the broker with a majestic sweep of the arm. He was calming the disturbing elements of his nightmare with his waking thoughts and this was still part of his dream.

Suddenly he realized his position and knew that

CLUB PAPERS

his wish to meet a criminal face to face had been granted. And O, Lord! how was he to sustain his dignity — much less make a convert, he might have thought, if that phase had struck him!

As soon as the burglar saw that his victim had no weapon at hand, the calmness of his expression became a truthful index to his mind. He did not seem to notice the broker's action in placing his hand on a pocketbook on the stand at his bedside. That pocketbook was one of the broker's little devices — under ordinary conditions to grasp it would be to send a call to the police.

“Don't mention it!” the broker had said! It touched the burglar's sense of humor under the circumstances and with what might have been a wink, had his face been less sternly set, he responded:

“No! I won't speak of it in public!” “Come now, not a motion,” he added, as the broker stirred his legs under the covers, “just one peep and you are a dead man;” and the burglar's hand went very suggestively to his pistol pocket and rested there.

“Quietly now,” he said, “so as not to disturb your wife.” The broker watched with some apprehension the movement of the intruder's hand, and seeing, as he thought, the murderous expression of his face, wisely concluded to remain quiet — for his own sake as well as for his wife's.

“What do you want here?” he asked in a hard whisper. “There isn’t a cent of money in the house except what is in this pocketbook.”

“I don’t want your money,” said the burglar, “I want a package of papers, sealed and marked ‘Special’ and I want it pretty speedily too!”

The broker started and the cold perspiration broke out all over him. A package of bonds with coupons attached — how did he know of them? The broker, himself, had brought them up from town with papers for his wife’s signature and they were to go to his daughter’s husband in New York in the morning. They must not be taken. They lay in the unlocked drawer of a desk just behind the burglar, and beside them lay a loaded revolver. He would deceive the villain, would get up to open the safe for him and in passing would get the weapon, and then he would be a more even match for the wretch whose hand seemingly was still on the handle of his gun.

It would have been an immense relief to the broker to know that besides the hand there was nothing in that pocket but a sponge and a vial of chloroform. Oh, too! that he might gain time for the police patrol which surely would be upon them before many moments.

“They are in the safe down” — he began.

CLUB PAPERS

“Hist!” said the burglar, as he turned the night light a trifle higher, “they are not there, I have looked!”

That was an unexpected blow to the broker and knocked nearly all his wind out but he had enough left to continue feebly “at the office!”

“No! you l— excuse me, they are in this house. Come, where are they?”

The broker unconsciously cast a longing, almost vanquished look at the drawer in which the revolver lay at rest.

The burglar had noticed his glance take that direction before and moving quietly backward, with his eye still fixed on the broker’s face, at last put his left hand down and touched the desk. He knew it perfectly. Years before, as representative of a great daily, he had been in this same room with this same man who now lay there breathless and trembling in his bed, and with his wife, who lay calmly sleeping at his side — but she must have had a clear conscience — and among other bridal gifts to their daughter, for it was her wedding day, they had showed him some bonds in that drawer! The thought of that time made him take back his hand with a start, but soon he put it out again and opened the desk.

As he reached down to discover the contents he gave a shudder for his hand came in contact with the

cold steel. He knew instantly what it was and cursed luck for putting it in his reach. Then, he thought, after all fate was doing him a good turn in disclosing to him this hidden danger and in giving him a chance to leave the house alive. As he took up the weapon a swift glance downwards revealed to him the coveted papers!

In an atmosphere so charged with the curious, chloroform itself could not have held in bond the weakest of feminine instincts, to say nothing of the most powerful, and Mrs. Wheattop awoke.

There was a sharp rattle in the broker's throat and a fragment of an oath escaped from his lips. His wife turned toward him with an expression of tenderest solicitude.

"What is it?" she asked in alarm. "Are you ill?" as her eyes fell on her husband's ghastly face. Immediately she turned in the direction in which his gaze was strained and beheld the intruder. She did not shriek nor faint, but gave the wretch a glance which was intended to pierce him like a knife.

"Sir!" she demanded, "what do you wish?"

"I beg your forgiveness, madam, I mean no harm to either of you!" He had considerately put the weapon out of sight. "I came to your husband on a matter of business with which I could not well approach him at any other time. I am sorry to have

CLUB PAPERS

disturbed you, believe me, it is against my wish! ”

“ And against mine,” she cried. “ Leave, this instant! ”

There was something so persuasive in her command, that the burglar was well inclined toward going. But the situation was so unique that he did not care to break it, especially as he knew that he could hold it as long as he chose and with harm to none of them.

There was now one spark of hope in the broker's breast. Evidently the villain had not discovered the papers and by some means he must be enticed away from their immediate vicinity. He turned and whispered a word in his wife's ear. The look of pain which shot instantly across her face was a full noontide to which the intense expression of her husband's visage was but a twilight, so fathomless is a mother's love.

“ He must not get them! ” Their hearts said that much and more. “ He must not get them! ”

The burglar read that much in their faces and behind his imperturbable features there played a smile of scorn, for people who cared so much for money, to whom the prospective loss of the bonds and of the little money it would take to redeem those papers could cause such pain. Their circle of friends, their tastes as expressed in public, their surroundings and manner of life, all pointed to them

as people of higher ideals. He could not resist the temptation to play with them — so he moved a few feet from where their treasure lay and coolly seated himself in full sight of them both on the arm of a chair.

But he had not read their hearts. Ah! there lay the skeleton those vultures, the reporters, would have picked at before the eyes of the world. Their only daughter's husband had betrayed a great trust and was on the verge of a dishonor worse than ruin. To shield her, it might be to save him, those papers must be in a distant city within forty hours of that time, and if they missed — God help them all and especially her! It was altogether a pity that the burglar could not have read their hearts — but he was human and was just then bent on enjoying the advantage of his position.

His change of base had brought to them easier breathing — and oh! again that they might detain him till the police could arrive! In the broker's fancy the police had come! Singular that fellow should sit there so seemingly undisturbed and let himself be taken!

Thus, strangely, were brought face to face these two men of pronounced and widely varying traits of character. The underlying element of the broker's life was a deep moral or, perhaps better, intellectual principle of right, a character which in its complete-

CLUB PAPERS

ness gives nobility and grandeur to humanity. But in the broker it seemed so deeply buried that it rarely stirred upon the surface. He sometimes swerved from the straight line in matters sentimental — who of his type does not?

As to the other — his wellspring of action seemed to be a sentiment which lay near to the surface and responded to the lightest call. It is a trait of character which brings relief to distress and lends the hand of comfort to sorrow. This man was not always found in the paths of rectitude, but who is who commits himself entirely to the control of sentiment or the passions?

“As you passed the Palmer House tonight,” said the burglar, looking the broker straight in the eye, “you were speaking of reforming — the criminals — was it not? — well how are you going to do it?”

To an ordinary man, a question like that, coming so close upon a time of burning emotions, kindled by such anxieties, would have been fraught with something of terror. Not so to the broker, the reformer. A reformer is a creature more strange than a sentimental burglar. Why does the reformer always climb upon the line fence and closely scan his neighbor's garden, heedless of the rank tares spreading in his own. Reform like charity should begin at home, only reform must take one more step, a

personal step which charity can never safely take, and begin in the individual.

But the broker was not now thinking of himself or of his daughter's husband. The laborer was rising before his excited vision. "You devil!" said the broker internally, and he may be pardoned under the circumstances.

"Sir!" he said aloud, "it would be fruitless to speak of this with you!"

"How do you know?"

The broker hesitated.

"You are fallen too low!"

"I thank you, but is that the position a reformer should take?"

"Yes! in some cases," returned the broker somewhat hotly.

"Perhaps you don't think I am worth reforming," smiled the burglar. "Let me give you a little advice for your own sake to aid you in your work of reform. We used to learn in our study of the equations of the curves, that what was true of a curve as it approached the limits was true at the limits, and we learned that the reverse was true, did we not? Well sir! when you find one case too low to try to help, you may be sure there is something vitally wrong with the law of your curve, and that there are other cases way back, higher up, that you cannot

CLUB PAPERS

touch. Will you pardon me if I go on? I will not be personal longer, what I say is general. This is the age of reform, yet no one seems to understand its laws. Capital is setting out to reform labor. Labor strikes to reform capital. Each hopes for success and the struggle continues. I think labor has rather the worst of the fight.”

“I hardly think you understand the position of capital today,” the broker was forced to interrupt.

“Not from personal grounds,” admitted the burglar.

“The fight today,” continued the broker, “is between factions of capital, and it is the capitalist who suffers, not the laborer.”

“The stones grind one against the other,” exclaimed the burglar, “and the grain between is crushed; if labor did not of necessity get between it would not be ground.”

“But capital suffers primarily,” persisted Mr. Wheattop.

“And labor is ground, and not through fault of its own,” returned the other. “Do you expect to reform labor by telling it that capital suffers through internal derangement? Then labor will say to you, and justly, ‘reform capital!’ and that is the pith of the matter; for this world has swung along too far in the orbit of reform for one class to seek to reform another because it holds temporary power! That

already has been tried in many fields and has failed. Riches cannot reform poverty — labor cannot reform capital — capital cannot reform labor. He who would take upon his shoulders the burden of the reformer must have a heart as deep as another's misery — a sympathy as broad as humanity and a spirit as lowly as the lowliest, otherwise he must confine his work of reformation in very narrow circles! ”

The lines of mild irony which had been deepening about Mr. Wheattop's mouth finally parted his lips and he said: “ You amuse me, and yet I feel like correcting you. You very evidently do not understand the relationships existing between the various classes. You certainly do not appreciate the attitude of the rich to the poor — nor could you be expected to — but you do an injury to the cause of universal peace by willfully misunderstanding the motives and feelings of the upper class toward the lower and by misrepresenting us to the lower. It is the ravings of these blatant agitators that widens the gap between the classes.”

“ Pardon me,” said the burglar, “ but if we are to place so grave a responsibility let us place it rightly. It is not lodged entirely with the blatherskites nor with the supersensitive ones of the lower classes as many good people are led to believe. Too much of it lies with the upper class as you are pleased to call

CLUB PAPERS

it. It is mighty little the members of your class (in general I mean, there are some noble exceptions) care or think about their less fortunate brothers. They regard any movement on the part of the laboring class, for instance, to better its condition as a presumptuous striving to climb out of the mould in which fate — you call it Providence or God — cast them, and to fit themselves into a sphere forever above them. It takes a time of discord and of upheaval to call the attention of many of you to the downtrodden at all. And when your attention is called, is it not rather in a personal manner as to how the trouble will affect you, as to whether the red flag will really float triumphantly for a time, than what of permanent value and benefit to all concerned will be reached in the ultimate outcome of events? How can I misrepresent you to the poor. My associates, contrary to your implication, are not among the lower classes. I enter more frequently into the homes of the rich than into the abodes of poverty. There are not many valuable papers in the homes of the poor and their safes are not worth the cracking.”

The burglar could not resist the temptation to play on tender chords.

“But I could not misrepresent your class feelings if I would — your weak ones too vividly present them. Let me show you how heartless you can be.

It was on that sad May morning, whose fatal consequences will not soon be forgotten in many homes of this city. There had been blood shed at McCormick's. The strikers had come in contact with the police. Right into that quarter of the city drove a tallyho — a coach and four, with coachman, footman, and wind-bag, done up in white skin trousers, top boots, green coats, high hats and cockades — complete and absolute personifications of servility and degradation — how can one stoop so low as to wear that rig! On that coach which passed through that region of pain and starving and despair were the daughters of your class, with bright, happy, careless faces, and your sons — shallow pated dudes, with monocles and high collars which creased their chins and kept their lower jaws from slipping back into imbecility; and in spite of the insult offered to men of sense and sorrow by such a display, at such a time and in such a place, the party passed unmolested, unheeded perhaps, in spite of the tooting of the long horn, unheeded perhaps, except by those whose hearts were not stirred to envy, but whose eyes were moistened by the heartlessness in the upper class! I tell you the red flag on Michigan Avenue on that Thanksgiving day was a more blessed sight in the eyes of the angels — at least in the eyes of respectable humanity.

“Do I misrepresent your class?” continued the

burglar. "What is to be said for a class, acceptable members of which ride through the city stretched out at full length in their victorias with ankle joints exposed, embracing little curs the cost and maintenance of each of which would more than endow a cot in the hospital which its mistress passes daily in ignorance of its purpose or existence. It makes me sick!"

It was beginning to make the broker sick too, when suddenly there came to his ear a faint sound which caused new life to flow in his veins. A distant rumble — a clang — as of a gong. They were coming but why would they not come quietly and surprise the wretch and not give him an alarm and a chance to escape? The noise grew louder, the clangor fiercer and, in a whirl of uproar and flame, the district engine rounded the corner and vanished down the side street.

Forty shades of expression passed over the broker's countenance as the burglar sat there coolly eyeing him, and his profound fall from the pinnacle of hope into the pit of despair cast a gloom over the party for some moments. Finally the burglar broke the silence.

"That slight disturbance in the street interrupted our line of conversation. We were speaking of that incident of the strikes."

The broker's disappointment almost had the

better of him. "That one word — 'strikes,' " he muttered, "is enough to divert all sympathy from the laboring classes. The strike is the most wanton engine of destruction in the hands of labor today. To strike should be a criminal act! "

"And so you would manufacture criminals — not reform them," suggested the burglar.

"It would lessen the propensity for striking if justice were to hold its flaming sword before the strikers," dogmatized the broker.

"That fabled sword of justice had two edges," said his tormentor quietly. "Let us not condone the wrong of the strikers, nor let us impute all the evil to them. Is it wrong for a single employee to leave his employer in a time of need, supposing previous relations between them to have been just? Morally wrong, always. Legally wrong, never! Is the situation changed when the single employee is multiplied into a hundred? Hardly, I think. But, Mr. Broker, the laborer acts and conducts his affairs under the same general immoral law that governs the universe of trade today — your necessity is my opportunity."

"It certainly is so in your branch of trade!" sadly remarked Mrs. Wheattop.

"Let us not be personal," said the burglar. "I could not well exist in an age and be entirely out of harmony with it — no more could the capitalist!"

CLUB PAPERS

It is the general law though and even personal friendship sometimes falls before it. But we are not so apt to take advantage of those toward whom our personal sympathies extend and so it seems to me that when the 'brotherhood of man' is made a factor of daily life instead of a text for vague preaching, as it is today along with the kindred topics of sweetness and light, the element of personal sympathy will enter more broadly into the mixture of life and the immoral law as formulated will be a thing of the past."

"Is not the reign of brotherly love hopelessly far away," asked Mrs. Wheattop in a tone wavering between kindness and bitter irony, "when one who, like yourself, speaking in its behalf still bends his life energies against it? "

"It does seem hopelessly far away, Madam, when those who would care the most for it know not how to bend their forces toward it. Our human natures and all the wanton engines of civilization, as you would call them, Mr. Broker, are fighting against it."

"I do not recognize the force of this law of trade you have formulated," said the broker.

"The law is none of my formulating. It is a condensed decalogue and, so far as it touches the relationships of men, was engraved on everlasting bronze long ago by the adamantine tool of human

selfishness. It is a principle of the great law of evolution, nature obeys it implicitly and on her immortal tablets it is inscribed — ‘ The Survival of the Fittest! ’ ”

“ You are pessimistic, young man! ” said the broker partly in interest, partly with the police patrol in mind. “ This law you propound antedates the earliest days of creation! Come down to today and, to be precise, tell me one product of modern thought and meanness which contributes to delay this Utopia of Brotherly Love! ”

“ Your question is so tersely put, ” responded the burglar, “ that there can be but one answer and that is — the daily press! ”

There was silence for some moments. Two minds were working along somewhat similar lines; the broker’s was shooting off at a tangent. Two of them were thinking of characters blackened, homes and family altars desecrated, friendships severed, fortunes overthrown by the malicious lies and misstatements of the unbridled press. The broker’s thoughts soon took the form of words.

“ You must have had large experience with the papers to know them so well! ” he said, by way of a grim joke.

“ I have had unpleasant relations with the papers, ” quietly returned the burglar, “ in ways you would be very far from imagining, and must say

CLUB PAPERS

that in the editorial columns, in the news departments, in the garbled reports, it is one and the same vile mess. It seems to me that the daily press engenders more ill feeling between capital and labor, between rich and poor, between operator and operative, than any other one outside agency, yes! or than all combined."

"Young man," said the broker with severity, "you are as crazy on this topic as on the others you have touched. I read the papers and get a vast deal of information and benefit from them. Their stock reports are invaluable to me, their news items are necessary to a knowledge of what is going on in the world about us, their literary and religious departments are replete with interesting matter."

"I must be on track of a new bird," said the burglar, with a satirical little grin. "Do you mean to say that you read the literary and religious matter in the daily papers? I had supposed that men of culture went to periodicals and reviews and technical journals for such mental and moral sustenance as their libraries or their own experience could not furnish; and that no one read the Monday morning sermon except the man whose conscience was troubling him over a certain empty pew in his church the day before! "

"But the matter is there for those to read who cannot afford the reviews," insisted the broker.

It would have been of interest to Mr. Wheattop and his wife, especially to the latter, to have known of one unpleasant experience this man had had with the papers. He had reported their daughter's wedding and had lost his position because of it. He had done so well in police and criminal matters for the paper on which he was then engaged that the managing editor considered him fit to deal with the affairs of "high life." He had treated this matter in a gentlemanly manner altogether devoid of sensationalism and had purposely withheld the copy till it was time for the edition to go to press that it might not be altered. Mrs. Wheattop, with her fine instincts, had appreciated the notice and had gone, after some days, to the publication office to thank the reporter in person. But he was not there. His chief had taken him to task over that very article and the reporter had left abruptly. His whereabouts were unknown. A gentlemanly treatment of a delicate affair was that man's crime against modern newspaper methods! So it is not to be wondered that it was with a slight touch of bitterness that he heard the broker defend the press.

"Whether the influence of the press be for good or for evil," continued Mr. Wheattop, "it is hardly just to condemn that institution in a wholesale manner, for such as it is the public demands it."

"I must admit that the public furnishes a good

CLUB PAPERS

market," said the burglar, "but I do not believe the public created the demand. In fact I know that the newspaper, like all novel ideas, had to struggle for a footing and it is only by mixing good with the evil that it retains its hold. As to the moral purposes of the press we must let that institution determine. No paper has advocated a righteous cause but a rival sheet has at least attempted to show that it was actuated entirely by selfish or partisan motives, or has accused it of falsehood direct. And things have got to that pass that when the newsboys yell in my ear 'The Chicago Liar! for five cents!' I instinctively ask which one? — and if he does not happen to have mine which lies least often — well, I choose the least of greater evils — or take none at all."

A slow rumble along the side street, coming out of nothingness and fading away into the vast stillness from which it had emerged, told the trio that the engines were returning home. The fire could not have been much of an affair — it was so soon over that what had probably threatened a great loss had died away in a mild excitement!

"Sir! Madam!" said the burglar rising from his seat after this last explosion, "it would be unkind to keep you longer in suspense, your wires are cut and the police have not heard your call. I am free to act as I choose. I have been very pleasantly en-

tertained and I may hope that this visit has been not without a certain interest to you.”

He made a quick step toward the desk and deftly passed the package of papers from the drawer to his pocket.

“ You will hear from me before many days as to when and how you may redeem these papers.” “ I shall keep the bonds,” he added, as with his most polite bow he backed toward the chamber door. A groan escaped from the broker’s lips and over his wife’s face came such a look of despair that Raymond Hope, not the burglar but the man with whom they had been conversing, felt instinctively that in the minds of these people there must be some grief deeper than could be caused by the loss of the ransom money.

“ O God! ” groaned the broker.

“ My poor daughter! ” sobbed his wife.

The burglar for the time had vanished and in his place stood the reporter and across his brain there swept a vision of that fair woman, their daughter, whom he had seen but once and then, to love, as she was about to become the wife of another.

“ Your daughter? ” he said, stopping quickly upon the threshold, “ your daughter, what of her? ”

His tone was so gentle and full of concern that Mrs. Wheattop and her pride broke down, and be-

CLUB PAPERS

tween heavy sobs, hardly knowing what she did, she told the story of her daughter's sore trial and the certainty of her son's dishonor.

Her husband had tried to dam this rushing stream of a mother's woe, but to no purpose.

"Madam," said Hope, as Mrs. Wheattop convulsively finished her recital, "believe me you have not done wrong in thus honoring me with your confidence. Your secret is safe with me — how safe you may judge from my actions. This is a painful experience to you — it must be to any sensitive soul. The moral sense of the community receives a more violent shock by the discovery of crime and rottenness where purity is supposed to exist than when the crime emanates from confessedly criminal circles. That is looking at the question from the point of view of your class. But as for me, so far as I can discern its workings, the moral tone of the community is an impalpable affair and not worth taking into account in shaping the individual life. I return these papers and do not stand in the way of their safe delivery. I do not return them to shield crime in high places, for fear of the deleterious effect of the exposure on public morals — the exposure of hypocrisy in whatever quarter would not grieve me — I return them, for I must lose, if to gain however greatly to myself is to cause one additional throb in a pure woman's breaking heart."

While speaking Hope quietly laid the papers in

the drawer from which he had taken them, and placed the revolver at their side.

“It seems,” he continued, “that the financial profit of this visit is to be small to me; and in return for what I have missed I am going to ask a favor — where I might, perhaps, issue a command. Mr. Broker! I wish that at your earliest convenience you would send a check for \$500.00 to the management of the training school for boys, an institution which well appreciates the difference between the criminal class and the labor class and is trying to save from the one into the ranks of the other. And then, too, I wish you would donate \$500.00 to the city missionary society to be used for medical work in the slums. These donations are not to go in over your name, but over a name I will give you, say — Faith Hope. You may supply a third word if you choose. When these donations are made I will return the silver which anxiously awaits me at the door below. I have the honor now to bid you a good night,” and the burglar left the room.

Mr. Wheattop’s first impulse was to get the revolver, but somehow he got the better of it and lay for a few moments quietly in bed. In his superlative joy at still possessing the papers, the broker assured his wife that he would soon redeem the silver, and to this moment she believes that he has acted in good faith his part of the programme.

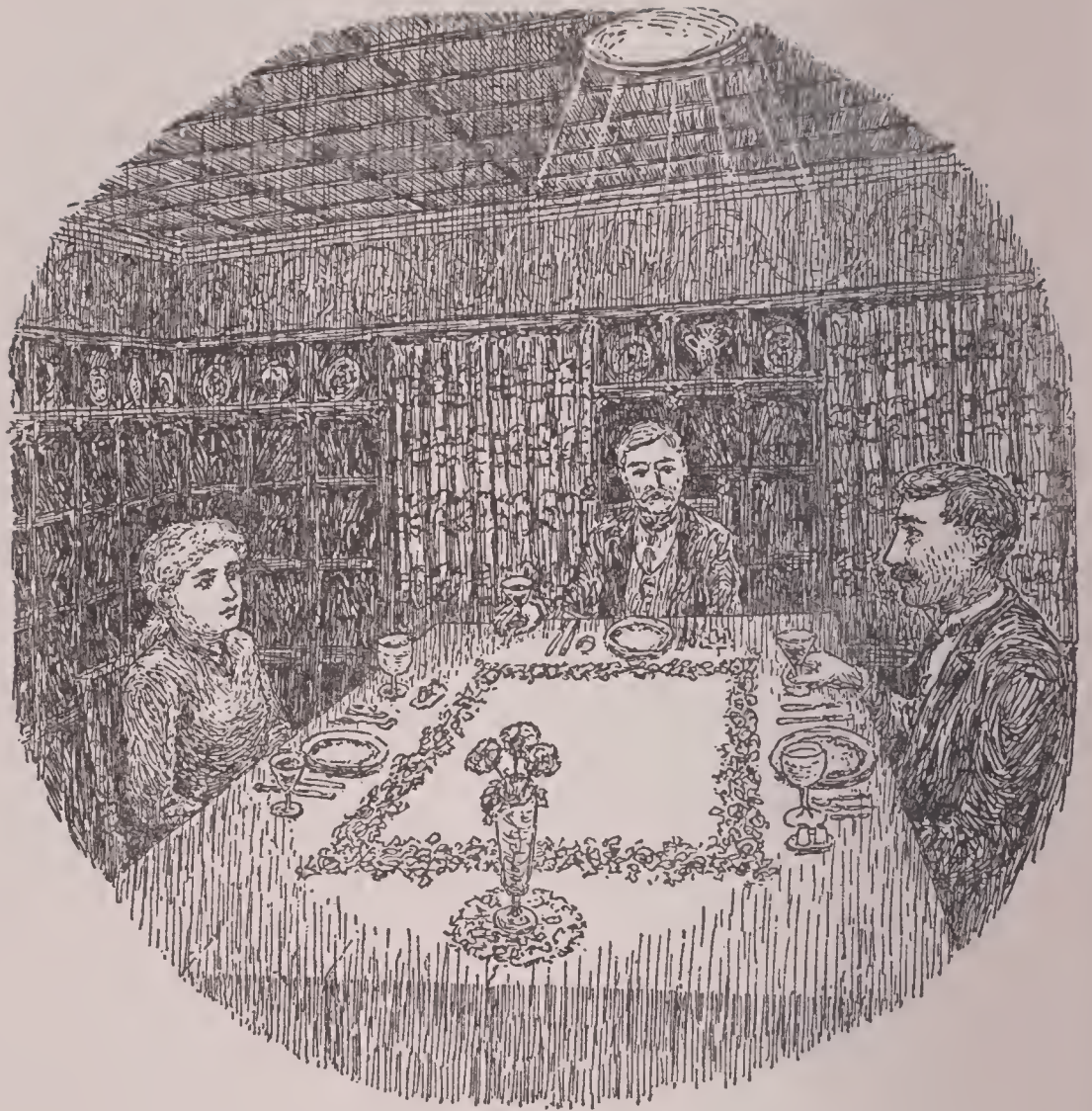
But between us, one thousand dollars sunk in an

CLUB PAPERS

obscure investment which would not reap to him even the interest of renown, was not to the broker's taste, and by and by, after an endeavor to put the police on track of the missing silver, he calmed his conscience by investing one thousand dollars in a picture of "Charity" in an elaborate gold frame on which his name appeared in large black letters as "donor" and presenting it to the Art Institute. His wife, with now and then a tear and many a warm feeling toward the frail side of fallen humanity, has never failed to remember that night and always winds up her line of thought something like this:

"He was a strange fellow! a strange fellow! There must have been two men in the house that night! It was doubtless a noble, true man who sat and talked with us — but it was a burglar who took the silver!"

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT



ARE YOU NOT AFRAID OF MENTAL DYSPEPSIA IF YOU
TAKE SUCH HEAVY DIET ON YOUR PLEASURE TRAMPS!

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

I WAS NOT feeling altogether at one with the world and this, perhaps, as much as anything impelled me to turn my footsteps away from the bustle and confusion of my surroundings and to tramp onward, aimlessly, through a dreary region which lay at one side of the city whither for this summer, as for the summer preceding, my labors had called me. Now I do not believe to any great extent in "blind fate" or, in fact, in any fate. I would prefer if possible to believe in a well ordered system of affairs in this God's universe; but sometimes, when I think over that day's tramp and to what it led, I wonder if any ordered system comprehending great suns and planets swinging in their orbits and including the transmission of sound and heat and force, the creation of light and life, can extend to the minutest details of so seemingly unimportant a life as mine.

I shall not try to place the responsibility — thank Heaven it is not mine to settle such questions — but I have wondered why I pushed my way among those shadeless sand hills when I knew that to the east and

CLUB PAPERS

south of the city, along a sparkling water course with level, winding banks, stretched mile upon mile of fruit and flower gardens, fragrant groves and grassy openings which reached far back from the mossy river banks. I knew very well the charm of that locality for in more satisfied mood I had wandered often in and out among the shady lanes, and often of a warm summer's day I had bathed my tired limbs in the secluded depths where a certain clump of willows and beeches cast dark shadows on the surface of the silver stream. I must here do myself the justice to say that my mood on this particular day was not of illtemper or of dissatisfaction; it was the craving mood of the unsatisfied. What a world of difference there is between those words. May Heaven have mercy on the dissatisfied soul. May Heaven help the unsatisfied to clearer light and broader truth, for by him alone are supreme heights attainable.

For hours I trod the treeless waste, holding communion with my inner self and carrying my bundle of yearnings. Of course I carried more substantial baggage for I am too good a traveler to venture out into a strange and especially into so uninviting a section of country without my lunch and flask and one or two companionable books.

It was well on in the afternoon — I had set out in the early morning — that I came to a realizing

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

sense of my distance from the city by a tired feeling strongly manifested in head and feet, and I must say that I did not relish the prospect of a return tramp that night. The country had become more hilly, some coarse brown grasses and weeds had spread patches of carpet here and there over the parched sand. Farther on the hills were higher and the carpet of grasses seemed more broadly spread and of finer texture, while I could see even at a distance that nature had woven flower patterns in soft colors into the body of dull green and brown.

I began to greet these grasses and banks of color in much the same spirit in which Columbus must have welcomed the floating landgrass and driftwood as he neared the golden strand of his new world. There may have been a slight difference, for I had not set out on a voyage of discovery; yet nevertheless I was soon to set foot on the borderland of a new world — a new life — and to learn of new possibilities of which I had never even dreamed.

Descending by a gentle slope into a valley, to my gratification and slight surprise I came upon a fairly well worn path. Into this I turned my steps and followed its windings for some distance as it wove in and out among patches of sunlight and shade, for it led now through a wooded country sweet with the perfume of plant and flower, where a laughing woodland stream sparkled between the trees and so

CLUB PAPERS

touched me with a sense of delight that more than once I stopped to hear its tinkling and singing as it skirted rocks and rippled over pebbles, under fern and brake and hanging branch, till, suddenly emerging from a deep shade I rested my eyes on one of the loveliest scenes God and man, working in perfect harmony, ever produced.

The spot to which the path had led me was on a slight eminence overlooking a little valley carpeted with living green and hemmed in and sheltered on all sides by a dense growth of trees. The sun, just before me, was sinking into a most gorgeous bed of crimson and gold, while over him was suspended a fleecy canopy worked by the angels of the light in rarest tints of green and blue, orange and vermillion, while athwart them all the brilliant monarch shot radiating lines of purest gold which, weaving all the colors into one grand harmony, pierced beyond into the transparent blue of the dome overhead.

Below my feet lay at rest two little lakes, blue and transparent, and as deep as the heavens were high above them. Beyond them, nestled in the purple shadows of the forest trees, stretched a long low house with its out-buildings whose red roofs and chimneys were touched here and there with the mellow sunlight which, drifting over treetops and sifting through the leaves, bathed the lower part of the picture in its soft radiance. Through an open win-

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

dow of the house floated strains from some musical instrument, and a voice was heard, tender and sweet, I knew, for I could just distinguish it at that distance.

A feeling of perfect contentment and satisfaction stole over me and it was some time before I could break the spell and make up my mind to go to the door and inquire the way to some tavern where I might pass the night for I felt sure that at no great distance there must be some small hamlet which could boast its genial wayside inn.

I was met at the door by a pleasant faced old black "mammy" who evidently was not in the habit of admitting early evening or indeed any other callers. In response to my question she spoke to someone within and in a moment an elderly gentleman stood before me. He did not seem to glance at me keenly, still I felt glad that I had nothing to conceal.

I never saw just such another face. It was full of strong manhood though the lines were soft. The eyes were calm and clear, almost penetrating, and an intense passion lurked in the corners of the lids. The nose was straight, the nostrils sensitive and the mouth, which was shaded by a drooping moustache, was firm and gentle. His whole bearing spoke of mental and physical activity and a life of calm restraint.

We did not stand in silence while each took mental note of the other, for I had soon made my wants

CLUB PAPERS

known and he had answered with slight delay. "I fear," he said with a kindly smile, "you will have some little distance to travel before you find a more comfortable bed than I can place at your disposal, if you are willing to accept. I can hardly offer my guests the social entertainment of the inn. However, if you care to share our simple meal, you will be welcome." Is there wonder that I was too surprised and delighted with this piece of seeming good fortune to express my thanks in words? However, I did not need to do that for he read my eyes and noting the dusty condition to which my tramp had brought me, said, as he led me across the hall, "There is the toilet room; and there are wanting some moments of supper time."

When I came out much refreshed into the broad hall, the evening shades were so deeply gathered that the light of the room was quite dim; but at the farther end reclining in a deep window seat I saw my host and a graceful young woman. As I came forward, they arose together and my host advanced saying, "Do not think we give you a cold welcome because we do not light the lamps. My daughter and I love the twilight hour and try to keep its gentle light unbroken." At his word, "my daughter," I bowed and she responded with a slight inclination of the head. This was our introduction. I could not distinguish the lines of her face, but her figure as it

showed in silhouette against the gray light of the window was simply perfection; and at that first movement of her head the blood surged to my temples. While her father and I were conversing she retired from the room.

I took from my pocket the books which hung rather heavily at my side and deposited them on the window sill. The keen eyes of my host were attracted to one of these and with a, "May I," he took it up. He turned the leaves noting here and there marked passages, and said quietly with a pleased look, "We may be entertaining an angel, etc., etc." Before I could respond otherwise than by a questioning glance, his daughter appeared and said in the gentlest voice I ever heard, "Father, our supper is ready;" and he led the way to the door. I went in to see her standing in the soft light which the electric lamp shed down from a panel in the ceiling of the room.

What can I say of her as she stood there in a graceful gown of soft white stuff with her calm, upturned face? My sensation on the first view of their home was repeated intensified. As the little lakes so calm and tranquil in the peaceful landscape had reflected to my eye the azure sky above, so did her blue eyes reflect the gathered light of heaven from the depths of her pure soul. And her hair! It seemed as if the sunlight had dashed up a spray against her white

forehead and, rippling back, kept falling in cascades of gold over the warm tints of her perfect neck and shoulders. When she moved it was as though with effort to keep her feet on the ground; so much she seemed a creature of clearer light and higher realms.

The conversation at the supper-table ran in pleasant channels. I hardly know if I did my share for I cannot use my eyes and lips to advantage at one and the same time and my eyes had all they could attend to. During the talk the father said to me, "The work which attracted my notice as you took the books from your pocket used to give me great satisfaction when I was a young student of these matters. Some of the marked passages seemed to indicate a certain appreciation on the reader's part that brought me into sympathy with him at once. — Hence my little pleasantry as to 'angels, etc., etc.," he added with a smile. "We entertain few 'angels,' as my daughter and I are pleased to denominate kindred spirits."

"What book is it, father?" asked the daughter and then added with a little wayward manner which charmed me to the quick, "Perhaps I do not care to be counted one of your band of angels."

"It is a volume of selections from De Vert," he said, "and the particular selection to which I refer is the essay on 'Old Truths Under New Lights.'"

"Indeed," she responded, and with so evident comprehension and appreciation that I wondered if

the mere girl she seemed could have puzzled her head with abstruse problems of philosophical speculation.

“Are you not afraid of mental dyspepsia if you take such heavy diet on your pleasure tramps?” she asked with a quizzical look in her eyes. At least that was the way I read their expression and answered in that vein:

“Perhaps I do not go as deeply into the thought at those times as I might,” I said, “for I keep my eyes open to whatever of beauty may lie around me. You may be sure my eyes drink their fill of the loveliness which is set before them.” She must have noticed that they did for the faint flush which came into her face told me plainly that she read my deeper meaning and I would best confine my conversation in conventional channels. So I continued: “But I do enjoy the book for the wonderful amount of suggestion it contains.”

“It was always full of suggestion to me,” said her father after a short lull. “Not perhaps in the line the author might have expected, but still full of suggestion; and I owe the author a great debt. His idea of spiritual truth always in some subtle manner suggested to my mind a parallel idea of physical light. How strangely these two words are bound together, and have been, ever since humanity began to seek after a higher life — and that you know was

CLUB PAPERS

early in the history of the race. Probably at first it was a poetical form of expression, this use of light for truth. At first the poetic seeker after God cried for light. He wanted truth. And now the unpoetic scientist seeks for light — he wants truth. They both are struggling toward the same goal; and frenzied poet and stern logician express their desires in the same word — light. Give us light. Is there not, then, some subtle, vital force in the light their physical eyes know to suggest to the mind's eye and to the eye of faith this same expression for ultimate truth — the light? It seemed so to me." Then the conversation turned on general topics till the conclusion of the meal.

"Will you sit with us a little while?" said my host when, after our cigars in the porch, we returned to the dining room. "We use this room for our general living room and, as you may have observed, our comforts and conveniences are near at hand."

I had noticed that the room contained much richly carved furniture and one or two antique cabinets. On shelves which ran around the room, which was paneled to the frieze in English oak, were displayed rare pieces of china and glass and decorated ware. A violin rested in its case by the music stand, while a piano against which a guitar was leaning stood at the farther end of the room. The pictures, which

were few, were chosen with fine taste. Along the lower shelves of the built-in cases were well thumbed volumes of the poets in proximity to the popular monthlies; and there were foreign and domestic scientific journals, with cut leaves, which evidently had been read.

My host had taken up a book with the sign that I was to make myself comfortable; and his daughter had arranged some unfinished fancy work in her lap where the light would best fall upon it. After a while the father closed his book, and I spoke to him of the perfect appointments of the house, so far as I had observed, especially in the matter of electric lighting which one would hardly expect to find carried to that state of completeness in a house so remote from mechanical centers. The panel lamp was no longer burning when we came in but side lamps filled the room with a gentle glow.

“Where do you get the power?” I asked. “I noticed no engine house as I came to the door.”

“There is no engine house or steam plant,” he answered, “for we make the water do the work after it has taken a rest in the little lakes.”

“I wondered why those lakes looked so contented,” said I. “Is it because they are conscious of doing work in the world?”

“Well, I hardly know about that,” he answered,

CLUB PAPERS

“but it may be because it has done its work that our brook goes, like a school boy released from his tasks, laughing and dancing down the valley.”

“What a musical little stream that is,” said I. “I saw it sparkle among the trees and stopped to hear its tinkling and singing as I came along the valley path.”

“You noticed our brook,” said the daughter, looking up from her work. “Why, how charming of you. We take great delight in the little stream; we have studied its songs. Would you like to see it sparkle and hear it sing, here, now?”

“Most certainly,” I answered with perhaps a tone of amusement in my voice, for my idea of what she had in mind was somewhat misty and the mist was not altogether cleared away by her next words.

“No,” she continued with much earnestness, “I am not trifling. Now God’s truth — which we were discussing at the supper-table — if it can touch to harmony the heart chords and stir to music the soul of him who by deep study and contemplation has come to realize something of its power and beauty — and it can — may not His light be found as potent in its way when one has come to learn something of the vital force it holds?”

She disposed of her fancy work and taking down a broad shallow case from a cabinet shelf placed it on the stand near which the violin was resting. It

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

was evidently some new or strange musical instrument with a sounding board over which were strung in a peculiar manner many fine chords, some so fine indeed that they seemed to be woven of spider web. On the stand which was designed especially to hold this instrument (and others of a similar nature as I learned afterwards) was an arm which held an electric lamp and a system of lenses, clear and colored. To this lamp she attached a wire from a wall switch, focused the lenses and, shutting off the light from the room, turned the current into the wire.

The effect was most marvelous and weird, for suddenly the room seemed filled with the pulsation of sweetest sounds which ebbed and flowed in rarest harmony. Sounds they were of nature; the babbling of brooks, the whisper of leaves and grasses, the whistle and song of birds; and through it all a chime as of distant bells as their clear tones flow down a valley of a peaceful Sunday morning. Where was I? I put out my hand to feel my chair from which I had involuntarily risen, when suddenly the music ceased and the lamps in the room were aglow.

“There is vital force in light, is there not?” said the father quietly.

I held my peace for the daughter was arranging a sort of keyboard near the instrument.

“Perhaps we can gather some of these sweet

CLUB PAPERS

flowers of sound," she said, "and weave them into a garland;" and, having refocused the lenses and deftly changed the stringing, she darkened the room again and directed the current to the instrument.

In the dim light, which was diffused like a faint halo, I could see her white hands wandering over the keys but her face was lost in the darkness. Strains from the "Spring Song" were swelling. I never knew what it meant till then; and then, too, I felt that I knew how the composer's imagination was fired and how passionately his heart strove to catch and crystallize the song which ran riot in his brain.

Other selections followed, all of the mystic order; snatches from the symphonies translating nature's gentler and more joyous moods — songs without words. Why attempt to describe them. What are words? If songs can be sung without them are they necessary to the closer communion of mind and heart? We three sat for some moments absorbed in a silence which I was the first to break, and then only to wish them good night and pleasant dreams.

In spite of the new and intense sensations which had been awakened in my breast, I had not long to wait before I was wrapped in slumber; and the early morning sun was peering into my window when I opened my eyes again to the world. I gave it only a glance of recognition and lay quietly in bed to collect my thoughts. Was last evening a dream?

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

Was her face on earth? and what of him? And then another question came to me, dimly at first, then appealing with greater and still greater force. I was tired after my long tramp and perhaps a trifle bewildered; he was so entertaining and she so beautiful that I did not give heed to what was set before me at supper, nor could I recall how the table was spread. The repast was simple I knew, white bread, a sip of wine — was there meat? Yes, there was cold meat and a dish of honey. That was all I could remember; yet as I recalled my sensations it seemed as if I had arisen last evening from the most delicate feast that ever tempted mortal appetite. Then, as I thought further, I remembered that the table was laid in a quaint, dainty fashion. The dishes were arranged near the edge, leaving a panel of snow white linen in the center and this panel was framed by sprays of running vines and plants, and delicately colored wild flowers showed their fresh faces in the rich green of the leaves. I remembered, too, that the light from the lamp in the ceiling played in soft colors on the white panel of cloth and I would have been more strongly attracted by this exquisite effect had not her face been in full view just across the table. I finally attributed it all to the grace of her presence — but why did it linger now that she was not with me? For about two minutes I made a vain attempt to free myself from the spell

CLUB PAPERS

of her face and voice and form. How useless it was; for, as the faint breath of the newborn day bore to my ears the morning songs of the wood, the twitter of birds, and the heart throbs of awakened flowers, the wonderful mystic music of the last evening thrilled me through and through and I was a slave to my fancies.

I arose, dressed and descended to the large hall. The front door was standing open and I stepped out to take a few hasty strides to start my blood. I viewed the house from a little distance and in closer detail. It was a simple structure with broad-seated latticed windows. The walls were of blue-gray stone lightened up here and there with bands of brown and buff. Quaint dormers gave light and air to the chambers in the roof which let its broad spreading eaves come close down to the first story window-tops. Mosses clung to the joints, while roses and woodbine and ivy clambered up the walls and out to the edge of the eaves where the more timorous climbers, which dared not attempt the ascent of the roof, dropped back gracefully toward the earth. There was a portion of the house whose use I could not determine to my satisfaction from the outside. Afterward I found this to be the father's laboratory and studio. As I turned toward the door I saw my host coming to invite me to breakfast.

The morning sun kissed the violets, stopped to

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

play with the roses and geraniums in the window boxes and then came in through the opened lattice to light the room for the morning meal. The soft flickering sunshine reminded me of the evening light and when I looked up to where it was I saw that the panel was closed and the lamp was gone. The moments passed happily though I confess to feeling some little pain at the thought that I might never sit in their company again. However, that pain vanished when, as I stood on the doorstep shortly after, about to take my leave, the father expressed the hope that at some time I would visit with them again.

Need I say that as frequently as my duties would permit I visited that house? A warm friendship sprang up between the elderly man and myself. On one of my earlier visits he took me into the laboratory and, while showing me some of his instruments used in physical research, dropped fragments of his life's history. Later on he took me into his confidence in the matter of certain of his studies and experiments. His was indeed a rare nature. I had never imagined possible such a combination of the scientific mind and artist heart.

In his earlier years, then, as now, an earnest seeker after truth, he had for his companion a wife who was in every way fitted to aid him. They were just on the verge of contentment, it seemed to them,

CLUB PAPERS

when his wife left him and took with her the newborn son. The blow was terrible, I imagine, to one of his supersensitive nature, and for hours he lay on his face in the darkened chamber clutching at the shroud as if to keep them back. It was so stricken that his little sunny-haired daughter found him and touching him softly on the shoulder said, "Papa come out into the light. Take me."

"How could I," he said to me once in speaking of that time, "how could I have forgotten that little angel. Since then we have lived each for the other and she has been for me the embodiment of light."

And indeed I loved her so intensely that I could see how this object of his worship and adoration into whose heart he had poured all the love of his own strong nature, and into whose mind and around whose body he had thrown all the well ordered influences of his own powerful mental and physical life, should at last reflect itself in him and inspire him to lines of thought and activity beyond the grasp of natures less pure and strong than his.

One morning we were talking over a recently published theory of a certain so-called scientist which struck us as very narrow in its perception and treatment of a broad subject.

"O, these people," he exclaimed, "with their 'isms' and 'ologies' and 'ences' who build a whole world on the little grain of truth they have found

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

and then keep it so near their eyes that it obscures the great universe of truth which envelops them. In their minds they are right and everyone else is wrong! Why will not one soul add its grain of truth to that which another holds and so on, till all humanity is touched. Then we can all stand on the outside of a great sphere of truth with a clearer view of the universe of light which is above, below and all around us. Sometimes these scientists, in common with other seekers after truth, seem to me like lightning rods. If they really have gone deep enough to touch a fountain of living water, when the real truth, passing over, presses upon them, they let their surcharged spirits flow out toward the great spirit. If they have not gone deeply, have touched the surface of things only, they make just as much of a show in the world, but in the attempt to 'draw the lightning' — to bring down great truth and to fit it to their caliber — they are generally left blackened and distorted wires and the object they would have protected is destroyed. It were better, were it not, to let the soul flow out to God than to try to fit God into the chamber of an undeveloped soul? I think so. But in the matter of purely physical experiment, for years now I have been doing and the time is still far away when I shall be able to formulate tenable theories or understand so simple a manifestation of truth as light."

CLUB PAPERS

“But I have done something,” he added with a smile in which there was a suggestion of pardonable pride.

“Yes,” I said, “that wonderful instrument played upon by the light, which so carried me away the first time I heard it and still affects me greatly, would seem to tell something of what you had accomplished.”

“That is very simple,” he responded, “very simple compared with another instrument I have just recently brought to a point bordering on completion. I believe you have been affected by it though so subtle is it in its operation that you have hardly noticed it.”

“What can you mean?” I asked in surprise.

“It has been a secret between two persons up to this moment,” he said seriously; and added with a smile, “I believe it goes into safe hands.”

He beckoned me to an alcove off the laboratory which he used as a dark room for experiments with light. At his bidding I seated myself at a table, and we were in silence for some moments while he arranged a small white screen directly before me. Having connected an instrument, which was a bulk in the darkness of the room, with a small dynamo, he took his seat at my side saying: “We will experiment.”

“ Oh! ” I exclaimed with surprised excitement as a prophetic idea flashed upon me, “ I shall know the mystery of the panel lamp.”

“ That was a mild form of it,” he replied with an assenting nod which I could see for, as he had touched a key, the room was now light enough to make objects fairly distinct.

“ I do not want to leave it entirely to your imagination,” he said, as he handed me a piece of white bread. “ Eat this and tell me what you taste.” And the colored lights began to play upon the screen.

“ I could swear that I am eating roast duck! ” I exclaimed.

“ I will not ask you to swear,” he said, “ for your brain in its present excited condition probably does not receive as truth the evidence of certain senses.”

“ But I am perfectly calm and cool,” I affirmed, “ my brain is not excited.”

“ Yes, it is,” he said quietly.

“ By what? ” I asked, but the truth was beginning to dawn upon me.

“ By the lights on that screen. They are carrying the same sensations to your brain through your eyes that are carried there by your nerves of taste when you eat roast duck. The same sensation would exist if there were nothing in your mouth. But the piece of bread makes it seem more real, perhaps, as

CLUB PAPERS

that taste is connected in your mind with a solid substance. Now, what are you drinking? ” and suddenly the combination of lights was changed.

“ It is Burgundy,” I said almost stupidly, for I could not believe my senses, “ I am drinking Burgundy and I have not even a glass in my hand.”

With his daughter’s aid he had worked all this out to a point of absolute perfection and so it had come to him by degrees. I was the first to taste its ripe fruits; and the revelation was almost more than my excited nerves could bear. He noticed how it was affecting me and, throwing off the lights, raised the slide of the darkened window.

We conversed quietly for a few moments on other subjects and then returned to the instrument. Upon examination I found it to be a very simple affair when once understood, as all great things are. It was only a delicate arrangement of prisms and lenses, so disposed that by operating a cylinder the prismatic colors could be combined, intensified or modified at the will of the operator. Where the great achievement lay was in selecting the colors which should produce certain definite and desired effects.

All this he explained to me in a general way; for I was not a sufficiently advanced student of the organisms of the human body fully to comprehend a more technical explanation: The sense of sight, be-

sides being incomparably the finest of the individual senses, really comprehends them all so that the vivid image of an object with all its special attributes of form, feeling, etc., can be presented to the brain through the medium of the eye when we come to know the combination of colors necessary to produce the various effects; that is, to send the sensations of touch, hearing, smell and taste through the nerve centers of the eye to the brain. The specialization of the organism is feeblest in smell and taste and the color combinations of these senses he had determined to a high degree of accuracy. As yet, the application to the senses of touch and hearing lay beyond his achievement but not beyond his hopes. He regarded the work of Schwann and Schultz as authoritative, so far as it went, on the subject of ganglia or nerve centers; but, of course, they had not touched the borderland of the new science, and even Ranvier and the French School had not dreamed of it. Hence he was alone in his work, which up to that time had to be carried on by experiment mainly, for as yet no empirical rules could be laid down. However, he was so well grounded in the study of physics, chemistry, physiology and histology that no difficulty seemed too great to be encountered and overthrown, so that he had succeeded in obtaining many precise formulae and in making a subtle analysis of the special sense of taste!

CLUB PAPERS

I may say, by the way, that he explained to me that I had not detected the power of light to create the sensation of taste since when the instrument had been in operation in the panel of the dining room ceiling, he had permitted only a suggestion of various dainty flavors to play in light upon the white panel of the cloth. I mention this rather to show the extreme perfection of the instrument in his hands than to excuse my dullness in not discovering some occult power in the changing lights.

As to that musical instrument to which I had listened many times since the occasion of my first visit, it was merely a mechanical contrivance of great delicacy, over the strings of which the lights played very much as the soft zephyrs play across the strings of the Aeolian harp. Of course it was a matter of some skill and study to arrange the instrument so as to produce desired tones and harmonies, as was effected when the daughter connected the keyboard. But this too was simple when one saw it! And all came about so naturally for, as the father told me, the whole scheme occurred to him one day while watching the blade of the radiometer revolving in the sunshine. If the light could make the blade revolve why could it not make strings to vibrate? and the result of his work was a complete demonstration that it could.

But in the matter of affecting the brain with the

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

sensation of taste, the study had been carried with successful results to a point far beyond what the father had shown to me. (Thank Heaven, I may remark parenthetically.) One day chance gave him an opportunity to test in an extreme degree the power of this sublime force in light; and then for the first time its power for evil struck with full force upon him, and I can hardly think of it now without a shudder.

A strange dog found its way into the valley and acted in so peculiar a manner that our suspicions were aroused. We were fortunate in getting it into a small pen where soon it exhibited symptoms of genuine rabies. The rage and suffering of the brute became intense; and as we knew of nothing which would furnish relief, the father decided to try an experiment. We brought out the instrument which had given us so many sensations of delightful taste and focused it on a screen which we placed at the side of the cage. The sun, which was shining with heated glare, gave us the light we now used. We who were watching protected our eyes with strongly colored glasses and even then, as the light played upon the screen, we experienced a sickening sensation, and it could not have been many moments before the brute lay dead in the pen.

As I said, now for the first time the awful capability for undetectable crime burst on the man and he

CLUB PAPERS

was overcome with the thought that he had discovered and now held in trust, as it were, for humanity this great power for good or evil.

“ O, God! ” he cried, “ how can I give this to a world which is not ready to receive it? to a world where man is selfish, where each cares more for his own advancement than for the good of others! Is it safe with me even, who this day in an act of mercy have demonstrated its awful power! ”

We all turned away deeply moved and with sober faces. I forbore to ask questions; but with the father's consent I took the intestine of the brute to a noted chemist in the city and he told me, after some days, that the animal had evidently died of arsenical poisoning, though the microscope did not reveal an atom of the poison. For days I could not shake off the depressing effect of this last exposition of power and kept saying to myself, “ Oh Heaven! what an engine of misery this would be in the hands of a man who had power over light and who knew not truth and love! ” “ But could that be? ” I would ask myself. “ Could a man gain power over God's great forces who had not the love of God in his heart? ”

During that rich summer I hastened many times across the sandy waste to let my eyes rest on the quiet peacefulness of that low house nestled in the cool shade beyond the placid lakes. The vivid impres-

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

sions of my first visit never dimmed; but the feeling of supernal contentment, of complete satisfaction, grew ever stronger. You may be sure I never rested long to view the scene from a distance, but hurried to the door to receive the glad welcome which is accorded a friend one trusts, who has come to know one's dearest secrets. There was always the hearty hand clasp of the father, who after so many years of secluded working was glad to find an appreciative young mind into which to pour the riches of the past and the hopes of the future. There was the smile of welcome from the beautiful woman, who always would greet kindly one whom her father trusted with thoughts about his life's work. The frankness and simplicity of her greeting did not change from the first, so I could not say if she even dreamed of my devouring passion. Now and then, too, a guilty feeling would creep in to accuse me of a betrayal of trust. Was it a regard for her father and an interest in the future of his work which urged on my visits? Somewhat, yes! But there were stronger motives. I came to bask in the sunshine of her face, to drink in the rhythmic cadence of her voice, and with half shut eyes to float away in a dream trance as my soul swayed in the exquisite poetry of her motion.

But the day came too soon when duty called me to a distant land and on that day I sought her father, for I could not bear to add his condemnation of be-

trayer of trust to my own guilty conscience. As simply as I could I told him that I had loved his daughter from the very first. He raised his hand and resting it gently on my shoulder said, "I have known it almost as long as you have. I saw, too, that you would try in every honorable way to win her, and I was glad that from the first my heart could go out to you as a father's to a son. I have sometimes hoped I was mistaken, but that hope was born of a selfish wish for I would not know how to give her up. I give you my consent to woo her, I don't know that I give you a wish to win her!"

I sought her and found her reading in the porch. I opened my heart. There was a serious, almost sad smile on her lips as she responded in calm tones: "I have come to care for you very much during this summer, but not in that way! I could not bind you — No, I could not let you bind yourself. You are under the spell of this enchanting, this almost enchanted life. Would you think me worthy or beautiful out among the women of the world? Do I not need my setting of lovely nature, my rare flowers and" — this slowly — "the wonderful light which has shone on us in so many mysterious ways?" Then with a brighter look and a laughing voice, "Why, you have not seen me in perspective, and the only woman you have ever seen at my side to compare me with is the dear, good old black nurse of my childhood!"

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

It was not safe to be serious with her when that tone was in her voice; and so I only put both my hands on her head and bending over her drew one long sweet kiss from her pure forehead! I saw the spot my lips had touched turn white and then glow with a faint flame. How vividly this came back to me in the following years, for before my lips had touched her again a lightning courier of the storm kissed her and as long as she lives the faint flame will glow on her white forehead!

I will not speak of the letters that passed between us during the year I was abroad, other than to say that hers reflected in every word her beautiful spirit, and into its depths I could look more closely than when I had been with her. My distance from her dispelled one vicious, haunting thought which gave me many a sleepless night, and flashed around me for a time as I recalled her words in the porch, "And the wonderful light which has shone on us in so many mysterious ways!" Was there power then in physical light to create love? and had he — but at the thought I became wild. I learned then and I have never forgotten the lesson, that the light of love glows in the heart and external sunshine cannot add to it and storm and darkness round about cannot dispel it.

I shall speak of but one more visit to that earthly paradise and that the first one on my return home. The air was laden with an intense sultriness which

CLUB PAPERS

was so oppressive that I could hardly keep my seat in the saddle as I followed again my way across the sand hills and up the valley path. The little stream was not singing that day but, showing now and then with a sullen light from which all sparkle was gone, it fell back with a sob and a moan. The trees swayed with sorrowful whispering and the flowers on lifeless stems drooped to earth.

As I emerged from the wood and gazed on their home how changed was the scene from the first day! All the calm and peacefulness were there in the little valley; but a frightful doom seemed to impend. Now the sun was hidden, and in the western sky lay great dark banks of clouds on which the gleam of lightning played at short intervals. I had never seen the heavens present so threatening an aspect, and after putting out my horse I sought the house with a sense of relief. The father met me at the door. His daughter had been overcome with the oppressive heat and had retired for a short time to her chamber.

Now the wind began to rise in fitful gusts; and, although neither hand was beyond the first quarter post on the dial of the tall clock, a darkness as of night was falling upon the landscape. The rolling thunder crept up steadily and rapidly from the black west and vivid flashes of lightning in chain and sheet swept over the tumbling clouds. The rooms were

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

filled with weird sounds from the delicate instruments as the piercing light, forcing its way under the closed covers of the cases swept the sensitive chords. The rain fell in torrents, shutting the range of vision within the walls of the house. In the midst of a lull, bolt upon bolt of lightning fell and crash upon crash of thunder followed until it seemed that the roof of the house must give in and fall before the warring elements.

Just then his daughter, my love, came into the room faint, almost falling. I caught her in my arms and was about to put my lips to her forehead when, with a crash that rocked the foundations of the house, a blinding light came between us and we sank to the floor! I did not lose consciousness, although I was stunned and as she lay there in my embrace, seeming lifeless, I saw the flame playing about her forehead where I would have kissed her, where I did kiss her that day in the porch. For some time she was beyond our aid. We feared beyond recall. The storm abated and as she came back to strength, sunshine played upon the peaceful landscape; and in the eastern sky fragments of black clouds and irregular flashes of light, hangers on of the grand cloud army, were skulking away from the work of havoc that had been wrought.

For there was desolation in one part of the house, the laboratory. There the lightning had played

CLUB PAPERS

with the delicate electrical instruments, ruining some of them absolutely. In one corner, smouldering on the brick floor, were the charred remains of a cabinet which held many note books and all the formulae he had been so long in perfecting. I cannot describe her father's look of anguish, as he laid eyes on this precious wreck. Then suddenly his attitude and expression changed. "It was all for the best," I heard him say, and then he turned toward us with a calm, almost smiling face.

We were not long in repairing the damage to the house where we continued to pass many happy days; and the landscape was changing her golden autumn dress for one of sombre brown for winter wear, when I took my wife and her father with me to the city. In spite of his seeming calm and contentment, this sudden ending of his life's cherished work told heavily on him and he was glad when he was called away.

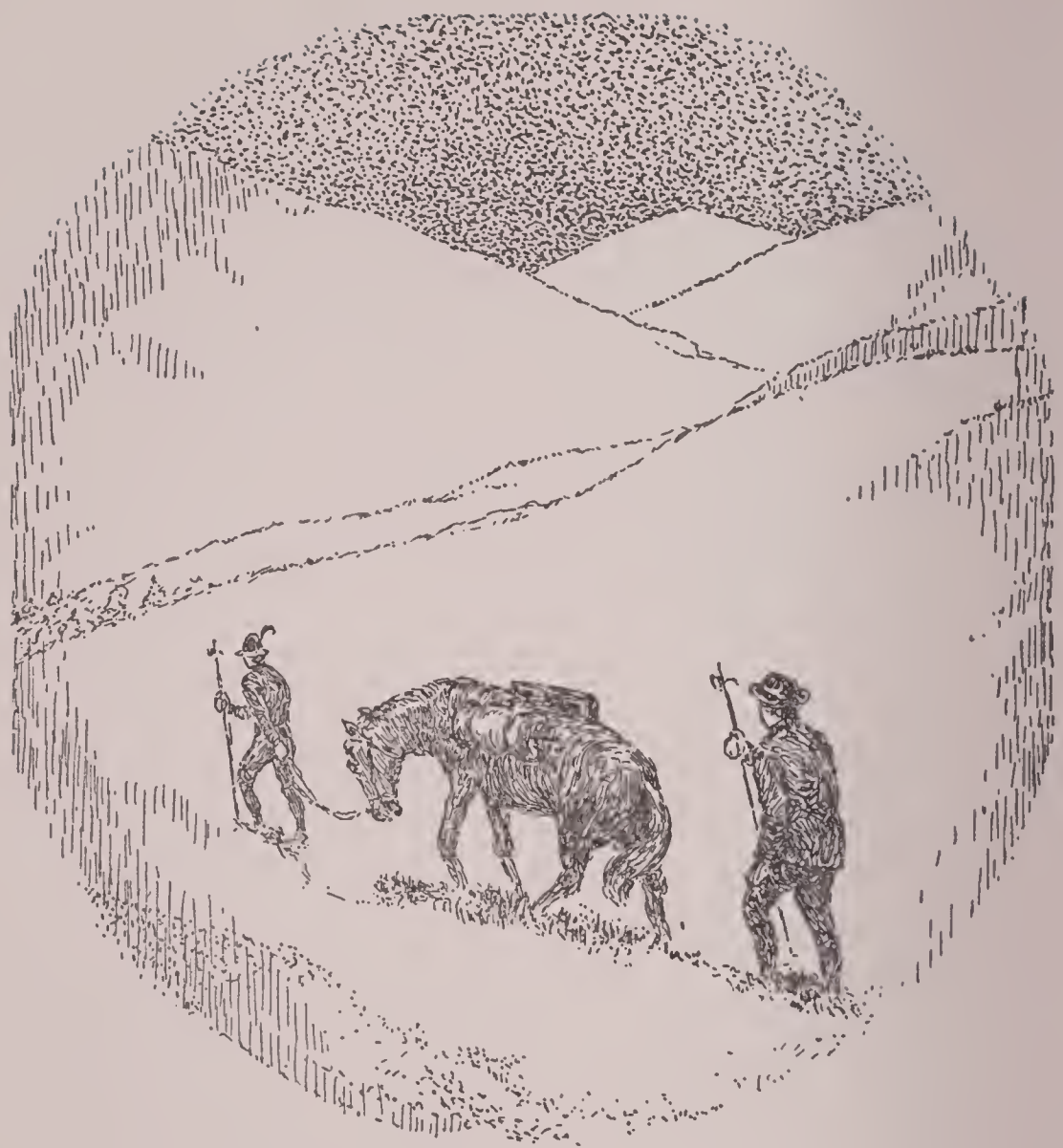
We often talk of her father, my wife and I — of his subtle intellect, his pure heart, his total indifference to worldly gain or applause; of his gentleness and kindness and, above all, of his hopes to give the world the results of his study of the light — hopes which the light itself had so wantonly broken.

We have that musical instrument now; and, as my wife brings out its sweet harmonies, I dream of her father. "Oh!" I say to myself, "you away

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIGHT

from sordid strife and low, unhuman toil for gain — you lived with the masters in your study of the light, with the masters of painting and music and poetry. What heavenly manna was the light to them! What need of grosser human food had Angelo in those days of spiritual and mental activity on the scaffold of the Sistine Chapel, when the light flowed through his hand in flames of living color! What need of coarser food can touch the poet's thirst when the celestial light of some great truth is glowing in his heart to fill the unsatisfied craving of countless kindred souls! And the great composer — does he not quaff the nectar of the gods when heaven's sweet light sweeping across the tense chords of his brain makes them to throb with divinest harmonies, while, forgetful of earthly food and rest, he catches the musical mist and holds it in his mind till it is distilled in crystal drops and becomes food and warmth for us more common clay! ”

THE PLEASURES OF TRAVEL



IR

WE CLIMBED UPWARD FOR
HOURS WITH EYES NEARLY BLINDED BY THE WHITE SNOW

THE PLEASURES OF TRAVEL

GENERALLY speaking, the greatest pleasure taken in travel isn't taken in travel at all, but in retrospection; or, more than that, even, in reminiscing. Next to a newly-laid parent, or a doting father whose callow offspring is beginning to have its wisdom and philosophy recorded for the edification of future generations and the desolation of this, there exists nowhere such another retailer of sayings and doings and seeings as the traveller. Even a sewing circle sits in silent admiration when a returned missionary takes the stand.

To gratify curiosity, to anticipate the desire of readers to look ahead and ascertain in advance the outcome of a story, and also to relieve any anxiety which otherwise might be felt concerning my fate, I shall combine my first and last chapters in a concise prelude, as follows:

PRELUDE

I WENT — I SAW — I RETURNED

I went, which I hardly need reaffirm. I saw!

CLUB PAPERS

Heaven forbid that I should tell all I saw! I returned and am here — which should convince the most skeptical, and reassure the most anxious as to my fate; and what is more, I am here to indulge myself in one of the greatest pleasures of travel.

I wish I could have made the ocean voyage as short as this prelude just finished! The first days of my voyage I spent doing nothing, and the last days I spent in trying to undo from bottom, up, all the nothing I had done before.

I was a miserable seaman, and there was no health in me. For a moment only, and that toward the close of the last day, was I allowed even a twinge of happiness and that was when we sighted the green hills of old England, off Plymouth, and then the jealous night set in chill and rainy and shut out from sight the patched quilt of landscape, with its wooded spaces, tilled fields, grassy openings, sweeps of wavy grain and green capped chalk cliffs. But real happiness did come and that was when I found myself in a clean French bed, with candle snuffed and curtain drawn, and gentle sleep about to settle on my lids at 2:30 o'clock of a Sunday morning in Cherbourg.

Because I skip that part, it does not signify that the encounter with the French Customs officials on the cold stone quay, in the drenching rain of a dark

early morning, was without interest or humorous situation as well. But other encounters of mine with customs officials have been most replete with dramatic incident and have more deeply touched my pocket book.

The quaint tavern which contained the bed which contained me during the first few hours of my continental wandering is well worth a word to those who never have enjoyed the welcome of similar provincial hostelries. I remember that I hardly could keep my eyes open from weariness as we rode in the little "bus" from the quay through narrow dark streets, between high gabled houses, rattling over rough cobblestones, till at length we dipped under a low archway and brought up in the courtyard of the inn. Our hostess, with a bevy of neat white-capped maids, awaited us with lighted candles in the little office upon the stone pavement on which the rain was dripping. The courtyard was lower than the street, the office pave was lower than the courtyard, very evidently, for the water was flowing in streams into the house and it was too dark for us to see where it did manage to escape at last. I wondered why so great a part of so small an office was kept out of doors on rainy nights, and I thought to solve the problem to my entire satisfaction in the morning. But in the morning the aspect of things was changed for the sun was shining brightly on the tile roofs

CLUB PAPERS

about the court and upon the potted plants on the window ledges and the swinging casements reflected in every direction the cheery welcome of the bright sunshine of my first European day! The office seemed all right, perhaps a little damp as if from recent contact with scrubbing brush and broom, for the little rivers had, in some subterranean way "to the ocean run." In the courtyard I saw a soldier and from then till I took ship homeward bound I couldn't have slapped at a flea without hitting a soldier; not that all the fleas are on the soldiers, but that there is a soldier for every breath a fellow draws over there. The breakfast in the sunlit café was sweet and wholesome and blotted out the bitter memory of many an ocean steamship meal partaken of or passed by regretfully — anyway, lost to me. (I want to say parenthetically that my first ocean voyage was undertaken in extremely boisterous weather, and I had concentrated into one week of my existence all the misery which generally is allotted to one individual during the threescore and ten years it is given to man to suffer for the sins of his fathers. I wanted to die! and I said as much. That sounds strong, but it is the truth. If I should say "I simply died" — and we have heard the phrase used by good people not infrequently — that would be manifestly an untruth and, in this recital,

I shall studiously, if not conscientiously, avoid entering the region of manifest falsehood.)

To those that love the sea, a land journey seems tame; but to me the smooth, swift ride by express from Cherbourg to Paris through the garden of Normandy was like the fragrance of a delicious dream, after my rude rocking in the arms of Neptune. Apple trees were laden almost to breaking — even the props bent beneath the ripening fruit. Roses climbed over the hedges along the track and covered the walls and roofs of the way-station houses. Peach, pear and apricot branches brushed the roofs and sides of the coaches as we swept through the orchards, and the guard must have received many a quick rap from the boughs as he passed along the foot-board at the side to collect the tickets. It was one stretch of beautiful sunlit garden as far as the eye could reach until we touched the skirts of Paris soon to be lost in the ample folds. It was a quick transition from the half-timbered cottages with thatched roofs to the domes and mansards of the gay city. But we did not mourn the transition, in spite of the beauty of the country for our cry was “On to Paris!”

I will not try to describe Paris — better men have tried it and left but vague impression, like much impressionism, with distorted perspective and false

CLUB PAPERS

colors. To describe Paris! I imagine it would be like trying to describe a rainbow to a man blind from birth! Paris is the storm center of French life. Along her boulevards eddy and swirl tides and counter tides of humanity. On the surface of the current bubbles dance lightly and gaily; below, dragged down and along by the irresistible force and unyielding clutch of the undertow are all the passions and vices that desire and pleasure and selfishness can beget in human breasts. If there is any worst to it all, the worst of it is that the vileness is in fascinating form. Even the sewers, they say, are clean and invitingly attractive! It is just to Paris, however, to say that all her cleanliness is not confined to her sewers, nor is it altogether wanting in the morals of her humanity.

It did not take many hours' strolling along these same boulevards, where one comes in contact with the entire scale of Parisian life, to fix one thing pretty firmly in my mind, and that was the absolute perfection of finish to everything to which the Frenchman applied his art, be that thing man, woman, child, painting, sculpture, building, or pavement, even. We may not like the style, but we must acknowledge here is style. Here is technical finish in the highest degree and it is controlled by a feeling for beauty and a knowledge of correct relation-

ships. Take a French woman, for instance; catch her with a dark skirt and light stockings. You can't. Catch her with straw bonnet and fur shoulder cape. You can't. Not only you can't catch her, she doesn't exist! From the toe of her boot to the tip of her glove finger, the French woman is perfectly harmonious in dress, and in the appreciation of this law of fitness she stands for her race in other matters.

You cannot stick a spade into the ground in Italy without unearthing a fragment of ancient art, a relic of a dead past. You can't lift your eye in France without beholding a finished piece of modern art, a vital factor of a living present. Even where ancient forms are touched it is with a spirit which brings them into harmony with the life of today.

I never could reconcile the classical architecture of Munich to the surrounding art and life; but take the Madeleine! Somehow that great, simple Roman façade never seemed an incongruous thing in Paris. Perhaps I am prejudiced! Well, perhaps I am. I came into Munich out of sunny Italy, in a snow storm with nose nearly frozen and fingers so stiff that I broke the mainspring when I went to wind my watch. All that did not seem to me to be quite consistent with bare heads and legs and floating togas! A German watchmaker mended the spring, but either the spring had contracted a cold or the

CLUB PAPERS

cold had contracted the spring, for the watch began immediately to get irregular in its habits and refused thereafter to run twenty-four hours without two windings.

One cannot be much upon the streets of Paris without calling to mind the streets at home, and if he is a Chicagoan it will not be because of any similarity; but part of the difference is this: In our streets you are apt to be crowded to the gutter by the piles of goods laid out on the sidewalk for sale and display, and these piles always are surrounded by an eager crowd of bargain seekers each strong to save that one cent as though it were one hundred dollars. In Paris the chairs and tables of the open air cafés blockade the walks and at certain hours are filled with gay and festive lunchers, who talk over affairs of business or of pleasure, of politics or of society; and the man who happens to be passing just then without appetite for foods or affairs is forced to balance along the curb or walk in the gutter. Here it would mean mud. There the pavement is as smooth and clean as a floor.

It was during my second season in the capital that I attended the opening of the Great Salon. That is in May and is the social and artistic event of all Paris. Have you seen a penniless boy hanging wistfully about a show tent? That was I and the Salon,

metaphorically speaking. I had money enough, so far as that went, but I had no ticket and as the tickets that day, that great varnishing day, were complimentary and as nobody had offered to compliment me and I was too modest to seek a compliment, I stood simply looking. As I stood thus simply looking I was accosted by a dilapidated French gentleman with a hungry visage. "Would the Monsieur like to visit the Salon?" Ye gods! was this a French angel in disguise? I believed so and hastened to bind its wings before it could get away. "You bet," I exclaimed (not strictly that for we conversed in the French gentleman's own tongue but it will serve to show my state of mind). "Indeed," I said, "it would be the greatest happiness of a life time." "I have a ticket!" "How much! wie viel? Quanto costa?" (I was excited) "combien!" (at last). "Five francs!" I fairly jumped. I would have given twenty but the French angel wasn't looking for a crown! So I paid five francs, took my ticket and passed in with all the grandees of Paris and the visiting world. I would have given another five francs to know then, what I know now, that I was in the same room with Marie Bashkirtseff and her paintings. However, I saw no paintings that day. My head ached so that I had to leave the galleries when, after four hours' counting, I had

CLUB PAPERS

reached only 15,000 new, beautiful, individual spring toilets on as many vivacious women, and had not seen them all!

It is a night's ride from Paris to Switzerland. I took that ride before I had seen Paris to my entire satisfaction, because I heard that heavy snows were falling in the passes early in the season and, while I wanted to do Switzerland, as tourists say, I did not desire to come into personal contact with an avalanche. However, early as I did go I had an experience. To reach Chamounix I had intended taking a "voiture" over the "Tête Noir" but the guides declared the roads impassable to vehicles and I was advised to desist. But I didn't want to desist. That wasn't what I went to Switzerland to do. I could have desisted anywhere, in America, for instance, if I had cared to. So the good people of the tavern of Martigny were prevailed upon to furnish me with a guide and a horse. The horse was under size and in course of half a mile I had winded him completely. However, he stood me in fair stead though I went on foot the remainder of the journey which was some fifteen miles in all, six of them uphill, for I strapped my traps to the saddle, and when we came to a particularly wet place I used him for a ferry. We climbed up for hours, with eyes nearly blinded by the sunshine on the fresh snow. We would turn now and then to look back on the

little tavern below us, almost straight down, at first only a few feet and then a good many hundred, for the "Tête Noir" is one of the highest passes of the Alps. At last we reached the little hut which crowns the summit of the pass, and stopped on the wide bench to rest our tired limbs. I ordered two cents worth of wine for myself and brandy for my guide. As I took the glass, the wrinkled old hag who kept the hut said with a cracked smile, which may have been sunshine in other days, "Le Monsieur a du bon courage!" At first I thought she referred to the wine, and I eyed the glass suspiciously as I took a sip. It was all right, so I ordered two cents worth more. Of course, she referred to my courage in attempting the pass after the hard storm of the previous night which, indeed, had blotted out every sign of the path in many a ticklish place, and must have skinned over many a dangerous crevasse. And, too, there was the added danger of snow slides. I disclaimed any especial courage, told her it was one of my customary constitutionals and went on my way rejoicing. On the down side we encountered a snow storm. We did not encounter much of it for it was leaving the valley just below us; but we saw it raging there, and were not grieved to see it sweep around a mountain, at angles to our course, and out of sight. We stopped at a more pretentious hut for late dinner, and here was hatched a weak conspiracy

CLUB PAPERS

to detain us for the night — bad roads, danger, etc. My guide was weakening. Two more brandies for him and we started. We lost our way, came back a rough mile and regained it, wandered uncertainly in the snow fields till suddenly we caught sight of the bald pate of Mont Blanc, and from that moment our guiding star was ever before us and all we had to do was to keep right on stumbling and slipping and ferrying and fording and sliding down into the valley where, long after dark, we saw the lights of Chamounix.

It was pleasant to see the lights of Chamounix. I was pleased to find other travelers in the inn. After a hot supper by the side of a big blazing fire, I went to bed. I was too tired to have any care for damp sheets. In fact, I never thought about sheets till morning when I found I was frozen in between those on my bed. I called for help and a hatchet and by noon I was dressed and downstairs. From where I lay in my bed of ice I could look up the whole side of Mont Blanc from bottom to top and the sight was glorious. I had the pleasurable sensation of being an integral part of one of the biggest things on earth. The sunshine which illumined that grand old crown was the same that flooded my bed chamber. The ice which glistened on that great bald pate descended in sheets and restrained gently but firmly my corporeal being, though my spirit

could soar at will, and my voice could demand freedom for my body. My voice prevailed and with a hatchet I cut Mont Blanc off from me and the great white mountain stands there sadly today, a maimed thing, while I am as whole and as happy as ever! Tourists mention the sad solitude of Mont Blanc—I have accounted for it!

Caesar went into Switzerland by way of the Rhone Valley. I came out of Switzerland by way of the Rhone Valley. Curiously enough (as I thought) I did not see Caesar. I mentioned this to a friend who said the discrepancy of a few centuries of time might account for it easily enough.

One can study and judge fairly of the taste of a people by the treatment given to blank walls. In France, for instance, the blank side of a building is treated with a simple architectural feeling. The Northern Spaniards who may be said to have an undeveloped taste, decorate the blank sides of their buildings with painted landscapes, with impossible perspective, flat trees and never flowing fountains. Sometimes the lines of the composition are laid down so as to carry on into the picture the lines of a real park or garden at the base of the wall, as the solid or real relief and the flat are made to merge into each other in our cycloramas. However, the Spanish artists avoid extreme realism so that no unwary one shall be injured in an unwitting attempt

CLUB PAPERS

to enter one of these ideal parks through a wall of solid masonry. In Northern Italy often the entire side of a building is covered with a painted architectural composition, with all the accessories of life — painted flowers on painted balconies, painted men and painted women (the artist had no lack of models) making painted love or reading painted books behind painted windows. Sometimes the imitation of architectural features is so well done as to be quite deceptive; but a painted woman can be told a mile away. I should call all this a demonstration of perverted taste. And what we see in England but more especially in America, I should charge to an entire absence of taste. The germ, even, seems wanting so there is no promise for a better future. “Coleman’s Mustard, Keen’s Mustard” in England; “Bull Durham, Kentucky Bourbon, Foot-form Shoes,” “Zip, cures in five days” (it may have been three days, I don’t remember) — these and others similar are the legends which adorn our blank walls when the builder has not left them in such ugly shape as to preclude the possibility of even the vivifying touch of the sign painter’s art.

Let us dwell on more cheerful matters. I used to find the various funeral customs of interest in different parts of the continent. In Venice friends and relatives send empty gondolas, draped with black, to piece out the procession and demonstrate

regard for the dead. In the Southern countries relatives or friends do not follow the body to the grave. It is accompanied by hired mourners who do all the wailing which is to be done in public. The corpse is the only member of the family who takes enough interest in the proceeding to go along and see if he is properly disposed of; and even he does not care enough to turn on his bier and rebuke the indifference of his hired companions.

In Granada, the funeral party, instead of passing along the broad beautiful avenue which winds up past the Alhambra to the cemetery beyond, is forced to go up a steep, tortuous path in the narrow valley which lies between the Alhambra and the Generaliffe. So the funeral band must necessarily be in a disordered state when it reaches the high plateau beyond. It is not the disorder but the heartlessness which clings to my memory. I stepped aside one day to let a straggling party pass. My eyes rested accidentally on the form on the uncovered bier. I have no particular leaning toward corpses in general but this vision I shall not care to forget. The form was that of a young girl, of twelve years or thereabouts, clothed as for the first communion, with the long veil fastened by a wreath of flowers to the soft dark hair. My eyes, which had caught by accident, held with eager intention. No Greek marble ever was so pure, so delicately chiseled, so beautiful in

CLUB PAPERS

the suggestion of ineffable calm. No sculptor could express the mystery, the tenderness, the sweet repose of those lids, fringed with the long, dark curving lashes. I did not wonder that He who gave it should want it back again, but I did wonder that the father and mother into whose charge such beauty had been committed should leave it, unattended by love, in the heartless surroundings in which I saw it. The boy who carried the cover of the bier set it up against a bank of earth while he rested his aching arms. The wretched little acolytes flung aside their tapers and heaved rocks and clods of earth at the target, thus inadvertently set up. The bearers of the bier stumbled and jarred and halted and jested in coarse voices. She did not care. I was the only person who minded it at all. And — and I — well, what was a little dead Spaniard “to me, that I should weep for her?”

THE WHALE — A STUDY



R

ONE PROPHET FROM MAKER TO CONSUMER! JONAH TURNSTHE TABLES

THE WHALE — A STUDY

THE HISTORIC SCHOOL OF JONAH

I WAS MUCH interested in the diagram on the Time Card sent out by the Secretary of the Club the other day, accompanying the notice of a Musical Soiree to be given at some future date in the club rooms. At first glance I supposed that the pink card was an enclosed dodger surreptitiously introduced by some irresponsible mailing firm to call attention to the times of sailing and to the admirable accommodation and service on the Whaleback, which takes men in happy frame to Milwaukee to be married — and returns them to become sober. This idea was rather borne out by the portrait on the reverse of the card of such a jolly tar, wearing pinned to the bosom of his bathing suit the insignia of his ship, seemingly. Then the brilliant complexion of “Literary Club” and “Jonah” dazzled my eye and I perceived that I was on the wrong tack, nautically speaking, for there was no possible connection between Jonah and the S. S. Christopher Columbus. The “Whaleback” is said not to be profitable while, as is stoutly maintained in some quarters, in the time

of Jonah there was considerable prophet in one whale — an individual prophet, as it were — one profit from maker to consumer!

While cogitating on this and kindred themes, I was inspired to study the natural history of the whale and found much to my profit in the many interesting and scientific facts. Neither I, nor the authorities I have taken occasion to consult, have had Jonah's splendid and I may say unique opportunity to take an inside view into the workings of the whale in the domestic economy of every day life. We have arrived at our conclusions from careful use of the dissecting knife and the microscope. As to that powerful, vital engine in the hold of the whale, we all agree that it is "heart to beat."

Although living in the water the true whale resents being called a fish. Some un-naturalists once, in the presence of a mother whale, referred to her cub as a cunning little fish; whereupon she interjected in almost the words of "the father of her country," "I cannot tell a lie, I did *not* do it with my little hatch it." And, indeed, to its lasting credit be it set down that in all the great multitude and magnitude of fish stories, the whale has never been known to utter a lie. Whales though moral are not necessarily ecclesiastical.

Now Bulls may be papa-l. Whales are mamma-l always.

Whales swim naturally with great ease and their tails — steering with one fin and nursing their young with the udder.

The most recent discovery in connection with the whale is that it does not play golf. The links of an anchor chain do not offer a sporting ground suitable to whales.

Whales do not care to indulge in football or sports of that nature though they spend so much of their time in schools. The nature of the work is almost entirely academic so that the head of a whale soon develops to about one-third the size of the body. A large part of their school term is given to Delsarte and elocution, with great attention to correct breathing; so that the whale learns to “spout with considerable violence” like a senator or an alderman though unlike an alderman in that water is the whale’s natural element. A suck of salt water flavored with iceberg puts the whale in the best of spirits. But like the senator and the alderman, when the whale spouts in public it gives itself dead away, for then the man at the mast-head cries “there she blows” and that is the signal for the harpoon or the lampoon.

Without wishing in the least to disparage the whale I must say that in one thing it much resembles the populist and free silver orator. Its jaws are six feet wide, open up ten feet high and are sixteen feet

long. Just think of it! 16 to 1 — sixteen feet of jaw to one whale.

Like old Mr. Johnson of the song, the whale has troubles of its own and has been caught weeping bitterly — but it much prefers to keep its blubber to itself.

The whale, producing as it does necessary and beautiful articles of toilet such as seafoam, whale oil soap and corsets, is much affected by the ladies. The jaw of the north whale is equipped with about a ton of fish plates composed of whalebone. It is the function of this bone to catch fish and truck for its whaleship's food; and being deeply attached to the whale it performs this function cheerfully throughout its aquatic life. When its term of food gathering is completed, the whalebone enters into rest in corset form and embraces the dainty waist of many a charming maid. A rich reward, indeed, for a life of service. I believe there are men who would fish for a whale if for reward they might forever clasp in their sinewy and flexible arms some lithe, slender female form. It were a consummation devoutly to be wished — could one be assured that it, in time, might not become consommé!

And now having imparted to the club more information concerning the whale than I, myself, possess, I retire in favor of some disciple whose barque threads more fluently than does mine the watery mazes of the lie.

POETRY NIGHT



R

AND SO, AS. POETRY WILL NOT COME AND PURE SWEET PROSE IS NOT AT HOME

POETRY NIGHT
CHAPTER INTRODUCTIONS

The Symphonic Tapestry

The grandest design that Eternity holds
Is woven of threads that are picked up each day.
The luminous life that will live alway
Is wrot from the Tints which each Hour unfolds

But

The luminous life is a vain conceit.
For the warp and woof of the grand Ideal
Tangle and snarl in the Creaking Real
And threads won't run and lines won't meet.

To some it is Providence (Capital P.)

To some it is Luck (with a big, big D.)

But Luck or Fate or whatever it may
It touches life after its own sweet way.
The man below bobs up with a smile
And sports on the surface with Bubbles a-while.
The man on top goes down with McG.
And is lost in the depths of the bottomless sea.

The Heliogabali

Inspired (?) by Heliogabali generally, and the Heliogabali of the Cliff Dwellers particularly. As Bertie, the Lamb, might have said — “and every fellah thinks that *he* — as well as the other fellah — is a devil of a fellah — but he isn't.”

The form of this poem is peculiar. The parenthetical lines, while bearing upon or expanding the line each follows, form in themselves a complete Sextet, — which might well stand under a composite portrait of the giddy bunch.

Congenial friends about a board
 (These are the Cliff Dwelling Heliogabali)
 With vintage rare from cellars stored.
 With song and quip and bubbling jest
 (That babble and bubble — spiritus frumenti)
 To give the dainty viands zest.

And ere the sparkling feast be done
 (Some feast! that is served at a dollar a cover)
 Swift sinking to oblivion —
 That wines and viands may not pall
 (How sassy it is to put such a thing over)
 Nor two seem to drop where one does fall.

As feast and life draw toward an end
 (They stick to the chairs as long as they're able)
 This hopeful wish do all extend:
 A cordialed meeting bye and bye
 (At last the whole bunch is under the table)
 Embalmed spirits hence to hie!

Immortality

I have listened on various and sundry occasions to the assumption by men of little experience and slight attainments that immortality was to be their part. Whatever could they do with it! Whatever of comfort or of happiness could immortality hold for one who had gained so little of what this mortal life has to offer! Real appreciation and understanding, real living, come only through personal participation in effort. How many of the Human Race have reached spiritually and emotionally to and through sculpture, as did Angelo; painting, as did Raphael; musical composition, as did Beethoven; acrobatics, as did Schaefer; design, as did Da Vinci; philosophy, as did Bacon; poesy, as did Shakespeare; and so on through the field of human endeavor. When such capacity and achievement is general in the race then will be the time to dream of immortality! This thought I have cast in sonnet form.

Doest thou claim Immortality, O man!
Thinkst thou thy soul will need so wide a space!
Hast reached the confines of this measured place —
Fulfilled in thought and deed the finite plan?
Hast mastered Science and Philosophy;
Known well through thine own act the joy of Art —
Of every phase of Life become a part;
In Rhythm set thy fettered spirit free?

The oceans of eternity were deep
For him who has not plumbed the pool of time!
Too vast were Immortality for one
Who in this “ little life ” has failed to reap
The harvest rich of thought and deed sublime
Which mortal man has e'er conceived and done.

VERS LIBRE

A LITTLE LOLLIPOP ALONG THE LATEST LITERARY LINE
OF LEAST-RESISTANCE; CONSISTING OF A DEFINITION,
A PRELUDE AND A "POME."

Definition

Vers libre is a form in which
a theme unworthy of a
pure prose embodiment
is developed by one who
is incapable of pure poetic
expression.

Prelude

I sought release in rhymed verse
 But soon was disabused.
 The metre went from bad to worse;
 The only rhyme to come was hearse
 My pen aught else refused.
 So then I knew my Muse was dead;
 And no one better knows,
 That all the things I would have said
 (Poetic fancy having fled)
 Were better put in Prose.

But neither Prose nor Poetry
 Would come at my command.
 The only form, apparently,
 Was Verse denominated "Free."
 But such Verse must be "Scanned."
 It must be scanned by fleshly eye,
 For to the physically blind
 Free Verse affords no means whereby
 It may impress, or even try
 As Poetry to reach, the mind.

CLUB PAPERS

For to the eye of flesh alone
Free Verse as Poetry appears;
Law, Order and Restraint are gone;
Of pulsing melody — there's none
To fill the spirit's listening ears.
An amiable amble, gentle jog,
A balk — it's Form; a wabbly trot.
Sophisticated, luminous fog
And Sentiment drawn from a bog
Disport themselves as "Rhymes of Thought."

And so, as Poetry will not come
To aid me in this dire case,
As pure, sweet Prose is not at home
(And other Prose disturbs me some)
I'll ask Vers Libre to save my face.
With such may one confuse the Arts
And sing for eye and paint for ear,
And dance for corpses stiff whose hearts
Have long since passed to other parts
Nor hate, nor love, nor hope, nor fear.

The Pome

Upon the floor
A Child
And yet another child —
Two children so —
And still 'tis hard to understand
Why 'tis
A child and yet another child
Should be two child-ren
And not
Two child-s!
But even so.
Between the two
A Chessboard stretched, —
Its squares of black
And white
With Kings and Queens and pawns bedeckt.
And Knights and Bishops were there
And Castles, too.
One pawn rambunctious got
And
In one single move he swept the whole field clear!
Loud laughter followed this on-slaught; and glee!

CLUB PAPERS

The child,
The other child,
The childer-en
Enjoyed the sport,
The game. —
Ah yes,
The sport,
The game. —
(A rhyme, or better — parallel — of thought.)
Ah yes!
But then, indeed, was it a game?
Not chess —
Though played with Knights and pawns and Kings
And Queens
On chessman's field.
There was no law,
No stern,
Inflexible and stringent rules
To be obeyed; no heavenly order
Set
To be maintained.
A mere child's whim — and nothing more!
To the child a game?
Yes, only to the child!
And on such games as this are only children fed —
And on such poetry —
And only to the uninitiated are
Such things real games;

POETRY NIGHT

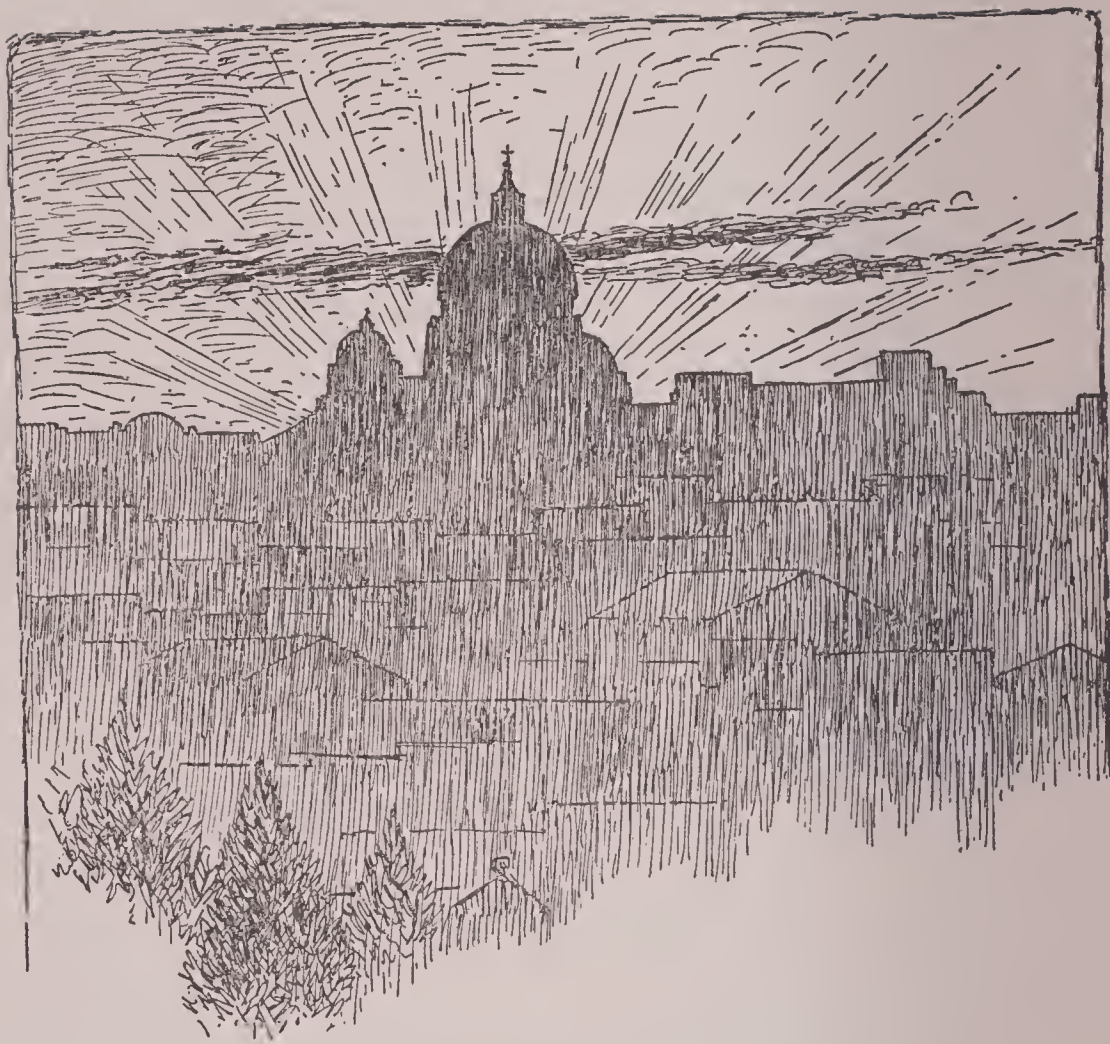
And only to the unimaginative is such
Stuff poetry.
But it is fun!
And We,
Kids,
Must have fun.

Frost is on the pane
For 'tis a slushy, slippery,
Winter's day.
Within,
A petal from a rose,
Falls from a jar —
And by a jar.
(A subtle thought
And rhyme of static state and motion, too!)
And floating lightly down the air
Rests on the rug.
Ah, there is law!
The law of gravity.
The child,
The other child,
The child-ren,
Note it not,
Without, —
(Oh! subtle rhyme of place
And circumstance —
Within — without!) —

CLUB PAPERS

Without,
A fleshy woman slips upon the ice
And, with gesticulation wild,
She falls
Upon her ear. —
(Another rhyme of thought
And subtle rhyme of place!
Upon her rear.) —
The law of gravity again!
The children note it not.
But —
The law of levity appears holding shaking sides,
And tickles children's in'ards
To the core, as,
Flabbergast and all distraught, the woman picks
Her heavy body up!
Would God!
Man had the Childer's innocence
And insouciance
And felt and saw in forms of modern art
Some what of that light levity
Grave, stupid gravity instills!
Then were we sane,
And, after each depressing swat,
We could
Unlike the female dumpling dropt,
Smiling 'rise and rehabilitate ourselves again.

BOOK NIGHT



IR

THE HAND THAT ROUNDED PETER'S DOME AND GROINED THE AISLES OF CHRISTIAN ROME

I 20

BOOK NIGHT

“SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE ON”

AS THAT PARTY of “lusty gentlemen,” on that fateful night in Verona, was about to set forth upon what proved to some of its members to be the great adventure of their lives, and fraught with melancholy and tragic consequences, Romeo remarked, “I dreamt a dream tonight;” to which Mercutio responded “And so did I.” “Well,” Romeo asked, “what was yours?” “That dreamers often lie.” “In bed asleep,” added Romeo, “where they do dream things true.” I am interested not so much in Mercutio’s description of “Queen Mab” which followed, as in the conclusion indicated — that when this atomic instigator of dream touches the relaxed chords, each instrument gives out harmonies (or discords) after its own waking nature: thus,

“Through lovers’ brains, and then they dream of
love;
O’er courtiers’ knees, that dream on curtsies
straight;

CLUB PAPERS

O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees:
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream;

Tickling a parson's nose that lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice;
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats "
etc., etc.

until Romeo cries, "Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
Thou talkest of nothing." "True," answered
Mercutio, "I talk of dreams; which are the children
of an idle brain —."

I shall not argue as to the relative fertility of the
dream soil in a static or a dynamic brain field, but I
fain would note that there is complete correspond-
ence between the subject matter of the dreams I am
about to record and my own waking thoughts and
activities.

As to Mercutio's remark "that dreamers often
lie" — well, dreamers, especially waking dreamers,
often are possessed of imagination; but neither this
element nor that of conscious embroidery attaches
to what I am about to set down; that is, to the dream
portion which, in both cases, presented itself vividly
to my sleeping vision and remains vivid in my wak-
ing memory. The experience would seem to answer
affirmatively the question as to whether or no dreams

are ever coherent and, even, as to whether real "jokes" are perpetrated in dreams. In the first instance cited I was conscious that I was indulging in a "pleasantry," and in the dream I laughed in hearty enjoyment. In the second instance I am not so certain that I was conscious of making a pun, but I felt a glow of satisfaction in having said something "pat." However, not until after I had analyzed my dream and had identified the complexes, did I appreciate how altogether pat the answer was. Without further prelude, then, let me establish a background against which to sketch the outline of my earlier dream.

I was, once upon a time, superintending the construction of two summer cottages designed by my firm for clients in a North Shore suburb. The structures were underpinned with cedar posts which were set in holes dug in the ground. To insure drainage the bottom of each hole was filled with small field stones worn smooth and rounded by the elements.

I spent the week-end now and again with friends living in the suburb, and had gone with them upon occasion to the service in the Presbyterian Church, presided over by a plump, intense little Dominie who had a habit of screwing his face to his notes upon the desk, while at intervals he viewed his congregation through squint eyes, peering over the upper rim of his spectacles. His expression of coun-

CLUB PAPERS

tenance, intense and interrogative, always amused me so that perhaps I did not take him or his words as seriously as I should.

Once after visiting the scene of the building operations with my clients I had the dream in which I perpetrated the pleasantry and delivered myself of something in the nature of a pun. On the morning following the night of the dream I asked my brother if he remembered the name of a game we used to play as boys, the game in which one boy strove to "bowl" out of a shallow hole in the earth a stone rolled in by another boy. He told me the name, the one I had used in my dream; a name which I had not had in mind for many a long year. This was the dream:

On a beautiful Sunday morning the families of my clients and I, a jolly party, were at the site of the future cottages rolling stones into the holes which had been dug for the underpinning. In turn we would cast a stone and try to displace one which had found lodgment in a hole. At this juncture along came the Dominie who eyed us for a few moments in his intense pulpit fashion and then asked solemnly, "Are you remembering the Sabbath Day to keep it holy?" As the others appeared reticent it devolved upon me to make answer, and, shying the "dornick" I held in my hand, I said, "Yes! don't you see? We are remembering to keep it

Holey-Bowley," a pleasantry the dream people all seemed thoroughly to enjoy.

A more elaborate pattern must be woven into the background of the dream which came to me on a night early in February, 1920. Very vivid and definite it was, involving several "complexes" and relating itself directly to experiences and to mental operations of the recent past. I hastily sketch the background.

In May of 1919 I attended the convention of the American Institute of Architects in Nashville, Tenn. The good people of the town entertained the visiting architects at a barbecue at the "Hermitage" which was reached by automobile. This will account for the "banquet complex" in the dream. Now, I have sometimes been inclined to question the absolute validity of Ralph Waldo Emerson's theory of the identity of the processes of Art and Nature, and the philosophy underlying the manifestations of each, as implied, at least, in his rare poem, "The Problem," from which I quote:

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free."

CLUB PAPERS

Note particularly the last line. And again farther on in the poem:

“ These temples grew as grows the grass.”

Abbeys, Temples, Pyramids, Shrines, —

“ Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.”

As I had quoted these last lines and discussed their content in print fairly recently, the relationship of this matter to the “subject complex” of the dream conversation is readily traced. On the evening of the Friday preceding the night of my dream, my brother and I had visited the studio of an artist who exhibited to us several paintings of brilliantly colored cliffs and “architectonic” masses in the landscape of the Far West; — weird, entrancing things they were. Upon arriving at home after this visit, my brother, for purposes of comparison, produced his colored photographs of the Dolomites together with architectural subjects, upon the characteristic beauty of which he discoursed with enthusiasm, indicating the while various features in detail. The bearing of all this on what follows will

become apparent; and against the background I have now laid in, the outlines of the second dream will stand in clear relief.

The dream: I found myself on one bright morning in an automobile, in company with a half dozen other architects, on a foraging expedition near Rockford, Ill. We had set out to gather some ears of green corn which were to be roasted in the husk for a forthcoming banquet of our guild. We procured the desired provender at the farm of the Emersons (relatives of Ralph Waldo, though the relationship was not specifically noted in the dream) who, recognizing in us kindred spirits, invited us into the house to join them in the noonday meal. We accepted and immediately the talk turned on art topics. One of the younger ladies of the family went to a cabinet in the well appointed drawing room and thence brought a number of colored photographs of the Dolomites and of the Grand Canyon, together with photographs of architectural subjects. (The colors stood out vividly in my dream.) Certain of the photographs, the natural subjects in her left hand and the architectural in the right hand, were held up for inspection by a gentle old lady seated in a low divan around which the little party was gathered.

As I looked down upon her face from my standing position I was distressed to notice that her silken gray hair was rather sparse and that there was a flat

CLUB PAPERS

black mole on her right temple. She spoke with animation and, pointing out the details or tracing the outlines of the objects in the photographs, which she held in one hand, with a corner of one of the photographs she held in the other, said: "Now I get no sort of sense of relationship between these masses and details and this or these!" indicating in turn the face of a cliff or a mountain and the façade of a cathedral or a palace. "They seem totally unrelated; I perceive no correspondence between them."

"It is altogether natural and proper that you should perceive none," said I; "for these," indicating the natural objects, "are the product and manifestation of blind forces — blind, unknowing, unconscious forces working to an unseen and unknowable end; while these," I continued, indicating the architectural subjects, "are the works of a consciously directed and knowing force moving unerringly toward a pre-determined and desired goal." This explanation seemed to satisfy the others, as it did me.

Suddenly the dear old lady looked up and asked a question which seemed not at all to break the sequence, "Which process, do you think, is the more tedious?"

"Ah! Madam," I answered, out of my knowledge and appreciation of nature and the arts, "no

element of tedium, nor, for that matter, of *Te Deum*, enters into either of the processes! ”

This answer so evidently rounded out the subject that the dream faded immediately into nothingness, and, upon waking, I rehearsed it to my brother substantially in the form in which I have here set it down.

Now, with a transition quite as gradual as that through which my dream lady reached her last question, I am led to wonder if the “ processes ” underlying the structure of such dreams as the foregoing — barring the humor, which never consciously (?) enters into spiritualistic presentations — may not account for many of the manifestations which accompany the very recent if not altogether present hysterical search into the “ beyond,” * as they have accompanied all similar search in other and similar periods of stress. May it not well be that, impelled by wills stronger than his own, or self-hypnotized into a state of ready acquiescence and response, the subject projects his subconscious being against a background of real experience woven of anguish, hope, despair, love and longing, and dreams dreams or has them dreamed for him — the effect in both cases being similar — the vision seeming real while the

* Lodge and Conan Doyle at that time were very much in the public eye.

CLUB PAPERS

condition lasts? Too rarely does the subject awaken to the reality, while all too often the glory of the dream, translated into waking speech, is dissipated in a vapor of banality or incoherency. As to these dreams which I have just recorded, the "glory" may never have enveloped them, though that they are characterized by a certain "freshness" will hardly be denied.

AN ARCHITECT IN THE
CLASSICAL LANDS



R

YE MEN OF ATHENS I PERCEIVE THAT YE ARE TOO SUPERSTITIOUS

AN ARCHITECT IN THE CLASSICAL LANDS

THE CLASSICAL lands hold a glamor for architect, archaeologist and traveler. The archaeologist digs among ruins and seeks to restore ancient buildings upon paper or in models and, again on paper, to repeople them with the individuals of contemporary society. He digs among graves and tombs and deciphers inscriptions and hieroglyphs to determine the status of the art, religion, philosophy, customs and manners of bygone days. But the contemporary architect created the reality and, because of spiritual insight into contemporary life, was able to give it definite expression and interpretation in the material, thus creating and constructing buildings which, even in ruin, remain vital records of the civilization of his time. As the modern architect is at one in sympathy and understanding with his ancient brother, performing for the present what his ancient brother did for the past, he has, or should have, a very fair conception as to how these architectural records of great civilizations came into being.

CLUB PAPERS

Therefore the figure of the architect may well be in the picture in a vision of the classical lands!

The classical lands! Greece and the Isles, far Spain, North Africa, Asia Minor, the Near East; Constantinople of the Christian era as well as the Athens of Pericles. The impulse which flowed in rhythmic vibrations through the life in all these lands in ancient days and which unifies the varied pictures — an impulse which is not totally lost even in the hubbub and hurly-burly of our Western Civilization — this impulse emanated from that section, small in area, immense in realized potentialities, called Greece; and at its center was Athens and at the center of Athens, the spiritual center, was the Acropolis. It is the spirit of Greece which makes lands classical, works classical and forms classical, and which animated the past from which we sprang; a past of which we are still a part.

I shall deal herein, in not too pedantic mood, with the reactions of a present day architect, none other than myself, to sights seen and sounds heard in lands made classic by the persisting vitality of this spirit of Ancient Greece. Within the forms of Greek architecture, as I had known them in lifeless copies, in books, plates, photographs and models, I sensed an animating spirit. I tried to set this spirit free and to take it to myself as guide and counselor. The intrinsic difference between the architectures of Greece

and Egypt became clear to me and I felt sure that, contrary to a widely promulgated theory, Greek forms were not borrowed from Egypt; that Greek architecture no more evolved out of Egyptian architecture than did the Greek evolve from the Egyptian, or the Caucasian from the Negroid. It was partly to satisfy myself as to the validity of my own theory that I took the journey which led me through the classical lands and into the presence not only of the Egyptian temples, but of that wonderful manifestation of the clarity and logic of Greek thought, Hagia Sophia at Constantinople; and on to the wellsprings of inspiration in the shadows of the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis. I use the term Hagia Sophia — the Divine Wisdom — that the mind may not hold a misty image of the material body of a nonexistent female saint but, rather, be bathed in a pure spiritual essence.

It is with some trepidation that I say that the Greeks did thus and so, or thought thus and so; or that I suggest that my individually developed theory embodies the spirit of Ancient Greece. I well know what numerous misshapen and fantastic burdens have been foisted on the Greeks, ancient and modern. If one evolves out of the recesses of nowhere in particular a theory of dynamic symmetry, he foists it upon the innocent Ancient Greeks. If one, after a period of arduous labor, concocts some

mathematical theory of design which will fit many a two dimensional and now and then a minor three dimensional work of art, he, too, proceeds to foist it upon the Ancient Greeks who, being dead but surely not forgotten, have no material means of defending themselves. They are defended and exonerated in the minds of all sensitive beings who know the difference between art and the application of mathematical formulae; who know the difference between a mathematical series and the rhythmic play of vibrant emotion. I have no quarrel with that rhythmic and admirable science, mathematics, abstract or applied; my quarrel is with those who would make a wrong application and bring art and life down to the terms of an algebraic equation in which there is but the one and inevitable value of X and the one and inevitable value of Y. Life, and art — the spiritual expression and interpretation of life in the material — are replete with variations from the norm; with accidentals which give interest and color, and give room for that play of individuality and personality which would vitiate a problem in geometry. So, again I say that it is with trepidation that I advance my theory as one acted upon by the Ancient Greeks in developing their art. My theory has nothing to do with mathematical formulae nor with geometrical forms, but solely with the spiritual and physical reactions of a man faced with the condi-

tions incident to living, to real living, in any or all localities, in any or all periods of time. Scrutinizing my own reactions and reading myself into the life of the Greeks, as interpreted to me by their philosophy, their literature and drama, their sculpture and architecture, I am constrained to believe that they acted upon a very concrete impulse or theory. I know that they acted and reacted as sensitive and sensible men of their sort would have been likely to act and react to similar stimuli under similar conditions; only perhaps their actions and reactions were finer because of their demonstratedly finer aesthetic perceptions. One who can feel asks no further demonstration of the super-refinement of the Greeks' aesthetic perceptions after he has bowed in reverential awe under the all space encompassing dome of Hagia Sophia or has bathed his spirit in the charm which emanates from the ruined yet living Parthenon which crowns the Athenian Acropolis.

However, in talking of the spiritual aspects of Hagia Sophia and the Parthenon before we have traversed the material paths which lead up to them, we seemingly have plunged into the middle of things. Let us orient ourselves and enter the Mediterranean, that great sea bordering the classical lands, from the Western ocean between the Pillars of Hercules, those far outposts of the antique world. On

CLUB PAPERS

our left is Spain, a land which, if not decorated too profusely with the flowers of classical mythology, shows still the fruits of Roman Civilization. Where Rome was, pure water flowed, and was enjoyed. Tarragona, once the center of Roman power in Spain, is rich in Roman remains and in Roman traditions. Spain to the west and north is similarly rich; in the south, Moorish and Arabian life and culture wiped away all trace of Rome except as it may appear in fragments in the Moorish structures.

Rome, with her temples, baths and aqueducts, was not only a good builder and water carrier, she was a good locater and in no instance was she happier than in surveying that rich high valley to the south of the Tell Atlas and in establishing therein the City of Thamugas, now called Timgad, which lies over the mountains a hundred miles or more from the sea, near the far eastern border of Algeria; it is reached from Batna over smooth roads winding higher and higher toward the snow peaks which furnished the life-giving waters to the town. Flocks, herds and droves were grazing in the rich upland pastures. Grain fields lay spread out in the sun as far as the eye could reach, away over southward to where the desert begins or, better, where the progress of the desert northward is halted by a range of low hills. The valley, most austere in its beauty,

is reached through groves of olives and almonds in blossom and forests of cork trees. At the head of this valley lie the bare, comely, and the but recently uncovered bones of long buried Timgad. The guide books will tell you that the city was founded at the order of Trajan by the Commander of the Third Legion, but I need only tell of the beauty which lies there on the fertile plain in appealing ruin for your inner and outer eyes to feast upon. With none of the sophistication of Pompeii the ruins of the theatre, the forum, the arch and the capitol stand in monumental grandeur, while the remains of multitudinous bathing establishments tell to what use some of the water from the nearby mountain springs was diverted.

Two or three days eastward lies Carthage, redolent of Rome. Again aqueducts and cisterns; again remains of theatres and circuses. I was not so much impressed by being in the home town of St. Cyprian and "best Augustine" as by being where Dido had been; and Hannibal, who crossed the Alps with one hundred thousand men and forty elephants. The ratio between men and elephants amuses us moderns. One hundred thousand men is, for us, a restricted ration of cannon-fodder, while the number of elephants seems also small. We remembered that the Ringlings were wont to cross twice yearly a vast con-

CLUB PAPERS

continent and two mountain ranges with twelve hundred men and forty elephants. To have been in the Ringling class, Hannibal should have had with him three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three elephants and one-third. Then, as a flippant person might say, his show — of taking Rome — would have been better.

Off to the eastward of old Carthage, and a few points to the north, Italy has booted little Sicily out into the sea nearly making Siamese twins of the Mediterranean. Near the southeastern extremity of this much buffeted island — for Sicily down through the ages has been buffeted not only by warring winds and waves, but by warring tribes and races — lies Syracuse. We are taken ashore in tenders. Near the landing stage lies, bordered by papyrus plants, a pool of limpid water known as the Fountain of Arethusa. Now we know that we are in the truly classical lands rather than in what we may call the pseudo-classical lands which we have been visiting. The Roman engineering and structural forms which we have viewed so far were creative expressions, but not rightfully to be called classical. Classical has to do with form which functions rightfully, truthfully, and beautifully. Forms intrinsically Roman functioned rightly, generally truthfully, always powerfully; and might have been made to function as beauty had the Romans had a

deeply aesthetic nature. The Roman, however, did not see beneath the surface of beauty. He saw beauty in the superficial aspect of the Grecian Temples. That surface beauty he applied to his great engineering works in the expectation of making them beautiful. But he confused issues, combined systems, and created an active restlessness which was the antithesis of Greek poise and self-control. He was sincere, but his nature lacked that poise and sweet constraint which was in the Greek mind. Power and mixed motives showed always through his architecture and robbed it of a truly classical quality. So we may be justified in calling the Roman lands pseudo-classical lands.

Roman influence was felt in Syracuse, as witnessed by the remains of the amphitheatre. Sports were always a star feature on the Roman programme and the amphitheatre setting was omnipresent. But the Roman amphitheatre in Syracuse is overshadowed in the mind of the architect by the Greek theatre; both in the beauty of the latter's plan and environment and in the performance which took place therein. The tragedies of the stage were subjective and intellectual; those of the arena were objective and sensual. But real tragedies were objectified in the great cavern not far from the site of the theatre. This cave is known as the Ear of Dionysius, where even a whisper was conveyed

CLUB PAPERS

throughout its vastness to the concealed though listening ears of the tyrant. It was not safe for a prisoner in that cave to whisper other than compliments for his tyranny. Underground Syracuse is interesting, and not the least of the interest is centered in the Catacombs of San Giovanni which, we are told, far exceed in extent those of Rome. Here in the subterranean chambers Paul, the great Apostle, was said by our guide to have preached. I missed the service by nearly nineteen hundred years. I ran across Paul's tracks again some weeks later up on Mars' Hill in Athens; of which more anon.

In the underground corridors beneath the Capuchin Monastery in Palermo, burials have been the order up to quite recently. Bodies are exposed in grotesque and humorous attitudes; at least they seemed humorous to me. The forms and faces were as remote in my mind from anything that ever lived as are the marbles, bronzes or wax figures in museums. If we could be sure that at some future time we were to be as amusing and interesting to posterity as these chaps are to us, we might well feel that we had not lived altogether in vain; though, perhaps, consciously being a messenger of joy rather than being the unconscious object of mirth lies at the root of satisfaction in living and dying.

The narrow crooked streets of modern Syracuse were teeming with life. Four and five storied build-

ings flanked the lanes. Every window had a balcony and every balcony had from one to five occupants who smiled down upon us as we passed beneath. Perhaps we were interesting to them in life as the remote ancestors of their neighbors in Palermo were to us in death; and perhaps after the same fashion — that is, as something though somewhat resembling humans yet far detached from their own manner of life and thought. And, indeed, if our party of tourists looked to the native Algerians, Tunisians, Syracusians, Turks, Athenians, and so on, as conducted parties of my own countrymen looked to me as I saw them hurried through galleries and churches and museums, when I was a leisurely student of architecture in foreign lands fifty years ago, I can quite understand why these peoples should regard us — as all but the most enlightened of us still regard them — as an altogether inferior race of beings. As for us, the mere fact that we are so assiduously seeking culture would seem to prove that we possess it not.

With all their cultural seeking, and whatever their cultural background, there are tourists who, if they knew that Hagia Sophia existed, did not and, having seen it, still do not know wherein it differs from St. Mark's or the Baths of Caracalla; or wherein the Parthenon differs from the Christian Science Church or the Carnegie Library or the

bruised or broken Bank of their home town. What is the reaction of such in the presence of the great buildings of the world or of the great facts of history! Does the blank mind remain a blank in spite of the shadows thrown athwart it by realities great or small? I am quite convinced that it does so remain. I am at heart an Ancient Greek; I feel the inevitableness of fate. I feel that the mind which was blank at birth will forever remain blank; the mind which was imbued with imagination at birth will feed and thrive upon the imaginative; the mind which was stolid at birth will remain stolid; the mind which was receptive at birth may develop receptivity; the mind which was creative will continue under normal conditions to be creative. To culture must be added experience. I would not say that in order to get the most out of an object or experience the mind previously must have been saturated by all knowledge concerning it; but through knowledge the mind may be delicately sensitized so that impressions of reality shall register clearly and cleanly. Certain it is that no one can know all that is to be known of an aesthetic experience or of a work of art until he has undergone the one or beheld the other. All the descriptions in the world or all the pictures in all the galleries cannot take the place of reality even to the sensitized mind. It was acting, too, on this assumption that I visited Hagia Sophia

and the Acropolis as well as the Temples of Egypt and other great monuments. These, even in ruinous state, must be seen, must make their own direct appeal if ever I were to know them; for seen even in ruinous or unkempt condition they would help the imagination to paint them as they really were and are.

What is the connection between Hagia Sophia and the classical world other than the mere fact that a Roman Emperor had a church built to embellish his eastern capital. The connection lies deeper than that; it is not Rome carried over into Byzantium; it is the spirit of Ancient Greece touching to life forms intrinsically Roman. It is an actual demonstration of what Rome might have produced had she been able to see beneath the superficial aspect of Greek beauty. It is a demonstration of what Greek aestheticism might have done for the Roman system had Rome desired her Greek artisans to do more than to apply Greek forms decoratively to the surface of Roman structures. Lisle March Phillipps called Hagia Sophia "the Greek criticism of Roman construction." In its structure the arch and vault function perfectly. Thrust counterbalances thrust in living structure rather than being absorbed in immense and inert masses of masonry. Outside the purely engineering structures like the aqueducts, the Roman arch and vault functioned merely as form.

CLUB PAPERS

It was as though the form were carved out of solid masses of integral masonry so bulky that structural stresses were absorbed and entirely lost. But in Hagia Sophia vault springs from pier or sustaining vault in a system instinct with life. One within the enclosure is not depressed by dominating mass bearing down upon him; but, rather, the spirit is lifted by soaring surfaces which have encompassed space and which through a subtle art have made vastness more vast — immensity more immense. One might almost say that Hagia Sophia did for structural space what the telescope has done for astronomical space. It is the cool, calm, inevitable logic of the Greek aesthetic mind directed into emotional channels and applied to Roman forms which links Constantinople indissolubly to the classical world.

In miles and hours, as measured by modern means of transportation, Constantinople is not far remote from Athens, Hagia Sophia from the Parthenon. But though short the distance in time and space vast is the difference in forms; though vast the difference in forms single is the spirit which animates. The Oriental cast of Hagia Sophia and of its environment, contrasting with the Occidental cast of the Parthenon and its environment, seems upon superficial glance to cloud the unity of spirit; but penetrating thought will bring the picture into focus, and the basic principle underlying both will be seen

to be the development of character through the interplay of internal and external forces — the interpretation of human character in terms of structural stress and strain. The philosophy which underlies is different in the two, the aims or ideals to be achieved are diverse, but the spiritual medium is the same. Never had it manifested itself on earth, according to the best of available data, until given substance by the Early Greek. It was not to appear again, in the West at least, until the downfall of the Roman Empire; until the collapse of a system which expressed itself in terms of power and luxury, and which sought, as already indicated, to mask its perhaps unconsciously acknowledged aesthetic impotence in the applied, and generally misapplied, forms of Greek Art.

Egypt and Greece had the same structural system — the post and beam — and there the resemblance ended; for the idealism and philosophies of the races were different, and the expression in a sincere and single minded people, such as both were, had to be different — and in consonance with the racial and national life. There is not a particle of structural symbolism in any Egyptian temple; in the Parthenon there is nothing else, except as the sculpture goes to enforce the lesson which the structural symbolism teaches. In Hagia Sophia we have, expressed in structure, the soul of humanity lost in the unity

CLUB PAPERS

of the Infinite. In the Parthenon we have, expressed in structure, the individual developing the highest character possible to man become a god in his calm, measured resistance to a down-pressing fate which never masters him, but which he himself finally masters through the attainment of character made perfect — made perfect not through outside ministrations or external aid, but through indomitable selfhood. In both cases — in Hagia Sophia the merging of the soul in the Infinite, in the Parthenon the battle of the individual, body, mind and spirit, with fate — the expression is in terms of rarest beauty; otherwise it would not be Greek. It was the Greek who formulated his universe in terms of the Good, the True and the Beautiful; indulging in no anti-climax in placing beauty last. Beauty is the soul of Art; goodness and truth are its body — its media.

As I have already indicated I am at heart an Ancient Greek. For that reason I feel inclined to question the validity of the remark interjected by the reporter who supplied us with the text of Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill. That remark, which makes up Verse 21, Chapter XVII of "The Acts" in the New Testament, King James Version, is as follows: "For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Leaving out of

count the development of Greek Art from the archaic forms to the perfection of the Parthenon, that statement does not tally with the facts which called forth Paul's oration. The Greeks were assiduously worshiping Gods which they had been worshiping down through the centuries. These Athenians must have been spending some of their time at that or they would not have so stirred Paul. But Paul's first words, found in verses 22 and 23 of the same Version, show the Oriental's lack of comprehension of the Greek character and idealism — that is if the words have been properly translated and handed on to us, which possibly they have not. As in the case of his preaching in the Catacombs, I was on the ground too late to get the words from Paul's lips and to catch the expression of his face as he uttered them. King James's translators made him say: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." It is with the words quoted, and then only insofar as they misinterpret the Greek character, that I am at present concerned. The new Version substitutes or permits the substitution of the word religious for superstitious; but I hardly believe that Paul used either. Nothing could be too

religious for Paul, while degrees of superstition would not have worried him. What he did perceive in the Greeks, if he perceived anything at all out of the ordinary, was an intense intellectual inquisitiveness. Had he understood the Greeks, and I imagine he understood them better than his reporters and their translators did, he could have said something like this: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that toward all things you display a deep intellectual curiosity and, I may say, a rare breadth of mind. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'" (So the new Version has it — AN UNKNOWN GOD.) Had he really known the Greeks he would not have continued; "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," for he would have known that that altar to an unknown God was the shrine at which the stranger within the gates was at liberty, without let or hindrance, to worship his own individual deity who, being unknown to the Athenians, was not worshiped ignorantly or otherwise by them. The setting up of that shrine in Athens was characteristic of the Greeks' broad-minded tolerance and liberalism. What they found of the good, the true, and the beautiful in the religion or philosophy of these strangers they adopted, having filtered it through the alembic of their own thought; but they did not

coerce the stranger or force their ideas upon him. The so-called Christian religion and the Mohammedan forced their dogmas and doctrines upon non-conforming sects within, and upon the stranger, by fire and the sword, by the inquisition and torture. St. Paul and his followers had little of sweetness and light to bestow upon those Athenians who "ignorantly worshiped!"

Even the colors and the contours of the classical landscape induce philosophical reveries on art and life; and, paradoxically enough, the classical landscape draws one away from the contemplation of the abstract and sets up before him the image of the concrete in such alluring fashion that his eye through sheer and sensuous delight must needs dwell upon it. The golden rose tints of the columns of the Parthenon, as one stands within that ruined edifice, draw the mind's eye from the life and thought of a far off day and focus the eye of flesh on the purple hills beyond and on the distant silver sea. The marbles of the entablature are projected in almost translucent mass against the limpid cerulean of a sky which is flecked with wisps of cloud truly translucent, edged here with fleeting gold and there with purple and again with shimmering silver as if to bring into rare harmony the elements — Sea and Earth and Sky. These are given meaning and worth by the presence of the works of man. The eternal rhythms of the

CLUB PAPERS

Universe are meaningless and incomprehensible to man until fixed in forms of Art through the workings of the human hand and brain impelled by those eternal and vibrant rhythms; until man through Art has encompassed space as in Hagia Sophia and fixed the limits of spiritual expansion as in the Parthenon.

As the sky we saw beyond and above the columns on the Acropolis was flecked with clouds, so the sea was flecked with islands, misty and unreal in the distance, solidifying without loss of mystery upon approach. These islands of the Aegean and also of the Western seas have been the subject of song and of romance ever since song issued from human lips or romance entered the human breast; and both happened very long ago. All this glamor of romance casts a spell over the traveler from the West and he yearns to transplant this beauty of landscape and building to his home land. But there the skies are not the same and the purple shadows do not so blend into the misty amber of the atmosphere. The importation of Egyptian or Oriental forms or spirit into our own land with all its Occidental background is inexcusable; the introduction of Greek forms is, in the light of our past, understandable; the introduction of the Greek spirit would be beneficial, perhaps would be our salvation in Art and help us to solve that inferiority complex which, whether we

THE CLASSICAL LANDS

are conscious of it or not, we, as shown by our works, permit to govern and control us. As a man does so is he — not as a man says. If we are a superior race we will show it by freedom of thought, of life, of expression; freedom not from the good in others, from that truth in others which is applicable to us, but freedom from conventions which have grown up around an unintelligent use of forms, an unintelligent application of formulae.

A visit to the classical lands will be an inspiration to one who knows the past and can view not only the past but the present in the light of that knowledge; to one (and there may well be such) whose spiritual insight will permit or compel him to see beneath the surface into the heart of things; to comprehend why a Greek was a Greek, why an Egyptian was an Egyptian, why a Roman was a Roman; and why and how he, himself, can be himself. I am loath to believe that there are not many to whom such understanding has come in the course of every day cultural experience. I am forced to believe that there are many among those who have made a tour of the classical lands, including even some who have made intensive study of classical architecture, to whom such understanding neither will nor can come. But to him who is possessed of a native understanding and a native instinct for beauty a tour of the Classical Lands,

CLUB PAPERS

culminating in a visit to Athens and the Acropolis, will enlarge that understanding and will enhance the native capacity for the perception and apprehension of beauty both in its physical and its spiritual aspects.

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING



IR

SOME STILL PROFESS TO BELIEVE THAT THE EARTH IS FLAT
BUT MOST OF US LONG SINCE HAVE LEFT THAT BELIEF FLAT

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

I

IN ANCIENT times there was a widespread belief that the Earth was flat; that day accompanied the sun on its journey across the heavens from its emergence, fresh and dripping, from the Eastern Seas to its dip, worn out and weary, into the Seas in the West. Darkness lay upon the Earth until the sun, all refreshed, arose again from its nocturnal bath. Some even had it that the sun died each night in the West and that a new sun was born in the East each morning. But Astronomy (and, as we like to believe, common sense as well) teaches us that we see the same sun appearing in the morning, if we are up and about, that we saw disappear in the West at nightfall. We, you and I, bend a sort of superior smile, perhaps a bit derisive, on those who held this old belief; for science has taught us that "the Earth is round like an orange;" that it is not a stationary, flat plane over and under which the "sun moves," but that it is a spherical object itself moving around a fixed sun — fixed, that is, in relation to the Earth; an object turning on its own axis,

CLUB PAPERS

segments of the surface successively coming into the light and receding into the shade, causing the phenomenon of day and night.

I said that you and I bend a sort of superior smile on those who held this ancient belief; though what lies behind the smile is, in reality, more akin to pity; not, perhaps, so much for those who in times of ignorance held the belief as for those who, today, with knowledge laying its treasures at their doors, spurn its offerings and hug their delusions. I may say that, as for me, this feeling of pity towards the entertainers of this particular belief extends to those who have entertained and still entertain other of the world's great superstitions and delusions; delusions which once held mighty sway, and still in a way are potent, in the domains of human thought, aspiration and endeavor.

I would not wish to seem blindly intolerant of certain beliefs which have been, and certain others which now are, held by mankind. On the whole, as these unfold themselves before my inner vision, I find them in a way pathetic and, frequently, amusing. They become intolerable, and I intolerant, only as their devotees present them, each as the sole channel of individual and social salvation. Beliefs, in general, are conditioned by mental and spiritual factors rooted deep in the far distant past. Differing in character, like the onions, the turnips and the

lilies in the garden, some men are born to believe, some to doubt, others to reject all belief. All draw their belief-life from the soil of the past. The free man is he who can rise superior to background — to the vapors of the soil — and breathe the pure air above. As for that belief in the flatness of the Earth, a few misguided and not-to-be-informed mortals still hold to it. But, in spite of a few individual and sporadic cases, a world which once held pretty generally to the belief has left it flat.

Now, that particular belief probably antedated religion and the gods. It arose from primitive observations of physical phenomena by primitive minds. But even the primitive mind — possibly because it is primitive — is not satisfied for long with the seemingly obvious explanation of externalities. There must be a mystical interpretation to satisfy the mind which, through evolution out of seeming nothingness, is becoming spiritualized even primitively; which is entering the first stages of a spiritual consciousness. The flat Earth, with the air above and the waters underneath and the all-penetrating ether, was soon to be peopled in men's minds with beings celestial and demoniac; spirits or sprites soon were to inhabit every physical form and manifestation. Phoebus Apollo drove his chariot athwart the sky. Heracles cleaned up some dirty messes; and he, too, being a sun god, in conjunction with the

CLUB PAPERS

corn gods, the gods of the vine, the gods of the sowing and of the harvest, the river and innumerable other gods of mental and physical states, made the Earth a safe, wholesome, productive and altogether interesting place in which to dwell. Ancient man at one time or another believed in all these gods; and the various and varied forms of religion grew out of a desire to propitiate them. These gods were just as big and potent, as moral and divine, as the men who made them — and no more so. The gods of the tribe were greater, more complex and more powerful only in so far as the tribal composite excelled the individual's portrait. For man makes his gods; and in my way of thinking, there is no god interested in man personally which man himself did not create.

However, man did not create that active and external principle, that creative energy which had no beginning and will have no end, which we may call the spirit of life. The spirit of life is just as personal to — just as jealous of — the amoeba as of man; of the dog as of the Doge; of the insect worker in the coral grove as of the prophets of the Almighty themselves.

The authors of the stories of the Creation in the Biblical Book of Genesis knew of these mystical beings with which the ancients had peopled the Earth and of the gods which had been set up. These

story writers, however, belonged to a spiritually advanced race whose own god was single, indivisible and undying. To this race its god was the One god. He had all the powers, attributes, qualities and characteristics of all the other gods put together; all the other gods and demons. He was compassionate, cruel, merciful, malicious, gentle, jealous, loving, vindictive all in one. He had to fight for his own against all the other gods of all the other races; not denying their existence but placing them in a lesser category. It was simpler and more satisfactory for the race which conceived the notion of a single god-head to worship and to propitiate one god than a dozen. It was a step in the direction of an orderly theistic evolution; a conservation of the energy of worship, quite in line with that genius for organization and consolidation which is characteristic of this race. And this step was taken long before the story of creation was written down. It supplied the material for that story. These other gods ministered but narrowly to the processes of life — the god of the vine for drink, the god of the corn for food; the god of the flocks for food and raiment and shelter. You may readily discern how important to the shepherd tribes was the god of the lamb — the tribes which repudiated the “Lamb” of god. The god of the sun ministered to health and fertility, as when the life creating rays entered the womb of the Virgin

CLUB PAPERS

Earth and encountered the fructifying influence of the gods of the rain and the dew. Belief in the multiplicity of gods waned and the one god stood for a time in the ascendant. The story in Genesis indicates quite clearly that that which was translated or perverted into the One God was in reality the spirit of life — the spirit of creation. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” He divided the land from the seas. He filled the sea with fishes and told them to multiply. He covered the earth with grass and told it to grow. He set in the heaven (the Sun) a greater and (the Moon) a lesser light. He told the earth to bring forth plant and animal and told them both to fructify and replenish the earth. He created man — male and female created he them. And he blessed them and said unto them: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over every living thing.” Up to the word “subdue” the spirit of life was speaking — there god took up the strain: and man, whether he would or no, has followed the injunctions. Indeed man has gone so far in subduing the earth, and in subduing the heaven also, although that was not “nominated in the bond,” that he has discovered laws and natural principles that have led him to question the scientific accuracy of the story and the processes set down therein; but have not led him to question the exist-

ence of the eternal spirit of life and its instrumentality in the process of creation and maintenance, not only of the heaven and the earth and the sun and moon and stars of the story, but of the great cosmic universe in which the Sun in Genesis and the earth upon which it was told to shine are but as a filmy speck of dust upon the garment of infinity. The Earth in Genesis had not acquired the dignity of a planet; it was just the earth! One can leave without regret a belief in the story in Genesis as a recital of time and space actualities and leave it without dimming the splendor which envelops one's glorious vision of the spirit of life.

Although the Hebraic story of the Creation is an integral part of the Christian Bible and its acceptance is regarded by the majority of true believers as fundamental to Christian belief, yet all types of Christian believers repudiate the One god idea as set forth therein and uncompromisingly stressed throughout the Old Testament. The monotheistic idea was good enough for the Hebrews of the old dispensation; but to suit their own purposes the Jewish founders of the Christian religion cut up their god into three equal parts with inter-relations so involved as to lead to inextricable confusion in the minds of such Christian believers as have minds capable of normal functioning. So that the monotheistic idea, worked out by the Jews with so much of

CLUB PAPERS

love, poetry and human understanding in a world sunken in the mire of pantheism, is left behind by a Christianity under the domination of a church which began almost immediately upon its establishment to lapse back into paganism and into unadulterated polytheism in its worship of Saints and such like minor deities. And now in this enlightened age, if such it may be called, comes Christian Science nursing the hope that there may be another entity added to the Great God Triune; a fifth part it would really be for Roman Catholicism already has added a fourth — The Queen of Heaven. And would it not seem that the Romanists have reason on their side? The mother of a god must of a surety be a god; and the wife of a god must be one in substance with him if gods are to be examples to men; and, too, if the doctrines of the Church are valid both as regards the immaculate conception of the Virgin and the Holy state of Matrimony.

Now, while in contemplating the effect of all this on human mentality a sense of deep tragedy forces itself upon us, yet the divine element of comedy is not absent; and this element invests the atmosphere which surrounds the conception and development of dogmatic religion from the beginning. The progress of the concept is intensely interesting and altogether logical from the unreasoned and primitive idea of fending against the distressful acts of the

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

elements to the great modern engines of moral force; for every believer in every cult today considers his religion to be a power for good — an engine of moral force. What basis can there be for such belief! Indeed what use is there for morals in any religion which embraces a scheme of salvation! Creeds save — not morals! It must come as an awful shock to many a believer in many a scheme of redemption to be told that salvation does not rest entirely in his fold; and it would be difficult indeed to convince many a follower of the Christian faith that untold millions of sincere human beings were morally and spiritually saved ere the Christian Church came into existence and that millions now are leading moral and spiritual lives without the benefit of Clergy!

II

To know something of religious belief one must look in on the beginnings of the gods. There were and are as many religions, really, as there are gods; and, as we have seen, as many gods as there are people who make them. In popular estimation religion has somewhat to do with man's relationship to god; or a man's relationship to his god. In matter of definition the Bible gives little to lay hold upon. This is all: In James I, 27, we read, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To

CLUB PAPERS

visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself [whoever "himself" may be!] unspotted from the world." Now the really interesting thing about this passage is not the definition of religion but that the idea of duality is present; before God and the Father — not God, the Father.

Primitive man found nature unfriendly, even hostile. The elements, animals and, worse than either, other men were his enemies to be repulsed, battled and guarded against. Man was puny in the presence of nature, and he knew it. (Men know it now in the presence of earthquake, fire and flood.) He must get these things on his side. He used then the same argument, the same process of reasoning that the deist uses now; in fact the deistic idea is a development from the primitive. The very existence of a universe, says the deist, proclaims the presence of a controlling mind within. (God is all and in all!) The existence of objects, animate and inanimate, in nature, said primeval man, being unable as yet to grasp the broader concept, proclaims in each the presence of a special demon or controlling spirit. A stone falls and kills or injures a man; an evil spirit within the stone actuated the deed. The spirit must be appeased; must be propitiated. A tree falls breaking a man's limbs (in any connection but this I would say legs); an evil spirit has impelled the

tree to this action. The man has no conception of the accidental. It is nothing to him that the tree broke its own limbs too. That may have been in part punishment for its meanness to the man. The spirit of the tree must be reconciled to man and appeased so that no other tree shall cut a similar caper. And so down the line through objects animate and inanimate, beings sensate and insensate. Life was just one grand struggle to reconcile all these gods and sprites and demons of earth, water and air to the presence of puny man. That was religion; and in essence still is. This phase had to do mainly with man's physical status and his need for bodily protection; but now another element enters. The belly has to be filled — for a race, like an army, travels on its stomach — and the malign influences which are exerting themselves to thwart man in the exercise of that pleasing though necessary formality have to be met and overcome. Puny man distrusts his own powers, so he invents gods. The hawk-headed god will be his friend in the air; the fox-headed god will aid with his wiles on the land; the crocodile god will keep things going swimmingly in the water. So the gods came into being, invented by man to minister to man's needs. And the god of the corn — his body was broken and eaten; and the god of the vine — he was bruised and his life blood drunk; both that man

CLUB PAPERS

might have his belly filled and himself saved — to a life prolonged and full of trouble! So the Sacrament of the Eucharist came into vogue and has been a symbol of man's salvation and regeneration from the dawn of religious consciousness to this day. That was religion; and in essence still is.

And now a third element enters; a third galaxy of gods is to be invented and propitiated; and supernatural aid is to be invoked through magic, through application of formulae, through prayer and incantation. The falling stone has not always killed its victim — it may only sorely have bruised him. The overgenerous gods of the corn and vine may have permitted their devotee to overtax his stomach, and there is a pain in his little inside. To whom is one to go for relief — why to the gods of course; and so man makes more gods; Aesculapius — the fiery serpent in the wilderness — Mr. Dowie — Mrs. Eddy; and men's bodies are healed. This was religion and in essence still is. Somehow it never seemed to occur to primitive man to be cautious, to avoid danger; to irrigate or to sprinkle when moisture was not forthcoming from the skies; to avoid overeating when the gods had too bountifully spread his table. He was not to exercise self-restraint or self-control but was to seek relief from the gods; even if he had to make them for that purpose.

Now comes the fourth element in religion. This has to do with conscious life beyond the grave and appears in two phases; that of a spiritual continuance and that of bodily resurrection. Here again man is impotent within himself, and must seek the aid of the gods. Not only must he importune the old gods, but again, in the matter of bodily resurrection, he must invent new ones. I think the idea of a life beyond life — I prefer that form for if life continues into the beyond there really is no such thing as death, and “grave” is but an empty word, however gorged it may be with dead men’s bones — I think that the idea of conscious life beyond life arose in the minds of men of extended ego (who, perhaps, after all constitute a majority of mankind) men who think they have been of so great importance to their fellow-men in this world that their non-appearance in the world to come (which, too, they have invented for their own self-satisfaction) would be a serious, indeed an inestimable loss to the infinite host of the redeemed. These are those who crave future existence in some sort. Those who crave a bodily resurrection must be those who have exhausted in this life all the possibilities of the body along at least one line of human accomplishment and wish an infinitude of time in which to perfect the body in other and an infinitude of arts; or they are those who “stuck on their shapes” wish to disport their figures on the

shining sands of the golden sea of Eternity. There must be some reason why one should crave a conscious existence which shall endure — and be endured — throughout everlasting infinitudes of time; but I cannot divine the reason and the merest imaginative contemplation of such possibility stuns me quite. But we were speaking of the gods through whose intervention this, to me, highly tragic end is to be attained. It is the life and death of the gods which give man hope and furnish example. There were pre-Christian gods a-plenty who were raised from the dead. A noteworthy case was that of the Egyptian god, Osiris. He was slain and his body hacked to pieces by the powers of Evil in the person of a wicked brother who scattered the fragments in widely separated localities throughout the then known world where they were assiduously sought, especially by the women, and reassembled for resurrection. It is interesting to note the prominence of women in the stories of resurrections. Is it because women are the more credulous as well as the more emotional? A tomb was erected on the spot where each individual part of the dismembered body of Osiris was found (thirteen in all if my memory serves). But one part (the fourteenth or the first — depending upon one's attitude towards a certain philosophy of life, or upon which end of the series one reckons from) one part, much to the distress of

the women, never was recovered; and a wooden image of that part had to be substituted when the body of the god finally was resurrected.

The belief in the resurrection of Osiris may be called obsolete; but the story was influential in shaping the Christian doctrine of the resurrection and its implications as regards the future life of men. The major differences serve to connect the two notions the more closely. It was through the faithful ministrations of his son, Horus, that the body of Osiris was resurrected; and it was only through the repetition, in the presence of Osiris, the judge and king of the dead, of a magic formula transmitted to a dead father by a faithful living son, to whom Horus had imparted the knowledge, that the dead father could be raised into eternal life. The painful efforts of countless millions of faithful sons, emulating the deed of one living son of a slain and resurrected god, were necessary to the future existence of countless millions of fathers. This must have seemed like prodigious waste of energy to the simple inventors of the Christian theology who made the one and only slain and resurrected Son of a god do the arduous work with which the followers of Osiris had burdened the countless sons of men. The Christian way is so much easier! While still alive just to say "I believe" to mumbled words in an unknown tongue on the lips of a priest — and,

CLUB PAPERS

in due course, the body is resurrected into eternal life. The "Son of man" replaces the sons of men!

That romantic cycle, the life, death and resurrection of the Corn god, does not contribute much of hope to him who would have the identical physical body resurrected. The old body dies, rots in the earth, and a new body springs up — in fact, many bodies spring up from the seed of the old. What that would signify in populating Paradise I leave to minds endowed with a mathematical imagination. Today we regard the stories of the life, death, burial and resurrection of these ancient gods as symbolic and as in the realm of poetical and legendary romance. It remained for the Christian Church, within historic times, to produce a god whose bodily resurrection was made actual, that is, was testified to as in the realm of historical fact; and the doctrine established that because the body of one member of the Triune god was resurrected, the man who expresses a belief in that triple god through certain prescribed orthodox practices and along established orthodox lines, and no others, that man shall be received into glory in his natural body — resurrected or translated as the case may be. It is all in the Apostles' Creed which stared down from the church walls into my infant eyes and later into the eyes of a youth who saw in it only a fairy tale for half grown-ups. To the youth there lay more of human

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

interest and adventure in the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. The story of the "nativity" amid lowly surroundings, against a deeply emotional background, was genuinely human and appealing. Being myself a child in a beautiful home I knew that the home, to be really a home, needed children; but having no experience of the world I did not know how frantically (and as I now believe, with what little reason) the world craved gods. On a wave of religious enthusiasm which inundated our community when I was under ten years of age, I was floated into probationary membership in the Methodist Episcopal church, but something within me warned me to slow up and to accept no creed irrevocably. Some time thereafter I learned of numerous major gods who had been born in a stable or cave or underground, which mean one and the same thing; and who having tried to save mankind had, "from the foundation of the world," been slain for their pains. Because these gods had died that men might live I have read their stories with reverence. Perhaps with deeper reverence and fuller understanding have I read the story of Jesus of Nazareth for I could visualize him very clearly, it seemed to me, against the background which was painted for me in childhood. I have studied the genealogy of his male progenitor — not in this connection the Father with the capital "F" but Joseph,

CLUB PAPERS

who is entirely lower case agate in the eyes of the church, and in its light stands a vivid picture of the idealism, of the poetical and human side of the Nazarene. The magical deeds and words which were incorporated into the story of his life and death, by people interested in proving him a god, impress me not.

Fundamental facts in nature and human nature persist and are permanent. It is only the forms of belief grown up around them which change or are discarded. Thus, belief in the personality of Ceres has died, but the fact that nature is bountiful, and that mankind depends for its continued subsistence on that bounty, still remains. The continuing existence of life depends on the continuing processes of production and reproduction, through participation in which sentient life finds joy. But the belief that a worshipful recognition of the god Apollo or the goddess Aphrodite is necessary to the consummation of that joy in man, any more than in the dog, has long since vanished. Our present day orgies and intimacies are not participated in in the name of any god other than our own personal selves. In this phase at least, that of possible indulgence in joy, man is sufficient unto himself and no longer dependent upon the gods. This present day attitude may presage a new era in which man shall be free. The free man in his strength relies on himself. The

slave and the weakling look for salvation from without. Weakness and fear are the parents of the gods.

III

There are beliefs which might be divorced from religion in the narrow sense of appertaining to man's physical and spiritual dependence upon the gods, or upon god, although some minds may, indeed will, be inclined, as in everything else, to read religion into them. These beliefs are changing and taking on new aspects as the universe opens its heart to the loving inspection of the sincere scientist. One of these is the belief that the universe, being an orderly affair, must therefore of necessity be the product of a single orderly mind. This belief is in one aspect a "hang-over" from the story of creation in Genesis; in another aspect it is comparatively new and is acceptable to men who, having rejected the idea of a personal god, yet have not allowed their minds to travel the course to its logical end. The mystic ingredient is potent in their natures and a mechanistic or materialistic conception of the universe is abhorrent to them. Of course any belief, at any time, might easily be held by one to whose mind the extent and character of the Universe was as limited as that in the Bible story, and who could ascribe to the Creator absolutely fantastic attributes such, for instance, as omnipotence transcending the

CLUB PAPERS

limitations of time and space — elements co-existent with energy. But these men are not such.

Said the kindergarten boy to his amazed, and possibly amused, parent who had been trying to instill into the mind of the child some idea of the greatness of god and evidently had overstressed one point: "Papa, I bet there's one thing god couldn't do. He couldn't make a four year old colt in one minute." This was sincerely uttered with no attempt at "smarty-ness" for the clear seeing mind of the child was not to be lost in the metaphysical dust kicked up by and befuddling to his elders.

Have those who believe in the orderly creative mind even slight conception of the bearing of time and space upon the problem, time and space in terms of Eternity and Infinity? Have they projected their minds back into primeval chaos billions upon billions of years ere the suns had begun an orderly swing in their orbits? They might have found that everything then was movement, helter-skelter movement perhaps within that point of energy now known as the electron. It is easy for me to believe that the spirit of life was active, yes! but where dwelt the detached mind which should bring order out of chaos? Not in chaos, surely! Order began when two points of energy fell into step and, finding themselves congenial, that is that their fundamental vibrations coincided, moved side by side with the same rhythm;

or rhythmically opposed themselves to each other. Were these points of energy conscious of the rhythms in which they moved, were they mutually conscious? We may never know. But we do know that in all that infinite chaos two particles did unite and attracted, or were attracted to, another, to others, to billions of like-minded, that is, similarly constituted; and matter, which is order, appeared. There were an infinity of other particles vibrating in an infinity of rhythms, undergoing similar processes and — one day — “violets were born!” Rhythms had tried to harmonize — offspring came, but because of some lack of compatibility or of co-ordination in the parental rhythms were still-born, or worse, were abortions, if any living thing can be abortive in the eyes of the spirit of life. Only sterility would seem to be anathema to that spirit.

But this is a moral as well as a rhythmic universe, as spiritual as it is material. Whence came morals and spirituality? Morals may well have entered into the scheme when rhythms flowed together and kept together and begat sun, satellites and stellar systems. After all these eternal ages of a striving of like to find like, to beget like, to develop like to its supreme stature, is it not quite conceivable, quite within the bounds of reason, that there should be concord within the species of at least the sentient product of the spirit life; a definitely and possibly

CLUB PAPERS

consciously held and enacted code of morals; and is it not quite conceivable, quite within the bounds of reason, that when man came with power of articulate speech and a hand which could grasp a tool and make an implement — is it not quite conceivable, I ask, quite within the bounds of reason, that man, rising out of animal consciousness into the realm of self-consciousness should, within the processes of nature, be able to create distinctions between right and wrong, to argue about morals, establish premises and to draw conclusions and consciously to enact laws for the rest of mankind to break? — and this without the intervention of some extraneous mystical being whom the generality call god, the inferiority complexed call king, the trustingly expectant call father, and around whom the credulous build wondrous stories of power and might and wisdom; of jealousy, love and hatred, and all the other attributes of the gods of all the ages and races! Man has passed in a measure the self-conscious period and is entering into that of social consciousness; when, at some distant day, he enters into the domain of cosmic consciousness and becomes a citizen of the cosmic universe as well as of the world, he will not need for individual safety or self-satisfaction to pin his beliefs on the gods; on the god of the sowing and the reaping; of the killing and resurrecting; for he will vibrate in the harmonies of the universal rhythms and

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

his spirit will be free; and being life and seeing life he shall know the spirit of life as it is.

When man reaches that beatific stage his mind may entertain the possibility of a spirit inherent in the electron, the ion, the atom, the molecule — hence in matter; a power of active choice which, when conditions are propitious, as they plainly appear to have been in the case of man (and in certain other of the animals), shall express itself in terms of conscious spirituality.

IV

A wise man does not dogmatize too narrowly concerning belief. But one is safe in saying that, in general, a capacity for believing is the concomitant of a type of mind which is very widespread over the habitable portions of the globe. It is a type of mind which easily forms attachments but which, seemingly, is incapable of detachment. Years alone do not bring the philosophic mind. An innate love of truth will start what the years will strengthen in minds naturally free from obsessions. An obsession of any sort is a horrible thing to contemplate; whether it be the religious obsession that the holder is on the one divinely appointed track to salvation, or the mechanical obsession, quite as divine in its essence, that the holder has mastered the mechanics of perpetual motion; each proclaims a closed mind and

CLUB PAPERS

forestalls the possibility of sane argumentation; each precludes the possibility of a sane detachment from the vantage point of which things may be viewed in their right relationships. Detachment is not to be confused with superiority or aloofness, but may be regarded as a rock upon which the sane mind can stand calm and serene and, with broad sympathy and in humility and sincerity, watch the swirling tides of eternity sweep by. From this lofty eminence the philosophic mind views in its completeness the eternal scene; "Sees life steadily and sees it whole" and in quiet humor evaluates the local disturbance which at the critical historical moment creates a particular wave which forms, swells, spends itself and, breaking into misty spray, loses itself, not in tranquil depths, but on the restless wandering surface of the infinite main. It requires a sense of humor in one, who, even from this serene height, contemplates the cosmic scene in its entirety, that he be not overcome with nausea, with a sort of cosmic seasickness, as he views the antics and reads the minds of the petty creatures whose cockle-shells move without guidance with the current upon which, through time and circumstance, they find themselves cast.

As for these mariners (I speak of them as mariners for that is how they sing of themselves in their hymn-tunes) low visibility prevents them generally from seeing the waves and movement about them.

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

Each, therefore, deems his own particular wave to be the one great beneficent sea which is bearing him mercifully and surely to some snug harbor, to some blest haven, where he shall dwell eternally in the divine presence of him who so benignantly stirred up, or even created, the sea in the individual traveler's own special behalf. The philosopher on the heights sees what is not apparent to these cockle-shell mariners, who, wrapped in the mantle of dogmatic cocksureness, scout beneficence in the movement of any tide except the one which is bearing them whither they think they wish, or are destined, to go. Some of these voyagers do sense the fact that, bordering their own particular sea, are surfaces upon which others, not of their kind, of course, have been or are afloat. But these, our wise ones think, are the still surfaces of stagnant pools or the turbulently swirling, land-locked eddies upon which one rests in stupid content, or is buffeted about in futile attempts to make a landing. The observer on the heights sees that they all — the actively cocksure, the stagnantly content, the brutally buffeted, all, man, animal and atom — all are out on the one great flowing, swirling, eddying, weaving and surging cosmic sea of life, of action, passion and emotion, with each and all destined to find the same fate; and each just as apt as any or all the others to find in that fate the blissful fruition of all desire.

CLUB PAPERS

It really does predicate a sense of humor on the part of the cosmic observer, and a charitable spirit, too, if he can view with equanimity the attitude of the human freight in one of these cockle-shells towards that in another up-borne even by the same wave and drifting willy-nilly to the same destination. Because a cockle-shell differs from the conventional in size, shape or color its passenger, therefore, must be a heretic and destined to be swamped and eternally lost through the goodness of god! This attitude extends also towards those other voyagers on life's ocean who have been caught in a totally different eddy. God in his goodness will destroy them!

In not too humorous a mood, — for pathos, even tragedy, as well as humor, lingers near, — let us view a little more intimately the status of the human freight stowed in the holds of these cockle-shells which move without guidance from within and whose external guiding force is the momentary turn of the current upon which they find themselves cast or upon which they wilfully have cast themselves. From the philosophic vantage point and in wide perspective one may see the finger of the zeitgeist, of each particular zeitgeist, touching the waters and producing the currents which determine the course of the cockle-shell. Within that cockle-shell is a

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

human soul with a will which the truth would set free. Not far away, at any moment, is the mountain of serene detachment rising above the waters; the mount from which the whole scene may be viewed and where truth may be known. There are many dwellers on this mountain, choice spirits of the ages; but there is room for many more. Some happy ones were born on the shore at the base and achieved the summit merely by climbing. Others (are they not even happier?) sensing reality near, threw themselves into the sea, penetrated the mists and through struggle gained the shore and the heights. Mists veil thinly the base of the mountain, hiding it from the sight of the self-satisfied, the indifferent and the fearful; but even through the mists its presence is made known to the soul which craves reality. The humorous thing, the pathetic thing, to him whose vision pierces the veil, is not only that human souls should be content to ride the restless waves in these cockle-shells, but that one should wittingly leave one cockle-shell to cast his lot in another. The humorous thing, the pathetic thing, is that these human souls are not mariners directing their own course, not even voyagers out for discovery, but just freight to be dumped where time, tide and circumstance may dictate. To jump from the mountain of serenity into a cockle-shell, were such a thing conceivable,

CLUB PAPERS

would be tragedy; to jump from one cockle-shell into another is just low comedy. It is quite comprehensible that one should tire of bobbing about and fitfully floating and — sensing that he was getting nowhere, and not enjoying the company anyway — should seek a craft with a supposedly different destination and a more congenial society. But why, except that one is weary, mind and body, and plumb tired of wrestling with the spirit, should one jump from the cockle-shell of Occidentalism into Hinduism, for example. Except to free himself from the blessing of being able to think for himself and talk directly, if so inclined, with a personal god of his own contriving, why should one jump into drab Protestantism or into the gaudily draped cockle-shell of Roman Catholicism and place himself under the domination of a priesthood behind which he is permitted now and then to peep at a remote god which the church has set up to scare the weakling into being good, if for no more sordid motives. Except to experience the mild intoxication of losing himself in a maze of vague conceits and distorted meanings and to make himself believe that he can at all times gratify an appetite for all things material and immaterial without shattering constitution or disquieting conscience; and except to fool himself into the idea that he is well or living, when the world knows that he is sick or dead, why should

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

one jump from anywhere into the cockle-shell of Christian Science!

As one watches this futile jumping from cockle-shell to cockle-shell, this shifting of beliefs, one becomes keenly aware that a belief discarded is not always discarded in favor of unbelief; but that for some supposed or real compensation, such as lucrative employment, social prestige, the elimination of gas from the stomach, or from some sincere reaction against environmental conditions, beliefs once more or less sincerely cherished are often left and other beliefs adopted.

The restless human soul craves certainty in a world in which all at times seems uncertain and seeks that certainty in belief or again in negation. But the dwellers on the mount of detachment watch in serenity a world in which, be the moods of certainty or uncertainty, the spirit of life moves, resistlessly and inexorably, whether beliefs exist or not. As I am an emanation from that spirit I may with propriety set forth my reaction to its movement. I believe that the spirit of life moves as mysteriously as inexorably. That it moves consciously with and within and as a concomitant of the physical structure of the universe, as, let us say, my spirit moves with and within my body, has been suggested by would-be scientists whose natures impel toward mysticism. I do not imagine that such is the case, but I do not

CLUB PAPERS

know — I have as yet no means of knowing. None of the gods or messiahs of legend or history seems to have known more about that than you or I do — at least none of them has told us. (Some such possibility may have been sensed by him who wrote of the “god in whom we live and move and have our being.”) It may be that the spirit of life is reaching outward and upward to achieve that state which we call perfection. Sometimes it would seem so and it would be a pleasant theory to believe; but that it cares for me individually or for my person and would or could go out of its way to save me, any more than would or could an onrushing locomotive were I to step, inadvertently or otherwise, in the path of its progress, I do not believe; that it would do it for anybody else I do not believe. I should be a fool or worse, — I should qualify with the criminally insane, — could I believe that the spirit of life — right here let us be conventional and say god — could I believe that god, because of my belief, would deliberately and consciously save me in a petty emergency and just as consciously and deliberately condemn to death with slow lingering disease my best friend or worst enemy — no matter what I believed. And yet many religions, the Christian religion among them, are based on that hypothesis; the hypothesis that a certain formulated belief will bring to one individual safety and salvation through the

ON BELIEVING AND LEAVING

conscious act of god, while, by the conscious act of the same god, countless other and purer souls are eternally damned. I don't believe it — the human race doesn't believe it — only a few woefully selfish individuals, beyond the reach of spiritual grace, believe it; though multitudes through silence, indifference or timidity would seem to subscribe to the doctrine. There are some things in religion, in science and in art which a sane man may well believe; there are other things which a man may as sanely leave. Life has blessed each of us with some quantity of choice. Some do, and the others should, have within themselves the will and power to exercise that choice and to exercise it without fear — asking no favors of the gods.

ARTIST AND MODEL



IR

INTO THIS CHAMBER OF THE IMAGINATION HE POURS CERTAIN INGREDIENTS

ARTIST AND MODEL

PHILOSOPHERS and thinkers and non-thinkers have for ages surrounded art with a nebulous haze — almost impenetrable to a normal intellect. Yet art gets so involved with life that while life of a sort may be lived without art, art cannot exist without life. One in the stream of life “ must take the current ” whether “ it serves ” or no. That current with its eddying and swirling produces strange, fantastic, confusing and, at times, almost unbearable patterns. Art appears and lifts the buffeted spirit out of the slough of life and endows it with godlike attributes. The body may continue to struggle and to suffer, the mind to falter; but, in spite of this, the will may take control. Then, amid all the confused and warring elements, the spirit will assert its divine prerogative of choice and, through contrast, harmony and co-ordination of selected elements, produce a pattern which reflects itself, and establishes itself, in the realm of the imagination superior to the material and the transitory. In this welter of circumstance the artist is born; the artist who does more than “ hold the mirror up to nature ”; who dissects

CLUB PAPERS

nature and from the parts builds up a new nature, a new synthesis in which his freed spirit may disport itself.

Were it not that the artist will not remain under cover to enjoy himself to himself but needs must expose his product to others, the subject might be dropped right here. But there is the innocent bystander who has eyes, ears, feelings and occasionally intelligence, to be considered. He unwittingly or unwillingly may become involved — when willingly involved he ceases to be innocent and forfeits our sympathy. For the protection of this innocent party, that forewarned he may be forearmed, I attempt to disclose, in part at least, the nature of the artist. The artist need not necessarily be possessed of intellect. Intelligence? yes. Intellect? not necessarily! He uses certain faculties instinctively rather than intellectually. Now and again he is found with a trained and retentive memory which may supplement and, not infrequently, supplant the creative faculty. The prime factor of his spiritual equipment is imagination, that emotional mixing chamber in which he conjures up, sometimes vividly, more often dimly and hazily, the pattern or design which later he is to transfer to canvas or to writing pad. Into this chamber of the imagination the artist pours certain ingredients of human experience and reaction, selecting as may be proper those ingredients which

will induce a mood, arouse a passion or stimulate a desire; the mixture depending in each and every case on the effect he wishes to produce and the validity of his purpose. There must be always a purpose; indefinite or trivial sometimes it may seem, but without which the product falls short of art. Whatever comes into the mixing chamber, located in the abdomen, as some opine, or in the cranium as others will have it — which has not as yet been definitely established, though the emotional character of the product would seem to favor the abdominal theory — whatever enters this chamber of the imagination quite certainly travels along the sense channels of the physical body; which may well account for the morality or immorality, the sickly sentiment or the firm reason around which art, in itself unmoral, allows itself to play.

It must be understood that subject matter has intrinsically nothing to do with art. An obscene story or a lewd picture may or may not be a work of art; that depends solely on the selection or rejection of forms within the mixing chamber. An artist can as readily present purity in the forms of art as he can present impurity. Purity and decency can not wring a laugh out of the prurient minded. However, art does not exist to produce a laugh or cater to prurency; that potentiality lies in the subject matter alone. Only the moron can respond sympathetically

CLUB PAPERS

to the appeal of producers and managers to permit the publication of obscene books, the presentation in public of lewd and indecent pictures, on easel or screen, because forsooth they are deemed to be cast in the mold of art and the dear public should not be deprived of the beneficent ministrations of art! In these cases there is no salutary purpose in the art that can compensate for the degrading effect of filth on animal minds, for the appeal is to the animal in the body; the body — that marvelous instrument through which alone can mind, spirit or will function. Indecency will not dwell in a body which its owner considers a temple of the god; which god is the owner himself made godlike through the exercise of his own will and capacity for happy selection.

Let us come back to the artist who was nearly lost in the discussion of his product. There has existed a mistaken notion that the artist must be what he paints, what he acts, what he writes; or, at least that all the potentialities residing in all he simulates or presents must reside in him. As to the first there is no discussion; as to the second, the same potentialities reside in the artist as reside in any normal man. In the process of creation the artist must free himself of personal emotionalisms except as he may stand outside himself and consciously study, in himself as in an outsider, reactions to his forms. "This is not real, it is merely simulation," he says to himself.

“But am I making it seem real to him, the outsider?” The Romeo of the stage makes ardent love to his Juliet. Does he have to feel the passion in order to portray it? No, indeed. His real self for the time is pent up and the audience sees only a counterfeited passion. He who really loves is dumb before his enamorata. The commercial artist does not necessarily have to be an imbecile in order to depict the half-witted smile or grin which he smears upon the countenances of the males who pour out the libations in the various beer and liquor advertisements and on the faces of the damsels who are about to receive the dose; though I must admit that it would not be difficult to convince one’s self that the artist who produces the lewd cigarette advertisements appearing in supposedly first class magazines and on hoardings is a rake or libertine at heart.

Knowing the public, as I think I do, and being not without a certain cynicism in my attitude toward it, I can understand this spoofing on the part of the artist, for generally such it must be; but are not brewer and tobacco fabricator taking chances in permitting it? Or are they just part of the ingenuous public!

Again, knowing the artist, as I think I do, and his public, I have strong suspicion concerning much of the modernism in painting and architecture. I cannot say that I entertain strong convictions concerning

CLUB PAPERS

this form of art, for the word conviction is too momentous in its connotations to permit of use in connection with so trivial a manifestation. The only emotional content in much of the stuff is that which makes the judicious grieve.

The artist, like the philosopher, takes his unimpassioned spirit to the serene heights of the mount of contemplation and from that point of vantage views the so-called passing scene. To him now, however, the scene is not passing for the expression of life is permanent as he views it from its source, an infinity of ages ago, to its latest ebullition. Within the picture are placid pools of thought set in plains of philosophical calm and self-restraint; rivers of action swirling among hills and vales of emotionalism and hysteria; and rugged and precipitous mountains where rage titanic battles of negation and belief. In one of the regions of emotional activity bordering on hysteria, he sees life in our own land taking its erratic course unconscious, seemingly, of the past; indifferent, in most part, to the future. He sees its dictators or directors, for it has no leaders, and unemotionally, calmly and without rancor takes up pen or brush.

Let me accompany my friend, the artist, up onto the mount of contemplation and look over his shoulder as he works. He sketches one thing after an-

other, as appears to meet his fancy; and I shall tell you what he is doing though I cannot reproduce it as calmly, dispassionately and with as sure a touch as he sets it down — nor shall I exert myself to do so. I may expose some of his and some of my own bent of opinion in the process of interpretation and explanation; but I shall leave it to my hearer to differentiate between the two if he cares. It seems strange, does it not, that, from all the infinity of what human experience past and present can offer us, we upon the Rock of Serenity should focus our gaze on feeble Washington, in the United States of America, in the year of our Lord — whatever that may have meant forty centuries ago — nineteen hundred and thirty-three. But so it is!

My friend, the artist, showed me the sketch pad on which he had been outlining in detail his impressions of a coded social system, and then he suddenly shifted his position. “This is interesting,” said he stripping his pad, exposing a fresh sheet and casting his glance over toward the capitol dome beneath which and all about milled a crowd of human beings, looking and acting for all the world like an army of pismires groggy from external fumes or internal fury. The mass was given a certain unity by the percolating presence of numerous long black coats and

CLUB PAPERS

broad-brimmed slouch hats which serve to distinguish, from the rest of the brood, the Southern politician. Plenty of Northern politicians were in evidence, too, but so individualistic in dress and bearing as not to affect definitely the general tone of the picture. Among the Northerners, democrats and republicans were to be distinguished; the republicans by a stiff, holy, self-righteous stand-offishness which has always marked their attitude toward the opposition. Senators and Congressmen of both parties mingled with the crowd and cast an unhealthy hue over the scene, for they are in the way of being pimples on the body politic, which come to a head sometimes in the halls of legislation but mostly in the pages of the Congressional Record. "Well! I should say this is interesting!" I echoed, and added, "but not as interesting as perhaps nauseating;" for from our point of vantage we could, as I have said, view life as a whole and clearly see the cause which was having its effect in the scene which was being enacted 'way down below us in the balmy, blossom-scented air of the Washington springtime. A sheet which had covered a shape on a pedestal had just been withdrawn and there stood the counterfeit presentment of one Robert E. Lee, traitor and rebel to some, the highest type of American manhood to others — others probably little versed in what constitutes Americanism or manhood. And the modern

day politician had placed the effigy up against the statue of Washington, "The Father of his Country;" an effrontery which only could have been exceeded by placing it next to the statue of the martyred Lincoln — Lincoln who had saved the country, which Washington had fathered, from destruction at the hands of the Rebel, Lee. Standing in proximity to the Washington that statue of Lee is a sad joke; in proximity to the Lincoln it would be an insufferable insult to the nation.

Shall we come down to earth for a close-up of this man placed in recent years upon this exalted pedestal by historian and politician alike? No, it were better to rest serene on our mount of contemplation where the air is not surcharged with the emotionalism which blurs images and distorts the real; where the whole human scene appears just as ridiculous and petty and pathetic as it really is. No, we can distinguish details from up here as well as we could down below in the sweltering mass and we can better relate one detail to another.

"Look!" said my friend, and we saw Lee on March 30, 1861, in the act of renewing his oath of allegiance upon accepting his commission of Colonel of Cavalry in the United States Army. "He well knows what his oath implies and whither it may lead him. Seven states had already seceded and were in arms. He soon would be called upon to

CLUB PAPERS

fight against secession which he deplored and against the institution of slavery which he abhorred; at least deplored and abhorred as much as a weak and flaccid mind such as his could be made to entertain a real passion.”

“How do you know,” said I, “that Lee was antagonistic to slavery or to secession? His acts didn’t seem to indicate it.” “Well, this from a letter of his of January 23, 1861, to his son and this from one of December 27, 1856, to Mrs. Lee;” and he put his fingertip upon these two passages — first: “Secession is nothing but Revolution. The framers of our constitution never exhausted so much labor, wisdom and forbearance in its formation, and surrounded it by so many guards and securities, if it was intended to be broken by every member of the Confederacy at will. It is intended for ‘perpetual union’ so expressed in the preamble and the establishment of a Government, not a compact, which can only be dissolved by revolution or the consent of all the people in convention assembled,” and — second: “In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil in any country.”

“Those,” continued my friend, “were his expressed sentiments. But Lee never sewed himself up tight. He always left a loop-hole through which his shifty nature could escape. As for instance, he

ends his letter of January 23 with this statement: 'If the Union is dissolved and the Government dispersed, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people and save in defense will draw my sword no more.' Lee liked the flabby sentiment embodied in that last phrase and nearly wore it threadbare. 'Except under such conditions or in such circumstances I will draw my sword no more,' he wrote again and again.

"Let us follow his course a bit farther," said my friend, the artist, "and then draw our own conclusions as to the nobility and integrity of Lee's essential nature. On March 15, 1861, that is, fifteen days before he, tongue in cheek, had renewed his oath of allegiance to the United States, Lee was appointed to a commission in the Rebel army, to the highest military command in the gift of the Confederacy. On April 20, less than three weeks after renewing his oath of allegiance, Lee sent in his resignation from the United States Army in order to accept the Confederate appointment. On April 23, with some ceremony, Lee accepted the supreme command of the forces of Virginia, just one month to a day before the Virginia Convention's proposal to secede could legally have been submitted to the people of the State for ratification or otherwise. Therefore, the 'noble Lee' could not have followed Virginia out of the Union, could not have drawn an unstained

CLUB PAPERS

sword in defense of his native state, for his state (forced out of the Union rather than going of its own motion) was not being attacked.

“ In going over to the Confederacy Lee was putting into effect a design which had matured in his mind while still a Brigadier General of cavalry in the United States Army in San Antonio, Texas, before being recalled to Washington to be elevated in command. Therefore, you and I, even in the serenity of these calm heights, have a distinct right and perhaps a duty to call him traitor, while his actions proclaim him rebel.

“ The unregenerate South,” my friend continued, “ calls the War of the Rebellion ‘ the war between the states ’ but not so one who knows the background of the Rebellion. As all the acts, legislative and otherwise, of the Confederacy show the war on its side to have been solely a war to preserve the institution of slavery, to fasten irrevocably the chains of human bondage, no man who, like Lee, gave himself heart and soul (if Lee had a soul) to the cause of slavery can even by any mistaken notion of decency be called ‘ noble.’ No man who, like Lee, gave the enemy good reason to believe him sympathetic to its cause, and open to offers, while at the time maintaining status in the United States Army, can by any stretch of even a distorted imagination be called a loyal American. Wishywashy historians and politi-

cians of the North and prejudiced historians of a recalcitrant South may try, with buckets of whitewash, to make Lee noble and loyal; but his spirit will forever remain in essence disloyal and ignoble.”

My friend had laid in these lines with the extremes of calmness and dispassion, and I wondered if anything could break in on the serenity of his spirit. As for me, I confess I found myself moved. I could see why, for reasons to be advanced later, certain elements in the North and certain others in the South should want to elevate Lee to a high pedestal, but why should anyone, especially a Northern historian, or any true historian, seek, as has been and is being done, deliberately to defame and besmirch loyal Union soldiers and officers in the attempt to elevate Lee.

You have been told in this Club, in a sympathetic study of Lee, of the atrocities committed by the Union soldiers, especially on Sherman's March to the Sea; of the firing of barns and fine old mansions out of pure wantonness. Our essayist told quite gleefully how his parents had run all the stock to the swamps and had hidden it till the loyal — only he did not call it loyal — army had passed. He gave the impression that the parental mansion had been burned.

Well, if it wasn't burned it should have been, for those animals were contraband under every usage

CLUB PAPERS

of war. He knew, as you know, that the invading army was there to save the Union from destruction by those who wilfully, deliberately and in malice had fired the first shots and had taken loyal lives. The homes of the rebels might well have been burned, but they were not by Union men except as punishment in some extreme case. Go into Virginia today, and farther South, and follow the course of Sherman's March and among the things you will see, and which are advertised to be seen, are the fine old ante-bellum mansions the sight of which will be expected to awaken your uncouth Northern hearts to the charm and romance of a social order which blossomed and could flourish only in the sweet-scented soil of human slavery.

I have said that there are reasons why certain in our land wish to elevate Lee. I can touch on but a few of these and characterize but a few of the instigators. Those were not disinterested or uninterested congressmen and senators whom we saw hobnobbing with the politicians of both sections, North and South, in that huddle of pismires around the Capitol on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Lee last Spring (1933). Republican politicians, indeed, were the prime offenders. It started with Taft but showed itself most virulently in the Coolidge administration. Coolidge, you know, upon

signing a bill authorizing the minting of the so-called traitor coin to help finance the Stone Mountain project, pusillanimously permitted himself to be photographed between two Confederate flags with no evidence of the National emblem in sight; and G. O. Partisan legislators listened with approval to the harangues of a rebel senator who, in his effort to glorify the Confederacy, besmirched the Union and vilified its leaders in the Civil War — all this self-abasement in order to curry favor with, hoping to break the ranks of, the solid, the unreconstructed South!

“But,” chides a timid voice, “those are harsh words — rebel and unreconstructed! The South today is loyal; it acknowledges but one flag, the stars and stripes.” One flag! “Oh, yeah,” answers my friend, “no flag, rather!”

TIME, the news magazine, in reporting the launching of the dirigible Macon in Akron, Ohio, stated that “a delegation from Macon, Ga., waved flags.” John L. Morris, Manager, Chamber of Commerce of Macon wrote in correction — “No flags were waved. Proud of the distinction of having the world’s largest dirigible named after their home city, yes; but no flagwavers are Maconians.” This in TIME’S letters July 25, 1932 — while on June 13 of the same year one Thomas F. Little of

CLUB PAPERS

Chattanooga, Tenn., had wound up his letter to TIME with these words: "There are legions of these Yankees (Yanks, i.e., World War Soldiers) in the South today, native sons, proud of their heritage, regretting nothing which their forefathers did, convinced that they were right through and through and who would take up tomorrow where they left off if there was a sufficient cause but who fully realize that the true United States lay not to the North but to the South and with this responsibility upon them would fight all over again to preserve the Union."

Which means, if it means anything, that this "little" man, along with legions of others, would fight tomorrow to preserve that Union which lay to the South and which harbored and was based upon the institution of slavery; not based, mind you, on the doctrine of State's rights, which the Constitution of the Confederacy does not mention nor deem to exist, but solely upon the institution of slavery. This "little" man would fight tomorrow to maintain slavery if the issue could be joined! The Republican party under Coolidge degraded itself in a futile attempt to get the political goodwill of such as these. It is these and their ilk who initiated the Stone Mountain project; Stone Mountain which vitiates the pure air of heaven by forcing it to blow across the graven images of three archtraitors.

An Illinois Governor, a Republican, let his name

be placed upon the Stone Mountain directorate. In a speech before the Daughters of the Confederacy in Convention assembled at Savannah, Georgia, in 1924 that Governor had this to say: "When I visit Richmond and gaze upon the statue of Robert E. Lee, that masterpiece of art, I like to think that the knightly figure there portrayed was a countryman of mine, and that I have a small part in the immortal fame that has come to him."

You don't blame my artist friend for laughing and remarking: "as for me, the smaller the part the more gratifying;" and, he continued, "just to think! that speech is embalmed in the Congressional Record." (February 6, 1925.) That Governor, too, has allowed himself to be quoted as follows: "Standing here in front of the mountain, gazing up at the mighty wall of granite, picturing in my mind the colossal figures of Davis, Lee and Jackson, which are taking form, I felt a great thrill of pride that these men, whose portraits in stone will endure as long as the earth endures, were Americans."

Americans! forsooth! If a politician must stoop to getting votes for self or party, kissing dirty-faced babies were preferable to such prostitution as the above.

But snobs as well as politicians have played their part in the elevation of Lee to the post of the great American. The wife of a Republican Senator of

CLUB PAPERS

New Hampshire lobbied to put through the bill rehabilitating the Lee mansion, so called, at Arlington, and dedicating it to the memory of Lee, who cared so little for it that he swore that he never would return to it as it had been so defiled by the mere presence of the Union soldiers who had protected it from harm during the period of the war.

Our present Minister to Germany in his capacity of historian wrote — “Robert E. Lee, master of Arlington, heir of the Father of his Country, Mary Custis, his invalid wife, cast out of the home of her ancestors; Robert E. Lee, trying then to set free the slaves of the Mount Vernon estate.” And here my artist friend quoted a footnote in a great work called “The Reward of Patriotism” by Lucy Shelton Stewart, daughter of a Union general. Parenthetically I wish every loyal American or American of any stripe would read this book! The note reads: “These statements of Professor Dodd are of singular interest, since Lee was not the master of Arlington nor the heir of the Father of his Country, because his father-in-law entailed the property upon his grandson so that Lee never owned any of it. Nor was Mrs. Lee cast out of her home. Lee set the slaves free because his father-in-law’s will directed that they be freed. These truths are shown in the Lee biographies by his son and nephew.”

There could be no possible objection to the Gov-

ernment's acquiring Arlington as a National Museum and as a monument to a not as yet dead past; but only snobs or rebel sympathizers could wish it to be made a monument to Lee, who is presented as heir to the Father of his Country in the hope, perhaps, of giving dignity to their own self-imposed low estate. For such as these the home of a descendant of the great Washington (which you know it was not) must be preserved for the ages in its pristine purity (which is impossible for Lee's name is attached to it!). But it pleases the climbers to be linked with Washington even through the slight channel of a house which had once been owned by the great-granddaughter of the widow Custis who became Washington's wife.

But what a depth of insult in thus exalting Lee do these petty politicians and self-seekers heap upon those Virginians who were loyal to the Union, upon such men as Generals Winfield Scott and George H. Thomas, both loyal Virginians who could be and were loyal to the greater cause.

"Do not think," said my friend, "that in offering my strictures I forget that many, many, indeed a respectable minority of those living South of Mason and Dixon's line, including Mrs. Robert E. Lee, herself, favored the preservation of the Union and were antagonistic to the institution of slavery, for that was the fact; while many were made to suffer

CLUB PAPERS

for their loyalty throughout the period of the ' slave-holders' Rebellion ' and even later — perhaps until this day."

I watched my friend, the artist, as he sketched in another detail or two with firm and well directed stroke. Then he said with what sounded like a sigh: " It's funny — " I interrupted: " Funny is a funny word in this connection! "

" Yes," he returned, " I am using the word merely as a synonym for amusing, amazing, disgusting, incredible, depending upon the user's state of mind. Yes, it's funny where this mawkish, old womanish sentimentality, which says ' let bygones be bygones ' regardless of right and honor and decency and which sends flowers to the perpetrators of fiendish murders, will crop out. Now you would hardly expect it to appear in a callous, hard-headed bunch like the American Bar Association, an arm of the judicial branch of our Government, whose function supposedly is to further the cause of right and justice, but whose chief interest seems centered in technicalities." " Come now," I interposed, " isn't that a bit tough on the bar! " " By their works ye shall know them," he said, " and judge them." Then he continued, " The Atlanta Journal of March 11, 1924, begins an editorial thusly: ' Time is the great vindicator of right because it is the great clarifier. Forty years ago one hardly could have imagined the Citizenship

Committee of the American Bar Association preparing and publishing with the approval of that broadly representative body, a tribute to Robert E. Lee.'

"The tribute referred to, published in the interest of good citizenship," my friend went on to explain, "was entitled 'Washington, Lee and Lincoln, the great triumvirate among the makers of America.' You see Lee is given precedence over Lincoln in this American Bar Association document which continues: 'He (Lee) too, was a great American patriot. And as years go by and only the more prominent figures among the makers of America stand out in retrospect, we shall find that not one of them — no, not one — offers to this and future generations a more priceless example of duty to country as he saw it than is found in the high-souled, finely poised character, the model Christian gentleman, the soul of gentility and honor, Robert E. Lee.'"

"My gawd!" Each looked to see if the other had uttered the ejaculation. Neither had. It was the cry of the great soul of patriotism and decency and honor reverberating in the circumambient air.

"As he saw it!" A vicious term used by sickly sentimentalists and barristers in extenuation of any crime they may wish to condone. Christian gentleman! We realized at once why the term had become so obnoxious even in modern Germany! The Committee of the American Bar Association, headed

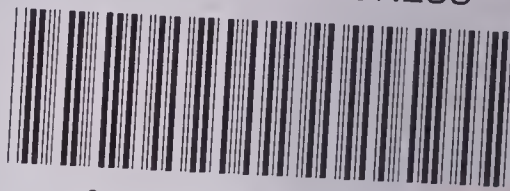
CLUB PAPERS

by Elihu Root of New York, which had put forth this document, was composed of Root, three "yes men," one each from Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Kansas, and a chairman, one R. E. L. Saner of Texas. When you consider the State and what the initials, R. E. L., of its representative might and probably did signify, you can see how the superannuated Root and the little "yes men" from the provinces had had it put over on them!

There my friend, the artist, stripped his pad and exposed a clean sheet which, however, he left untouched. Then, suddenly packing his kit, he said: "Let's get away from the City of Washington with its self-seeking, its intrigues, its personal and political bickerings, its little Mussolinis and Hitlers and Stalins who never will or can grow up to life size for they will wilt and shrivel up in the vital airs which blow across a wide country which the Fates have dedicated to the cause of political and personal liberty.

"There you are," he said, "just one thing after another! That makes life — and makes it interesting."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 591 294 1

