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**Makers of Canadian Literature**

# STEPHEN LEACOCK

*LIBRARY EDITION*

**Makers of**

**Canadian Literature**

**Lorne Albert Pierce**  
**Editor**

**Victor Morin**  
**Associate Editor**  
**French Section**

**Dedicated** to the writers of Canada—past and present—the real Master-builders and Interpreters of our great Dominion—in the hope that our People, equal heirs in the rich inheritance, may learn to know them intimately; and knowing them love them; and loving-follow.

**STEPHEN LEACOCK**

*by*

**PETER McARTHUR**

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Stephen Leacock—signed inscription

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# BIOGRAPHICAL

## STEPHEN LEACOCK



While an author is still living he has rights that a biographer is bound to respect. If he states that he was born on a certain day, in a certain year, at a certain place, it is the biographer's duty to accept these statements without question. He may suspect that the author has taken the facts on hearsay evidence, but he must leave it to some conscientious biographer of the future to consult the parish register and verify the details.

Moreover, if the author occasionally indulges in autobiography and sets forth explicitly what he regards as the effects of the various events of his life on his career, the biographer will be wise to accept these confidences in a thankful spirit.

Being convinced of the soundness of these views, the work of the present biographer of Stephen Leacock is greatly simplified. By letting Mr. Leacock, as far as possible, tell the story of his own life, his labors will be reduced to a minimum and the enjoyment of the reader greatly increased. Mr. Leacock can tell the story of his life better than anyone else—and this is how he does it.

"I was born at Swanmoor, Hants, England, on December 30, 1869. I am not aware that there was any conjunction of the planets at the time, but should think it extremely likely. My parents migrated to Canada in 1876, and my father took up a farm near Lake Simcoe, in Ontario. This was during the hard times of Canadian farming, and my father was just able by great diligence to pay the hired man, and, in years of great plenty, to raise enough grain to have seed for the next year's crop without buying any. By this process my brothers and I were inevitably driven off the land, and have become professors, business men, and engineers, instead of being able to grow up as farm laborers. Yet I saw enough of farming to speak exuberantly in political addresses of the joy of early rising and the deep sleep, both of body and intellect, that is induced by honest manual toil.

"I was educated at Upper Canada College, Toronto, of which I was head boy in 1887. From there I went to the University of Toronto, where I graduated in 1891. At the University I spent my entire time in the acquisition of languages, living, dead, and half-dead, and knew nothing of the outside world. In this diligent pursuit of words I spent about sixteen hours of each day. Very soon after graduation I had forgotten the languages and found myself intellectually bankrupt. In other words I was what is called a distinguished graduate, and, as such, I took to school teaching as the only trade I could find that needed neither experience nor intellect. I spent my time from 1891 to 1899 on the staff of Upper Canada College, an experience which has left me with a profound sympathy for the many gifted and brilliant men who are compelled to spend their lives in the most dreary, the most thankless, and the worst-paid profession in the world. I have noted that of my pupils those who seemed the laziest and least enamored of books are now rising at the bar, in business, and in public life; the really promising boys, who took all the prizes, are now able with difficulty to earn the wages of a clerk in a summer hotel or a deck-hand on a canal boat.

"In 1899 I gave up school teaching in disgust, borrowed enough money to live upon for a few months, and went to the University of Chicago to study economics and political science. I was soon appointed to a fellowship in political economy, and by means of this, and some temporary employment by McGill University, I survived until I took the degree of doctor of philosophy in 1903. The meaning of this degree is that the recipient of instruction is examined for the last time in his life and is pronounced completely full. After this no new ideas can be imparted to him.

"From this time I have belonged to the staff of McGill University, first as a lecturer in political science, and later as the head of the Department of Economics and Political Science. As this position is one of the prizes of my profession, I am able to regard myself as singularly fortunate. The emolument is so high as to place me distinctly above the policemen, postmen, street-car conductors, and other salaried officials of the neighborhood, while I am able to mix with the poorer of the business men of the city on terms of something like equality. In point of leisure, I enjoy more in the four corners of a single year than a business man knows in his whole life. I thus have what the business man can never enjoy, an ability to think, and, what is still better, to stop thinking altogether for months at a time.

"I have written a number of things in connection with my college life—a book on Political Science, and many essays, magazine articles, and so on. I belong to the Political Science Association of America, to the Royal Colonial Institute, and to the Church of England. These things surely are proofs of respectability. I have had some small connection with politics and public life. A few years ago I went all around the British Empire delivering addresses on Imperial

Organization. When I state that these lectures were followed almost immediately by the Union of South Africa, the Banana Riots in Trinidad, and the Turko-Italian war, I think you can form some idea of their importance. In Canada I belong to the Conservative party, but as yet I have failed entirely in Canadian politics, never having received a contract to build a bridge, or make a wharf, nor to construct even the smallest section of the Transcontinental Railway. This, however, is a form of national ingratitude to which one becomes accustomed in this Dominion.

"Apart from my college work, I have written two books, one called 'Literary Lapses' and the other 'Nonsense Novels.' Each of these is published by John Lane (London and New York), and either of them can be obtained, absurd as it sounds, for the mere sum of three shillings and sixpence. Any reader of this paper, for example, ridiculous though it appears, could walk into a bookstore and buy both of these books for seven shillings. Yet these works are of so humorous a character that for many years it was found impossible to print them. The compositors fell back from their task suffocated with laughter and gasping for air. Nothing but the invention of the linotype machine—or rather of the kind of men who operate it—made it possible to print these books. Even now people have to be very careful in circulating them, and the books should never be put into the hands of people not in robust health.

"Many of my friends are under the impression that I write these humorous nothings in idle moments when the wearied brain is unable to perform the serious labors of the economist. My own experience is exactly the other way. The writing of solid, instructive stuff, fortified by facts and figures, is easy enough. There is no trouble in writing a scientific treatise on the folk-lore of Central China, or a statistical enquiry into the declining population of Prince Edward Island. But to write something out of one's own mind, worth reading for its own sake, is an arduous contrivance, only to be achieved in fortunate moments, few and far between. Personally I would rather have written 'Alice in Wonderland' than the whole 'Encyclopædia Britannica.'"

Of the two books mentioned above he gives elsewhere an account that may be added appropriately to this autobiographical sketch. The attention of the reader is called to the fact that the sketches included in "Literary Lapses" were written between 1891 and 1897, when the author was in his early twenties. They were not published in book form until fifteen years later, when they made an immediate success. Although they did not attract the attention of book publishers when they first appeared in *Saturday Night*, *Life*, *Truth*, *Puck*, *The Detroit Free Press*, and similar publications, they established Mr. Leacock's reputation as a humorous writer with all who read these papers at that time. They won for him many enthusiastic admirers who were not surprised at the favor with which his writings were received when gathered in book form. For years this literary gold-mine lay hidden in the files of old papers, while the author occupied himself with the uncongenial task of school teaching and with serious forms of writing and study. Of his first book he writes:

"The sketches in 'Literary Lapses' were very largely written in my younger days, just after I left college. The one called 'A, B, and C' was the first of them. The editor of a Toronto paper gave me two dollars for it. This opened up for me a new world: it proved to me that an industrious man of my genius, if he worked hard and kept clear of stimulants and bad company, could earn as much as eight dollars a month with his pen. In fact, this has since proved true.

"But for many years I stopped this sort of thing and was busy with books on history and politics, and with college work. Later on I gathered these sketches together and sent them to the publishers of my 'Elements of Political Economy.' They thought I had gone mad.

"I therefore printed the sketches on my own account and sold them through a news company. We sold 3,000 copies in two months. In this modest form the book fell into the hands of my good friend—as he has since become—Mr. John Lane. He read the sketches on a steamer while returning from Montreal to London, and on his arrival in England he cabled me an offer to publish the book in regular form. I cabled back, 'Accept your offer with many thanks.' Some years after Mr. Lane, at a dinner in London, told this incident and said that it proved to him that I must be the kind of man who would spend seventy-five cents in saying 'many thanks.'"

Of "Nonsense Novels" he writes:

"The stories in this book I wrote for a newspaper syndicate in 1910. They were not meant as parodies of the work of any particular author. They are types done in burlesque.

"Of the many forms of humorous writings pure burlesque is, to my thinking, one of the hardest—I could almost feel like saying, the hardest—to do properly. It has to face the cruel test of whether the reader does or does not laugh. Other forms

of humor avoid this. Grave friends of mine tell me that they get an exquisite humor, for instance, from the works of John Milton. But I never see them laugh at them. They say that 'Paradise Lost' is saturated with humor. To me, I regret to say, it seems scarcely damp.

"Burlesque, of course, beside the beautiful broad canvas of a Dickens or a Scott, shrinks to a poor mean rag. It is, in fact, so limited in scope that it is scarcely worth while. I do not wish for a moment to exalt it. But it appears to me, I repeat, a singularly difficult thing to do properly. It is to be remembered, of course, that the work of the really great humorists, let us say Dickens and Mark Twain, contains pages and pages that are in their essence burlesque."

It would be possible to make quite a bulky volume of autobiography if one pursued the search through all of Mr. Leacock's writings. There are passages in the literary essays that are frankly autobiographical, and doubtless many of his sketches are burlesque renderings of personal experiences. But we shall content ourselves with just one more glimpse of his life that he has given.

"When I was a student at the University of Toronto, thirty years ago, I lived, from start to finish, in seventeen different boarding houses. As far as I am aware these houses have not, or not yet, been marked with tablets. But they are still to be found in the vicinity of McCaul, D'Arcy, and St. Patrick streets. Anyone who doubts the truth of what I have to say may go and look at them.

"I was not alone in the nomadic life that I led. There were hundreds of us drifting about in this fashion from one melancholy habitation to another. We lived as a rule two or three in a house, sometimes alone. We dined in the basement. We always had beef, done up in some way after it was dead, and there were always soda biscuits on the table. They used to have a brand of soda biscuits in those days in the Toronto boarding houses that I have not seen since. They were better than dog biscuit, but with not so much snap. My contemporaries will remember them. A great many of the leading barristers and professional men of Toronto were fed on them."

While these quotations are satisfying enough, they fail in several important particulars. They fail to tell that he was married in New York, in the "Little Church Around the Corner," in August of 1900, to Beatrix, daughter of Lieut.-Col. Hamilton, of Toronto, and that he has one son, who was born on August 19, 1915, and named Stephen Lushington Leacock.

Above all they fail to tell us what he looks like, so that we may recognize him when we see him on the street. But this omission can be remedied by extracts from the writings of his contemporaries. An open letter to him in the *Montreal Standard* has this gem:

"I saw you in your native *habitat*, with your protective coloring all about you, and I have been able to pick you out ever since.

"It was a bright August afternoon, as I remember, and you were honoring Lake Couchiching with your presence on holiday. You were fully clad in a suit of dungarees, waders, a cow-bite hat, and whiskers of at least three days wilfulness. Waist-high in the water you pushed ahead of you a sort of young scow, pausing ever and anon to curse a short, black pipe with a hiccup in its stem. The scow was loaded with stones, with which you calculated to build an oven in a remote part of the island and pretend you were an Indian. Even at that early date your playful fancy was at work."

An interviewer pictures him as follows:

"At the minute of four I was at the University club. An imposing official in an imposing uniform ushered me into a still more imposing room. It was a big room filled with a chilly, academic sort of atmosphere—the sort of room that made you feel very small; that made you wonder why you ever presumed to seek an interview. There I sat for ten long minutes, wondering what Leacock would be like, what he would deign to tell me, what I should dare to ask him; whether he would be witty or just talk in academic phrases miles above my head.

"Just then the door was sort of blown open and the room was flooded with a bubbling exuberance, 'lots of fun' and all the things that go to dissipate an academic chilliness. The entrance of Stephen Leacock was responsible. The room immediately took on his very human personality. It became intensely friendly. In a minute or so I found myself talking to Professor Leacock as if he had been a childhood friend regained after long years. From the first minute he impressed me as being 'understanding.' He seemed to laugh more than talk, and his eyes absolutely danced with merriment. His

conversation was every jot as witty as his books, and not for one instant did he even suggest the professor. Much more was he the big, happy school-boy, brimful of fun, very interested in all the things that go to make or mar the world of today."

For this picture of him we are indebted to an employee of the Library of McGill University:

"When three o'clock came round it was no unusual thing to see him, a host of books and papers under his arm, make giant and hasty strides into the library to the delivery counter.

"With the coming of 'Literary Lapses,' Dr. Leacock appeared before me in an altogether different light. His familiar figure assumed a new meaning. His fine, grave face, that boy's mop of hair which always looks as if it had just been washed the night before, and simply refused to be brushed, the deep, vibrating tones of his voice and his peculiar stride, had always appealed strongly to me."

When Dr. Leacock was discovering England, English observers discovered him. One of them wrote his impressions as follows:

"Nobody, we must think, could be churlish with such a man. A ripple of laughter spreads round him wherever he moves; vexation vanishes, ill-tempered people begin to chuckle in spite of themselves, everybody crowds about him to be entertained. So it must happen; and it is not surprising if such a visitor as this has found many nice things to say of us. He has a way with him to soften the ruggedest, to rouse the most inert, and there is not the least credit in being jolly in his company. Let his impression of the English, therefore, be accounted to his own irresistibility, not to ours. Professor Leacock as an explorer, is at a certain disadvantage; he can never see people as they are without the charm and enlivenment of his society.

"What is peculiarly delightful about him, moreover, is that he never seems to be friendly and kindly out of mere politeness. Indeed he is a man of whom at first sight we might expect to feel shy; his quizzical glances have a dangerous look; and sometimes we suspect him of meaning more than he says. His compliments have now and then a tweak of sarcasm."

Another English observer conveyed his impressions in this fashion:

"Leacock was smiling all the while. He was smiling just before 8.30, when he stood in the gangway of Eltham Parish Hall, looking out at and up at the great audience who had come to greet him. Whilst the chairman was introducing him to the audience, Mr. Leacock sat and smiled, and for nearly an hour Leacock smiled like a great human sunbeam.

"Well, if some one smiles at you and says nothing, you are constrained to smile back at him. It is a smile that invites a smile. Leacock must have found that out, and just as one tacks down an oil cloth to hold it to the floor, so has Stephen Leacock nailed down his world with that infectious, merry smile of his which takes one right to a merry heart and a merry brain. *Punch* once wrote of him:

"Anyhow, I'd be as proud as a peacock  
To have inscribed on my tomb:  
He followed the footsteps of Leacock  
In banishing gloom."

"His laughter quietly rocks a not entirely giant frame, for Leacock is not a really big man. He just escapes being this. Perhaps to him the body just merely matters. About the shoulders he is built largely and strongly, these shoulders heaping up slightly behind into the student's back. There is a not easily forgettable face of fairly large proportions. It is a live face, a kindly face. One writer has spoken of his shaggy locks; they are hardly this. A mat of closely growing hair lies all over the head, and it has made its way, almost creeper-like, far down on his broad forehead. There is no curl, no wave—just what one may call useful hair over a large, well-shaped head. It is a head that reminds one of that of John Masefield, the poet, but the faces of these two men are very different.

"Does Leacock's body really matter? Not that we wish to convey the idea that he is mystic and ethereal. Body means appearance. Mr. Leacock wears clothes, in spite of the fact that he once wrote 'To Nature and Back again.' For dinner and lecture purposes he wears a form of dress which is quite careless and easy. It has no 'fit' in the tailor's sense of the word, but just that looseness which it should have for the fireside talk he likes so well. Is there the supreme insouciance

of some professors about him? There is and there is not. When one looks at the highly glossed, turned down (perhaps a touch of Bohemianism) collar, and neat black bow above the white shirt front, there is not; but allowing the eyes to travel downwards to his trousers, one has to admit they have a peculiar vagueness about the knees that can only be obtained by intensive scholarship."

Since his first success as an author, Mr. Leacock's life has passed quietly as a professor at McGill, and in his summer home at Orillia. According to popular belief, he built the house in which he lives in Orillia with his own hands. This popular belief will be verified or disproven before going to press, if the information can be dragged from him by correspondence.

Since the publication of "Literary Lapses" in book form, he has added a book a year to his rapidly growing library of humor. In 1921 he visited England on a lecturing tour, and officially discovered the country—recording his impressions in a book that may be regarded as part of his autobiography. As a matter of fact, the final biographer of Mr. Leacock will only find it necessary to select from his published works the material for an adequate record of his life. Many of his sketches record faithfully his dealings with educationists, club-men and the world in general. In "Fetching the Doctor" he gives us a glimpse of his boyhood.

Mr. Leacock's writings have placed him so clearly before the public that there is little for a biographer to do beyond recording the usual facts of a quiet academic life. His history is written in his own books for the perusal of his host of admirers, who may be found wherever the English language is read.

# MY FINANCIAL CAREER



When I go into a bank I get rattled. The clerks rattle me; the wickets rattle me; the sight of the money rattles me; everything rattles me.

The moment I cross the threshold of a bank and attempt to transact business there, I become an irresponsible idiot.

I knew this beforehand, but my salary had been raised to fifty dollars a month, and I felt that the bank was the only place for it.

So I shambled in and looked timidly round at the clerks. I had an idea that a person about to open an account must needs consult the manager.

I went up to a wicket marked "Accountant." The accountant was a tall, cool devil. The very sight of him rattled me. My voice was sepulchral.

"Can I see the manager?" I said, and added solemnly, "alone." I don't know why I said "alone."

"Certainly," said the accountant, and fetched him.

The manager was a grave, calm man. I held my fifty-six dollars clutched in a crumpled ball in my pocket.

"Are you the manager?" I said. God knows I didn't doubt it.

"Yes," he said.

"Can I see you," I asked, "alone?" I didn't want to say "alone" again, but without it the thing seemed self-evident.

The manager looked at me in some alarm. He felt that I had an awful secret to reveal.

"Come in here," he said, and led the way to a private room. He turned the key in the lock.

"We are safe from interruption here," he said; "sit down."

We both sat down and looked at each other. I found no voice to speak.

"You are one of Pinkerton's men, I presume," he said.

He had gathered from my mysterious manner that I was a detective. I knew what he was thinking, and it made me worse.

"No, not from Pinkerton's," I said, seeming to imply that I came from a rival agency.

"To tell the truth," I went on, as if I had been prompted to lie about it, "I am not a detective at all. I have come to open an account. I intend to keep all my money in this bank."

The manager looked relieved, but still serious; he concluded now that I was a son of Baron Rothschild or a young Gould.

"A large account, I suppose," he said.

"Fairly large," I whispered. "I propose to deposit fifty-six dollars now and fifty dollars a month regularly."

The manager got up and opened the door. He called to the accountant.

"Mr. Montgomery," he said unkindly loud, "this gentleman is opening an account. He will deposit fifty-six dollars. Good morning."

I rose.

A big iron door stood open at the side of the room.

"Good morning," I said, and stepped into the safe.

"Come out," said the manager coldly, and showed me the other way.

I went up to the accountant's wicket and poked the ball of money at him with a quick, convulsive movement, as if I were doing a conjuring trick.

My face was ghastly pale.

"Here," I said, "deposit it." The tone of the words seemed to mean, "Let us do this painful thing while the fit is on us."

He took the money and gave it to another clerk.

He made me write the sum on a slip and sign my name in a book. I no longer knew what I was doing. The bank swam before my eyes.

"Is it deposited?" I asked in a hollow, vibrating voice.

"It is," said the accountant.

"Then I want to draw a cheque."

My idea was to draw out six dollars of it for present use. Someone gave me a cheque book through a wicket and someone else began telling me how to write it out. The people in the bank had the impression that I was an invalid millionaire. I wrote something on the cheque and thrust it in at the clerk. He looked at it.

"What! are you drawing it all out again?" he asked in surprise. Then I realized that I had written fifty-six instead of six. I was too far gone to reason now. I had a feeling that it was impossible to explain the thing. All the clerks had stopped writing to look at me. Reckless with misery, I made a plunge.

"Yes, the whole thing."

"You withdraw your money from the bank?"

"Every cent of it."

"Are you not going to deposit any more?" said the clerk, astonished.

"Never."

An idiot hope struck me that they might think something had insulted me while I was writing the cheque, and that I had changed my mind. I made a wretched attempt to look like a man with a fearfully quick temper.

The clerk prepared to pay the money.

"How will you have it?" he said.

"What?"

"How will you have it?"

"Oh"—I caught his meaning and answered without even trying to think—"in fifties."

He gave me a fifty-dollar bill.

"And the six?" he asked dryly.

"In sixes," I said.

He gave it me and I rushed out.

As the big door swung behind me I caught the echo of a roar of laughter that went up to the ceiling of the bank. Since then I bank no more. I keep my money in cash in my trousers pocket and my savings in silver dollars in a sock.

—*Literary Lapses.*

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# BOARDING-HOUSE GEOMETRY

## DEFINITIONS AND AXIOMS



Il boarding-houses are the same boarding-house.

Boarders in the same boarding-house and on the same flat are equal to one another.

A single room is that which has no parts and no magnitude.

The landlady of a boarding-house is a parallelogram—that is, an oblong, angular figure, which cannot be described, but which is equal to anything.

A wrangle is the disinclination of two boarders to each other that meet together but are not in the same line.

All the other rooms being taken, a single room is said to be a double room.

## POSTULATES AND PROPOSITIONS

A pie may be produced any number of times.

The landlady can be reduced to her lowest terms by a series of propositions.

A bee-line may be made from any boarding-house to any other boarding-house.

The clothes of a boarding-house bed, though produced ever so far both ways, will not meet.

Any two meals at a boarding-house are together less than two square meals.

If from the opposite ends of a boarding-house a line be drawn passing through all the rooms in turn, then the stovepipe which warms the boarders will lie within that line.

On the same bill and on the same side of it there should not be two charges for the same thing.

If there be two boarders on the same flat, and the amount of side of the one be equal to the amount of side of the other, each to each, and the wrangle between one boarder and the landlady be equal to the wrangle between the landlady and the other, then shall the weekly bills of the two boarders be equal also, each to each.

For if not, let one bill be the greater.

Then the other bill is less than it might have been—which is absurd.

—*Literary Lapses.*

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# L'ENVOI

## THE TRAIN TO MARIPOSA



It leaves the city every day about five o'clock in the evening, the train for Mariposa.

Strange that you did not know of it, though you come from the little town—or did, long years ago.

Odd that you never knew, in all these years, that the train was there every afternoon, puffing up steam in the city station, and that you might have boarded it any day and gone home. No, not "home"—of course you couldn't call it "home" now. "Home" means that big red sandstone house of yours in the costlier part of the city. "Home" means, in a way, this Mausoleum Club where you sometimes talk with me of the times that you had as a boy in Mariposa.

But of course "home" would hardly be the word you would apply to the little town, unless perhaps, late at night, when you'd been sitting reading in a quiet corner somewhere such a book as the present one.

Naturally you don't know of the Mariposa train now. Years ago, when you first came to the city as a boy with your way to make, you knew of it well enough—only too well. The price of a ticket counted in those days, and though you knew of the train you couldn't take it; but sometimes from sheer homesickness you used to wander down to the station on a Friday afternoon after your work, and watch the Mariposa people getting on the train and wish that you could go.

Why, you knew that train at one time better, I suppose, than any other single thing in the city, and loved it too for the little town in the sunshine that it ran to.

Do you remember how when you first began to make money you used to plan just as soon as you were rich, really rich, you'd go back home again to the little town and build a great big house with a fine verandah—no stint about it, the best that money could buy—planed lumber, every square foot of it, and a fine picket fence in front of it?

It was to be one of the grandest and finest houses that thought could conceive; much finer, in true reality, than that vast palace of sandstone with the porte cochère and the sweeping conservatories that you afterwards built in the costlier part of the city.

But if you have half forgotten Mariposa, and long since lost the way to it, you are only like the greater part of the men here in this Mausoleum Club in the city. Would you believe it that practically every one of them came from Mariposa once upon a time, and that there isn't one of them that doesn't sometimes dream in the dull quiet of the long evening here in the club, that some day he will go back and see the place.

They all do. Only they're half ashamed to own it.

Ask your neighbor there at the next table whether the partridge that they sometimes serve to you here can be compared for a moment to the birds that he and you, or he and some one else, used to shoot as boys in the spruce thickets along the lake. Ask him if he ever tasted duck that could for a moment be compared to the black ducks in the rice marsh along the Ossawippi. And as for fish, and fishing—no, don't ask him about that, for if he ever starts telling you of the chub they used to catch below the mill dam and the green bass that used to lie in the water-shadow of the rocks beside the Indian's Island, not even the long, dull evening in this club would be long enough for the telling of it.

But no wonder they don't know about the five o'clock train for Mariposa. Very few people know about it. Hundreds of them know that there is a train that goes out at five o'clock, but they mistake it. Ever so many of them think it's just a suburban train. Lots of people that take it every day think it's only the train to the golf grounds, but the joke is that after it passes out of the city and the suburbs and the golf grounds, it turns itself little by little into the Mariposa train, thundering and pounding towards the north with hemlock sparks pouring out into the darkness from the funnel of it. Of course you can't tell it just at first. All those people that are crowding into it with golf clubs, and wearing knicker-bockers and flat caps, would deceive anybody. That crowd of suburban people going home on commutation tickets, and sometimes standing thick in the aisles—those are, of course, not Mariposa people. But look round a little bit and you'll find them easily enough. Here and there in the crowd those people with the clothes that are perfectly all right and yet look odd in some way, the women with the peculiar hats and the—what do you say?—last year's fashions? Ah yes, of course, that must be it.

Anyway, those are the Mariposa people all right enough. That man with the two dollar panama and the glaring spectacles is one of the greatest judges that ever adorned the bench of Missinaba county. That clerical gentleman with the wide black hat, who is explaining to the man with him the marvellous mechanism of the new air brake (one of the most conspicuous illustrations of the divine structure of the physical universe), surely you have seen him before. Mariposa people! Oh yes, there are any number of them on the train every day.

But of course you hardly recognize them while the train is still passing through the suburbs and the golf district and the outlying parts of the city area. But wait a little, and you will see that when the city is well behind you, bit by bit the train changes its character. The electric locomotive that took you through the city tunnels is off now and the old wood engine is hitched on in its place. I suppose, very probably, you haven't seen one of these wood engines since you were a boy forty years ago—the old engine with a wide top like a hat on its funnel, and with sparks enough to light up a suit for damages once in every mile.

Do you see, too, that the trim little cars that came out of the city on the electric suburban express are being discarded now at the way stations, one by one, and in their place is the old familiar car with the stuff cushions in red plush (how gorgeous it once seemed!) and with a box stove set up in one end of it? The stove is burning furiously at its sticks this autumn evening, for the air sets in chill as you get clear away from the city and are rising up to the higher ground of the country of the pines and the lakes.

Look from the window as you go. The city is far behind now and right and left of you there are trim farms with elms and maples near them and with tall windmills beside the barns that you can still see in the gathering dusk. There is a dull red light from the windows of the farmstead. It must be comfortable there after the roar and clatter of the city, and only think of the still quiet of it!

As you sit back half dreaming in the car, you keep wondering why it is that you never came up before in all these years. Ever so many times you planned that just as soon as the rush and strain of business eased up a little, you would take the train and go back to the little town to see what it was like now, and if things had changed much since your day. But each time when your holidays came, somehow you changed your mind and went down to Naragansett or Nagahuckett or Nagasomething, and left over the visit to Mariposa for another time.

It is almost night now. You can still see the trees and the fences and the farmsteads, but they are fading fast in the twilight. They have lengthened out the train by this time with a string of flat cars and freight cars between where we are sitting and the engine. But at every crossway we can hear the long, muffled roar of the whistle, dying to a melancholy wail that echoes into the woods; the woods, I say, for the farms are thinning out and the track plunges here and there into great stretches of bush—tall tamarack and red scrub willow, and with a tangled undergrowth of brush that has defied for two generations all attempts to clear it into the form of fields.

Why, look—that great space that seems to open out in the half-dark of the falling evening why, surely yes—Lake Ossawippi, the big lake, as they used to call it, from which the river runs down to the smaller lake, Lake Wissanotti, where the town of Mariposa has lain waiting for you there for thirty years.

This is Lake Ossawippi surely enough. You would know it anywhere by the broad, still, black water with hardly a ripple, and with the grip of the coming frost already on it. Such a great sheet of blackness it looks as the train thunders along the side, swinging the curve of the embankment at a breakneck speed as it rounds the corner of the lake.

How fast the train goes this autumn night! You have travelled, I know you have, in the Empire State Express, and the New Limited and the Maritime Express that holds the record of six hundred whirling miles from Paris to Marseilles. But what are they to this—this mad career, this breakneck speed, this thundering roar of the Mariposa local driving hard to its home! Don't tell me that the speed is only twenty-five miles an hour. I don't care what it is. I tell you, and you can prove it for yourself if you will, that that train of mingled flat cars and coaches that goes tearing into the night, its engine whistle shrieking out its warning into the silent woods and echoing over the dull, still lake, is the fastest train in the whole world.

Yes, and the best, too—the most comfortable, the most reliable, the most luxurious and the speediest train that ever turned a wheel.

And the most genial, the most sociable too. See how the passengers all turn and talk to one another now as they get nearer and nearer to the little town. That dull reserve that seemed to hold the passengers in the electric suburban has

clean vanished and gone. They are talking—listen—of the harvest, and the late election, and of how the local member is mentioned for the Cabinet and all the old familiar topics of the sort. Already the conductor has changed his glazed hat for an ordinary round Christie, and you can hear the passengers calling him and the brakeman "Bill" and "Sam," as if they were all one family.

What is it now—nine-thirty? Ah, then we must be nearing the town—this big bush that we are passing through: you remember it surely as the great swamp just this side of the bridge over the Ossawippi? There is the bridge itself, and the long roar of the train as it rushes sounding over the trestle work that rises above the marsh. Hear the clatter as we pass the semaphores and the switch lights! We must be close in now!

What?—it feels nervous and strange to be coming here again after all these years? It must, indeed. No, don't bother to look at the reflection of your face in the window-pane, shadowed by the night outside. Nobody could tell you now after all these years. Your face has changed in these long years of money-getting in the city. Perhaps if you had come back now and again, just at odd times, it wouldn't have been so.

There—you hear it?—the long whistle of the locomotive, one, two, three! You feel the sharp slackening of the train as it swings round the curve of the last embankment that brings it to the Mariposa station. See, too, as we round the curve, the row of the flashing lights, the bright windows of the depôt.

How vivid and plain it all is. Just as it used to be thirty years ago. There is the string of the hotel 'buses, drawn up all ready for the train, and as the train rounds in and stops hissing and panting at the platform, you can hear above all other sounds the cry of the brakemen and the porters:

## **MARIPOSA! MARIPOSA!**

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And as we listen, the cry grows fainter and fainter in our ears and we are sitting here again in the leather chairs of the Mausoleum Club, talking of the little Town in the Sunshine that once we knew.

—*Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.*

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# THE LITTLE GIRL IN GREEN



ome," said Mr. Newberry; "there are Mrs. Newberry and the girls on the verandah. Let's go and join them." A few minutes later Mr. Spillikins was talking with Mrs. Newberry and Dulphemia Rasselyer-Brown, and telling Mrs. Newberry what a beautiful house she had. Beside them stood Philippa Furlong, and she had her arm around Dulphemia's waist; and the picture that they thus made, with their heads close together, Dulphemia's hair being golden and Philippa's chestnut-brown, was such that Mr. Spillikins had no eyes for Mrs. Newberry nor for Castel Casteggio, nor for anything. So much so that he practically didn't see at all the little girl in green who stood unobtrusively on the further side of Mrs. Newberry. Indeed, though somebody had murmured her name in introduction, he couldn't have repeated it if asked two minutes afterwards. His eyes and his mind were elsewhere.

But hers were not.

For the Little Girl in Green looked at Mr. Spillikins with wide eyes, and when she looked at him she saw all at once such wonderful things about him as nobody had ever seen before.

For she could see from the poise of his head how awfully clever he was; and from the way he stood with his hands in his side pockets she could see how manly and brave he must be; and of course there was firmness and strength written all over him. In short, she saw as she looked such a Peter Spillikins as truly never existed, or could exist—or at least such a Peter Spillikins as no one else in the world had ever suspected before.

All in a moment she was ever so glad that she accepted Mrs. Newberry's invitation to Castel Casteggio and hadn't been afraid to come. For the Little Girl in Green, whose Christian name was Norah, was only what is called a poor relation of Mrs. Newberry, and her father was a person of no account whatever, who didn't belong to the Mausoleum Club or to any other club, and who lived, with Norah, on a street that nobody who was anybody lived upon. Norah had been asked up a few days before out of the city to give her air—which is the only thing that can be safely and freely given to poor relations. Thus she had arrived at Castel Casteggio with one diminutive trunk, so small and shabby that even the servants who carried it upstairs were ashamed of it. In it were a pair of brand new tennis shoes (at ninety cents reduced to seventy-five), and a white dress of the kind that is called "almost evening," and such few other things as poor relations might bring with fear and trembling, to join in the simple rusticity of the rich.

Thus stood Norah, looking at Mr. Spillikins.

As for him, such is the contrariety of human things, he had no eyes for her at all.

"What a perfectly charming house this is," Mr. Spillikins was saying. He always said this on such occasions, but it seemed to the Little Girl in Green that he spoke with wonderful social ease.

"I am so glad you think so," said Mrs. Newberry (this was what she always answered).

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The whole thing from the point of view of Mr. Spillikins or Dulphemia or Philippa represented rusticity itself.

To the Little Girl in Green it seemed as brilliant as the Court of Versailles, especially evening dinner—a plain home meal, as the others thought it—when she had four glasses to drink out of and used to wonder over such problems as whether you were supposed, when Franklin poured out wine, to tell him to stop or to wait till he stopped without being told to stop, and other similar mysteries, such as people before and after have meditated upon.

During all this time Mr. Spillikins was nerving himself to propose to Dulphemia Rasselyer-Brown. In fact, he spent part of his time walking up and down under the trees with Philippa Furlong and discussing with her the proposal that he meant to make, together with such topics as marriage in general and his own unworthiness.

He might have waited indefinitely had he not learned, on the third day of his visit, that Dulphemia was to go away in the morning to join her father at Nagahakett.

That evening he found the necessary nerve to speak, and the proposal in almost every aspect of it was most successful.

"By Jove!" Spillikins said to Philippa Furlong next morning, in explaining what had happened, "she was awfully nice about it. I think she must have guessed, in a way, don't you, what I was going to say? But at any rate she was awfully nice—let me say everything I wanted, and when I explained what a fool I was, she said she didn't think I was half such a fool as people thought me. But it's all right. It turns out that she isn't thinking of getting married. I asked her if I might always go on thinking of her, and she said I might."

And that morning, when Dulphemia was carried off in the motor to the station, Mr. Spillikins, without exactly being aware how he had done it, had somehow transferred himself to Philippa.

"Isn't she a splendid girl?" he said at least ten times a day to Norah, the Little Girl in Green. And Norah always agreed, because she really thought Philippa a perfectly wonderful creature.

There is no doubt that, but for a slight shift of circumstances, Mr. Spillikins would have proposed to Miss Furlong. Indeed, he spent a good part of his time rehearsing little speeches that began, "Of course I know I'm an awful ass in a way," or, "Of course I know that I'm not at all the sort of fellow," and so on.

But not one of them ever was delivered.

For it so happened that on the Thursday, one week after Mr. Spillikin's arrival, Philippa went again to the station in the motor. And when she came back there was another passenger with her, a tall young man in tweed, and they both began calling out to the Newberrys from a distance of at least a hundred yards.

And both the Newberrys suddenly exclaimed "Why, it's Tom!" and rushed off to meet the motor. And there was such a laughing and jubilation as the two descended and carried Tom's valises to the verandah, that Mr. Spillikins felt as suddenly and completely out of it as the Little Girl in Green herself—especially as his ear had caught, among the first things said, the words, "Congratulate us, Mrs. Newberry, we're engaged."

After which Mr. Spillikins had the pleasure of sitting and listening while it was explained, in wicker chairs on the verandah, that Philippa and Tom had been engaged already for ever so long—in fact, nearly two weeks—only they had agreed not to say a word to anybody till Tom had gone to North Carolina and back to see his people.

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So the next day Tom and Philippa vanished together.

"We shall be quite a small party now," said Mrs. Newberry; "in fact, quite by ourselves till Mrs. Everleigh comes, and she won't be here for a fortnight."

At which the heart of the Little Girl in Green was glad, because she had been afraid that other girls might be coming, whereas she knew that Mrs. Everleigh was a widow with four sons and must be ever so old—past forty.

The next few days were spent by Mr. Spillikins almost entirely in the society of Norah. He thought them on the whole rather pleasant days, but slow. To her they were an uninterrupted dream of happiness never to be forgotten.

The Newberrys left them to themselves; not with any intent; it was merely that they were perpetually busy walking about the grounds of Castel Casteggio, blowing up things with dynamite, throwing steel bridges over gullies, and hoisting heavy timber with derricks.

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They left Peter and Norah to themselves all day. Even after dinner, in the evening, Mr. Newberry was very apt to call to his wife in the dusk from some distant corner of the lawn.

"Margaret, come over here and tell me if you don't think we might cut down this elm, tear the stump out by the roots, and throw it into the ravine."

And the answer was, "One minute, Edward; just wait till I get a wrap."

Before they came back the dusk had grown to darkness, and they had redynamited half the estate.

During all of which time Mr. Spillikins sat with Norah on the piazza. He talked and she listened. He told her, for instance, all about his terrific experiences in the oil business, and about his exciting career at college; or presently they went indoors, and Norah played the piano, and Mr. Spillikins sat and smoked and listened. In such a house as the Newberry's, where dynamite and the greater explosives were every-day matters, a little thing like the use of tobacco in the drawing-room didn't count. As for the music, "Go right ahead," said Mr. Spillikins; "I'm not musical, but I don't mind music a bit."

In the daytime they played tennis. There was a court at one end of the lawn beneath the trees, all chequered with sunlight and mingled shadow; very beautiful, Norah thought, though Mr. Spillikins explained that the spotted light put him off his game. In fact, it was owing entirely to this bad light that Mr. Spillikins' fast drives, wonderful though they were, somehow never got inside the service court.

Norah, of course, thought Mr. Spillikins a wonderful player. She was glad—in fact it suited them both—when he beat her six to nothing. She didn't know and didn't care that there was no one else in the world that Mr. Spillikins could beat like that. Once he even said to her,

"By Gad! you don't play half a bad game, you know. I think, you know, with practice you'd come on quite a lot."

After that the games were understood to be more or less in the form of lessons, which put Mr. Spillikins on a pedestal of superiority, and allowed any bad strokes on his part to be viewed as a form of indulgence.

Also, as the tennis was viewed in this light, it was Norah's part to pick up the balls at the net and throw them back to Mr. Spillikins. He let her do this, not from rudeness, for it wasn't in him, but because in such a primeval place as Castel Casteggio the natural primitive relation of the sexes is bound to reassert itself.

But of love Mr. Spillikins never thought. He had viewed it so eagerly and so often from a distance that when it stood here modestly at his very elbow he did not recognize its presence. His mind had been fashioned, as it were, to connect love with something stunning and sensational, with Easter hats and harem skirts and the luxurious consciousness of the unattainable.

Even at that, there is no knowing what might have happened. Tennis, in the chequered light of sun and shadow cast by summer leaves, is a dangerous game. There came a day when they were standing one each side of the net, and Mr. Spillikins was explaining to Norah the proper way to hold a racquet so as to be able to give those magnificent backhand sweeps of his, by which he generally drove the ball half-way to the lake; and explaining this involved putting his hand right over Norah's on the handle of the racquet, so that for just half a second her hand was clasped tight in his; and if that half-second had been lengthened out into a whole second it is quite possible that what was already subconscious in his mind would have broken its way triumphantly to the surface, and Norah's hand would have stayed in his, how willingly!—for the rest of their two lives.

But just at that moment Mr. Spillikins looked up, and he said in quite an altered tone,

"By Jove! who's that awfully good-looking woman getting out of the motor?"

And their hands unclasped. Norah looked over towards the house and said,

"Why, it's Mrs. Everleigh. I thought she wasn't coming for another week."

"I say," said Mr. Spillikins, straining his short sight to the uttermost, "what perfectly wonderful golden hair, eh?"

"Why, it's—" Norah began, and then she stopped. It didn't seem right to explain that Mrs. Everleigh's hair was dyed.

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"I didn't know she was coming so soon," she said, and there was weariness already in her heart. Certainly she didn't know it; still less did she know, or anyone else, that the reason of Mrs. Everleigh's coming was because Mr. Spillikins was there. She came with a set purpose.

"Oughtn't we to go to the house?" she added.

"All right," said Mr. Spillikins with great alacrity, "let's go."

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There is no need to pursue in detail the stages of Mr. Spillikins' wooing. Its course was swift and happy. Mr. Spillikins, having seen the back of Mrs. Everleigh's head, had decided instanter that she was the most beautiful woman in the world; and that impression is not easily corrected in the half-light of a shaded drawing room; nor across a dinner-table lighted only with candles with deep red shades; nor even in the daytime through a veil. In any case, it is only fair to state that if Mrs. Everleigh was not and is not a singularly beautiful woman, Mr. Spillikins still doesn't know it.

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So the course of Mr. Spillikins' love, for love it must have been, ran swiftly to its goal. Each stage of it was duly marked by his comments to Norah.

"She *is* a splendid woman," he said; "so sympathetic. She always seems to know just what one is going to say."

So she did, for she was making him say it.

"By Jove!" he said, a day later, "Mrs. Everleigh's an awfully fine woman, isn't she? I was telling her about my having been in the oil business for a little while, and she thinks that I'd really be awfully good in money things. She said she wished she had me to manage her money for her."

This also was quite true, except that Mrs. Everleigh had not made it quite clear that the management of her money was of the form generally known as deficit financing. In fact, her money was, very crudely stated, non-existent, and it needed a lot of management.

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And very soon after that Mr. Spillikins was saying, with quite a quaver in his voice,

"By Jove! yes, I'm awfully lucky; I never thought for a moment that she'd have me, you know—a woman like her, with so much attention and everything. I can't imagine what she sees in me."

Which was just as well.

And then Mr. Spillikins checked himself, for he noticed—this was on the verandah in the morning—that Norah had a hat and a jacket on and that the motor was rolling towards the door.

"I say," he said, "are you going away?"

"Yes, didn't you know?" Norah said, "I thought you heard them speaking of it at dinner last night. I have to go home; father's alone, you know."

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry," said Mr. Spillikins; "we shan't have any more tennis."

"Good-bye," said Norah, and as she said it and put out her hand there were tears brimming up into her eyes. But Mr. Spillikins, being short of sight, didn't see them.

"Good-bye," he said.

Then, as the motor carried her away, he stood for a moment in a sort of reverie. Perhaps certain things that might have been rose unformed and inarticulate before his mind.

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And so in the fulness of time—nor was it so very full either, in fact, only about five weeks—Peter Spillikins and Mrs. Everleigh were married in St. Asaph's Church on Plutoria Ave. And the wedding was one of the most beautiful and sumptuous of the weddings of the September season. There were flowers, and bridesmaids in long veils, and tall ushers in frock coats, and awnings at the church door, and strings of motors with wedding favors, and imported chauffeurs, and all that goes to invest marriage on Plutoria Avenue with its peculiar sacredness. The face of the young rector, Mr. Fareforth Furlong, wore the added saintliness that springs from a five-hundred dollar fee. The whole town was there, or at least everybody that was anybody; and if there was one person absent, one who sat by herself in a darkened drawing room of a dull little house on a shabby street, who knew or cared?

—*Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich.*

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# A HERO IN HOMESPUN

## OR THE LIFE STRUGGLE OF HEZEKIAH HAYLOFT



"Can you give me a job?"

The foreman of the brick-layers looked down from the scaffold to the speaker below. Something in the lad's upturned face appealed to the man. He threw a brick at him.

It was Hezekiah Hayloft. He was all in homespun. He carried a carpet-bag in each hand. He had come to New York, the cruel city, looking for work.

Hezekiah moved on. Presently he stopped in front of a policeman.

"Sir," he said, "can you tell me the way to—"

The policeman struck him savagely across the side of the head.

"I'll learn you," he said, "to ask damn fool questions—"

Again Hezekiah moved on. In a few moments he met a man whose tall black hat, black waistcoat and white tie proclaimed him a clergyman.

"Good sir," said Hezekiah, "can you tell me—"

The clergyman pounced upon him with a growl of a hyena, and bit a piece out of his ear. Yes, he did, reader. Just imagine a clergyman biting a boy in open daylight! Yet that happens in New York every minute.

Such is the great, cruel city—and imagine looking for work in it. You and I who spend our time in trying to avoid work can hardly realize what it must mean. Think how it must feel to be alone in New York, without a friend or a relation at hand, with no one to know or care what you do. It must be great!

For a few moments Hezekiah stood irresolute. He looked about him. He looked up at the top of the Metropolitan Tower. He saw no work there. He looked across at the sky-scrappers on Madison Square, but his eye detected no work in any of them. He stood on his head and looked up at the Flat-iron building. Still no work in sight.

All that day and the next Hezekiah looked for work.

A Wall Street firm had advertised for a stenographer.

"Can you write shorthand?" they said.

"No," said the boy in homespun, "but I can try."

They threw him down the elevator.

Hezekiah was not discouraged. That day he applied for fourteen jobs.

The Waldorf-Astoria was in need of a chef. Hezekiah applied for the place.

"Can you cook?" they said.

"No," said Hezekiah, "but oh, sir, give me a trial, give me an egg and let me try—I will try so hard." Great tears rolled down the boy's face.

They rolled him out into the corridor.

Next he applied for a job as a telegrapher. His mere ignorance of telegraphy was made the ground of refusal.

At nightfall Hezekiah Hayloft grew hungry. He entered again the portico of the Waldorf-Astoria. Within it stood a tall man in uniform.

"Boss," said the boy hero, "will you trust me for the price of a square meal?"

They set the dog on him.

Such, reader, is the hardness and bitterness of the Great City.

For fourteen weeks Hezekiah Hayloft looked for work. Once or twice he obtained temporary employment, only to lose it again.

For a few days he was made accountant in a trust company. He was discharged because he would not tell a lie. For about a week he held a position as cashier in a bank. They discharged the lad because he refused to forge a cheque. For three days he held a conductorship on a Broadway surface car. He was dismissed from this business for refusing to steal a nickel.

Such, reader, is the horrid degradation of business life in New York.

Meantime the days passed and still Hayloft found no work. His stock of money was exhausted. He had not had any money anyway. For food he ate grass in Central Park and drank the water from the Cruelty to Animals horse-trough.

Gradually a change came over the lad; his face grew hard and stern; the great city was setting its mark upon him.

One night Hezekiah stood upon the sidewalk. It was late—long after ten o'clock. Only a few chance pedestrians passed.

"By Heaven!" said Hezekiah, shaking his fist at the lights of the cruel city, "I have exhausted fair means, I will try foul. I will beg. No Hayloft has been a beggar yet," he added, with a bitter laugh, "but I will begin."

A well-dressed man passed along.

Hezekiah seized him by the throat.

"What do you want?" cried the man in sudden terror. "Don't ask me for work. I tell you I have no work to give."

"I don't want work," said Hezekiah grimly. "I am a beggar."

"Oh! is that all," said the man, relieved. "Here, take this ten dollars and go and buy a drink with it."

Money! money! and with it a new sense of power that rushed like an intoxicant to Hezekiah's brain.

"Drink," he muttered hoarsely, "yes, drink."

The lights of a soda-water fountain struck his eye.

"Give me an egg phosphate," he said, as he dashed his money on the counter. He drank phosphate after phosphate till his brain reeled. Mad with the liquor, he staggered to and fro in the shop, weighed himself recklessly on the slot machine three or four times, tore out chewing gum and matches from the automatic nickel boxes, and finally staggered on to the street, reeling from the effects of thirteen phosphates and a sarsaparilla soda.

"Crime," he hissed. "Crime, crime, that's what I want."

He noticed that the passers-by made way for him now with respect. On the corner of the street a policeman was standing.

Hezekiah picked up a cobblestone, threw it, and struck the man full on the ear.

The policeman smiled at him roguishly, and then gently wagged his finger in reproof. It was the same policeman who had struck him fourteen weeks before for asking the way.

Hezekiah moved on, still full of his new idea of crime. Down the street was a novelty shop, the window decked with New Year's gifts.

"Sell me a revolver," he said.

"Yes, sir," said the salesman. "Would you like something for evening wear, or a plain kind for home use. Here's a very good family revolver, or would you like a roof-garden size?"

Hezekiah selected a revolver and went out.

"Now then," he muttered, "I will burglarize a house and get money."

Walking across to Fifth Avenue he selected one of the finest residences and rang the bell.

A man in livery appeared in the brightly-lighted hall.

"Where is your master?" Hezekiah asked, showing his revolver.

"He is upstairs, sir, counting his money," the man answered, "but he dislikes being disturbed."

"Show me to him," said Hezekiah, "I wish to shoot him and take his money."

"Very good sir," said the man, deferentially. "You will find him on the first floor."

Hezekiah turned and shot the footman twice through the livery and went upstairs. In an upper room was a man sitting at a desk under a reading lamp. In front of him was a pile of gold. He was an old man, with a foolish, benevolent face.

"What are you doing?" said Hezekiah.

"I am counting my money," said the man.

"What are you?" asked Hezekiah sternly.

"I am a philanthropist," said the man. "I give my money to deserving objects. I establish medals for heroes. I give prizes for ship captains who jump into the sea, and for firemen who throw people from the windows of upper stories at the risk of their own; I send American missionaries to China, Chinese missionaries to India, and Indian missionaries to Chicago. I set aside money to keep college professors from starving to death when they deserve it."

"Stop!" said Hezekiah, "you deserve to die. Stand up. Open your mouth and shut your eyes."

The old man stood up.

There was a loud report. The philanthropist fell. He was shot through the waistcoat and his suspenders were cut to ribbons.

Hezekiah, his eyes glittering with the mania of crime, crammed his pockets with gold pieces.

There was a roar and a hubbub in the street below.

"The police!" Hezekiah muttered. "I must set fire to the house and escape in the confusion."

He struck a safety match and held it to the leg of the table.

It was a fireproof table and refused to burn. He held it to the door. The door was fireproof. He applied it to the bookcase. He ran the match along the books. They were all fireproof. Everything was fireproof.

Frenzied with rage, he tore off his celluloid collar and set fire to it. He waved it above his head. Great tongues of flame swept from the windows.

"Fire! Fire!" was the cry.

Hezekiah rushed to the door and threw the blazing collar down the elevator shaft. In a moment the iron elevator, with its steel ropes, burst into a mass of flame; then the brass fittings of the doors took fire, and in a moment the cement floor of the elevator was one roaring mass of flame. Great columns of smoke burst from the building.

"Fire! Fire!" shouted the crowd.

Reader, have you ever seen a fire in a great city? The sight is a wondrous one. One realizes that, vast and horrible as the city is, it nevertheless shows its human organization in its most perfect form.

Scarcely had the fire broken out before resolute efforts were made to stay its progress. Long lines of men passed buckets

of water from hand to hand.

The water was dashed on the fronts of the neighboring houses, thrown all over the street, splashed against the telegraph poles, and poured in torrents over the excited crowd. Every place in the neighbourhood of the fire was literally soaked. The men worked with a will. A derrick rapidly erected in the street reared itself to the height of sixteen or seventeen feet. A daring man mounted on the top of it, hauled bucket after bucket of water on the pulley. Balancing himself with the cool daring of the trained fireman, he threw the water in all directions over the crowd.

The fire raged for an hour. Hezekiah, standing at an empty window amid the flames, rapidly filled his revolver and emptied it into the crowd.

From one hundred revolvers in the street a fusillade was kept up in return.

This lasted for an hour. Several persons were almost hit by the rain of bullets, which would have proved fatal had they struck any one.

Meantime, as the flames died down, a squad of policemen rushed into the doomed building.

Hezekiah threw aside his revolver and received them with folded arms.

"Hayloft," said the chief of police, "I arrest you for murder, burglary, arson, and conspiracy. You put up a splendid fight, old man, and I am only sorry that it is our painful duty to arrest you."

As Hayloft appeared below a great cheer went up from the crowd. True courage always appeals to the heart of the people.

Hayloft was put in a motor and whirled rapidly to the police station.

On the way the chief handed him a flask and a cigar.

They chatted over the events of the evening.

Hayloft realized that a new life had opened for him. He was no longer a despised outcast. He had entered the American criminal class.

At the police station the chief showed Hezekiah to his room.

"I hope you will like this room," he said, a little anxiously. "It is the best that I can give you to-night. To-morrow I can give you a room with a bath, but at such short notice I am sure you will not mind putting up with this."

He said good-night and shut the door. In a moment he reappeared.

"About breakfast?" he said. "Would you rather have it in your room, or will you join us at our table d'hote! The force are most anxious to meet you."

Next morning, before Hezekiah was up, the chief brought to his room a new outfit of clothes—a silk hat, frock-coat, shepherd's-plaid trousers and varnished boots with spats.

"You won't mind accepting these things, Mr. Hayloft. Our force would like very much to enable you to make a suitable appearance in the court."

Carefully dressed and shaved, Hezekiah descended. He was introduced to the leading officials of the force, and spent a pleasant hour of chat over a cigar, discussing the incidents of the night before.

In the course of the morning a number of persons called to meet and congratulate Hezekiah.

"I want to tell you, Sir," said the editor of a great American daily, "that your work of last night will be known and commented on all over the States. Your shooting of the footman was a splendid piece of nerve, sir, and will do much in defence of the unwritten law."

"Mr. Hayloft," said another caller, "I am sorry not to have met you sooner. Our friends here tell me that you have been in New York for some months. I regret, sir, that we did not know you. This is the name of my firm, Mr. Hayloft. We are

leading lawyers here, and we want the honor of defending you. We may? Thank you, sir. And now, as we have still an hour or two before the court, I want to run you up to my house in my motor. My wife is very anxious to have a little luncheon for you."

The court met that afternoon. There was a cheer as Hezekiah entered.

"Mr. Hayloft," said the judge, "I am adjourning this court for a few days. From what I hear the nerve strain that you have undergone must have been most severe. Your friends tell me that you can hardly be in a state to take a proper interest in the case till you have had a thorough rest."

As Hayloft left the court a cheer went up from the crowd, in which the judge joined.

The next few days were busy days for Hezekiah, filled with receptions, civic committees, and the preparation of the brief in which Hezekiah's native intelligence excited the admiration of the lawyers.

Newspaper men sought for interviews. Business promoters called upon Hezekiah. His name was put down as a director of several leading companies, and it was rumored that in the event of his acquittal he would undertake a merger of all the great burglar protection corporations of the United States.

The trial opened a week later, and lasted two months. Hezekiah was indicted on five charges—arson, for having burned the steel cage of the elevator; misdemeanour, for shooting the footman; the theft of the money, petty larceny; the killing of the philanthropist, infanticide; and the shooting at the police without hitting them, aggravated felony.

The proceedings were very complicated—expert evidence was taken from all over the United States. An analytical examination was made of the brain of the philanthropist. Nothing was found.

The entire jury were dismissed three times on the grounds of prejudice, twice on the ground of ignorance, and finally disbanded on the ground of insanity.

The proceedings dragged on.

Meantime Hezekiah's business interests accumulated.

At length, at Hezekiah's own suggestion, it was necessary to abandon the case.

"Gentlemen," he said, in his final speech to the court, "I feel that I owe an apology for not being able to attend these proceedings any further. At any time, when I can snatch an hour or two from my business, you may always count on my attendance. In the meantime, rest assured that I shall follow your proceedings with the greatest interest."

He left the room amid three cheers and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

After that the case dragged hopelessly on from stage to stage.

The charge of arson was met by a *nolle prosequi*. The accusation of theft was stopped by a *ne plus ultra*. The killing of the footman was pronounced justifiable insanity.

The accusation of murder for the death of the philanthropist was withdrawn by common consent. Damages in error were awarded to Hayloft for the loss of his revolver and cartridges. The main body of the case was carried on a writ of *certiorari* to the Federal Courts and appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States.

It is there still.

Meantime, Hezekiah, as managing director of the Burglars' Security Corporation, remains one of the rising generation of financiers in New York, with every prospect of election to the State Senate.

—*Nonsense Novels*.

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## THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK OF MR. DOOMER



One generally saw old Mr. Doomer looking gloomily out of the windows of the library of the club. If not there, he was to be found staring sadly into the embers of a dying fire in a deserted sitting-room.

His gloom always appeared out of place, as he was one of the richest of the members.

But the cause of it—as I came to know—was that he was perpetually concerned with thinking about the next world. In fact, he spent his whole time brooding over it.

I discovered this accidentally by happening to speak to him of the recent death of Podge, one of our fellow members.

"Very sad," I said, "Podge's death."

"Ah," returned Mr. Doomer, "very shocking. He was quite unprepared to die."

"Do you think so?" I said. "I'm awfully sorry to hear it."

"Quite unprepared," he answered. "I had reason to know it as one of his executors. Everything in confusion—nothing signed, no proper power of attorney, codicils drawn up in blank and never witnessed; in short, sir, no sense apparently of the nearness of his death and of his duty to be prepared."

"I suppose," I said, "poor Podge didn't realize that he was going to die."

"Ah, that's just it," resumed Mr. Doomer, with something like sternness, "a man *ought* to realize it. Every man ought to feel that at any moment—one can't tell when—day or night, he may be called upon to meet his"—Mr. Doomer paused here as if seeking a phrase—"his financial obligations, face to face. At any time, sir, he may be hurried before the Judge—or rather his estate may be—of the Probate Court. It is a solemn thought, sir. And yet when I come here I see about me men laughing, talking, and playing billiards, as if there would never be a day when their estate would pass into the hands of their administrators and an account must be given of every cent."

"But, after all," I said, trying to fall in with his mood, "death and dissolution must come to all of us."

"That's just it," he said solemnly. "They've dissolved the tobacco people, and they've dissolved the oil people, and you can't tell whose turn it may be next."

Mr. Doomer was silent a moment and then resumed, speaking in a tone of humility that was almost reverential:

"And yet there is a certain preparedness for death, a certain fitness to die that we ought all to aim at. Any man can at least think solemnly of the Inheritance Tax, and reflect whether by a contract *inter vivos* drawn in blank he may not obtain redemption; any man, if he thinks death is near, may at least divest himself of his purely speculative securities and trust himself entirely to those gold-bearing bonds of the great industrial corporations whose value will not readily diminish or pass away." Mr. Doomer was speaking with something like religious rapture.

"And yet what does one see?" he continued. "Men affected with fatal illness and men stricken in years occupied still with idle talk and amusements instead of reading the financial newspapers, and at the last carried away with scarcely time, perhaps, to send for their brokers when it is already too late."

"It is very sad," I said.

"Very," he repeated, "and saddest of all, perhaps, is the sense of the irrevocability of death and the changes that must come after it."

We were silent a moment.

"You think of these things a great deal, Mr. Doomer?" I said.

"I do," he answered. "It may be that it is something in my temperament. I suppose one would call it a sort of spiritual-mindedness. But I think of it all constantly. Often as I stand here beside the window and see these cars go by"—he indicated a passing street car—"I cannot but realize that the time will come when I am no longer a managing director,

and wonder whether they will keep on trying to hold the dividends down by improving the rolling stock or will declare profits to inflate the securities. These mysteries beyond the grave fascinate me, sir. Death is a mysterious thing. Who, for example, will take my seat on the Exchange? What will happen to my majority control of the power company? I shudder to think of the changes that may happen after death in the assessment of my real estate."

"Yes," I said, "it is all beyond our control, isn't it?"

"Quite," answered Mr. Doomer. "Especially of late years one feels that, all said and done, we are in the hands of a Higher Power, and that the State Legislature is after all supreme. It gives one a sense of smallness. It makes one feel that, in these days of drastic legislation, with all one's efforts the individual is lost and absorbed in the controlling power of the State Legislature. Consider the words that are used in the text of the Income Tax Case, Folio Two, or the text of the Trans-Missouri Freight Decision, and think of the revelation they contain."

I left Mr. Doomer still standing beside the window, musing on the vanity of life and on things, such as the future control of freight rates, that lay beyond the grave.

I noticed as I left him how broken and aged he had come to look. It seemed as if the chafings of the spirit were wearing the body that harboured it.

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It was about a month later that I learned of Mr. Doomer's death. Dr. Slyder told me of it in the club one afternoon, over two cocktails in the sitting room.

"A beautiful bedside," he said, "one of the most edifying that I have ever attended. I knew that Doomer was failing, and of course the time came when I had to tell him.

"Mr. Doomer,' I said, 'All that I, all that any medical skill can do for you, is done; you are going to die. I have to warn you that it is time for other ministrations than mine.' 'Very good,' he said, faintly but firmly, 'send for my broker.'

"They sent out and fetched Jarvis—you know him I think; most sympathetic man and yet most business-like; he does all the firm's business with the dying—and we two sat beside Doomer, holding him up while he signed stock transfers and blank certificates.

"Once he paused and turned his eyes on Jarvis. 'Read me from the text of the State Inheritance Tax Statute,' he said. Jarvis took the book and read aloud very quietly and simply the part at the beginning, 'Whenever and wheresoever it shall appear,' down to the words, 'shall be no longer a subject of judgment or appeal, but shall remain in perpetual possession.'

"Doomer listened with his eyes closed. The reading seemed to bring him great comfort. When Jarvis ended he said with a sigh, 'That covers it. I'll put my faith in that.' After that he was silent a moment and then said, 'I wish I had already crossed the river. Oh, to have already crossed the river and be safe on the other side.' We knew what he meant. He had always planned to move over to New Jersey. The Inheritance Tax is so much more liberal.

"Presently it was all done. 'There,' I said; 'it is finished now.' 'No,' he answered, 'there is still one thing. Doctor, you've been very good to me. I should like to pay your account now without it being a charge on the estate. I will pay it as'—he paused for a moment and a fit of coughing seized him, but by an effort of will he found the power to say—'cash.'

"I took the account from my pocket (I had it with me, fearing the worst) and we laid his cheque-book before him on the bed. Jarvis, thinking him too faint to write, tried to guide his hand as he filled in the sum. But he shook his head. 'The room is getting dim,' he said, 'I can see nothing but the figures.' 'Never mind,' said Jarvis, much moved, 'that's enough.' 'Is it four hundred and thirty?' he asked faintly. 'Yes,' I said, and I could feel the tears rising in my eyes, 'and fifty cents.'

"After signing the cheque his mind wandered for a moment and he fell to talking, with his eyes closed, of the new federal banking law, and of the prospect of the reserve associations being able to maintain an adequate gold supply.

"Just at the last he rallied. 'I want,' he said, in quite a firm voice, 'to do something for both of you before I die.' 'Yes, yes,' we said. 'You are both interested, are you not?' he murmured, 'in City Traction?' 'Yes, yes,' we said. We knew, of course,

that he was the managing director.

"He looked at us faintly and tried to speak. 'Give him a cordial,' said Jarvis. But he found his voice. 'The value of that stock,' he said, 'is going to take a sudden—' His voice grew faint. 'Yes, yes,' I whispered, bending over him (there were tears in both our eyes), 'tell me is it going up, or going down?' 'It is going,' he murmured—then his eyes closed—'it is going—' 'Yes, yes,' I said; 'which?' 'It is going,' he repeated feebly, and then, quite suddenly, he fell back on the pillows and his soul passed. And we never knew which way it was going. It was very sad. Later on, of course, after he was dead, we knew, as everybody knew, that it went down."

—*Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy.*

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## THE SORROWS OF A SUMMER GUEST



Let me admit, as I start to write, that the whole thing is my own fault. I should never have come. I knew better. I have known better for years. I have known that it is sheer madness to go and pay visits in other people's houses.

Yet in a moment of insanity I have let myself in for it and here I am. There is no hope, no outlet now till the first of September, when my visit is to terminate. Either that or death. I do not greatly care which.

I write this, where no human eye can see me, down by the pond—they call it the lake—at the foot of Beverly-Jones' estate. It is six o'clock in the morning. No one is up. For a brief hour or so there is peace. But presently Miss Larkspur—the jolly English girl who arrived last week—will throw open her casement window and call across the lawn, "Hullo! everybody! What a ripping morning!" And young Poppleton will call back in a Swiss yodel from somewhere in the shrubbery, and Beverly-Jones will appear on the piazza with big towels round his neck and shout, "Who's coming for an early dip?" And so the day's fun and jollity—heaven help me—will begin again.

Presently they will all come trooping in to breakfast, in colored blazers and fancy blouses, laughing and grabbing at the food with mimic rudeness and bursts of hilarity. And to think that I might have been breakfasting at my club with the morning paper propped against the coffee-pot, in a silent room in the quiet of the city.

I repeat that it is my own fault that I am here.

For many years it had been a principle of my life to visit nobody. I had long since learned that visiting only brings misery. If I got a card or telegram that said, "Won't you run up to the Adirondacks and spend the weekend with us?" I sent back word: "No, not unless the Adirondacks can run faster than I can," or words to that effect. If the owner of a country house wrote to me: "Our man will meet you with a trap any afternoon that you care to name," I answered, in spirit at least: "No, he won't, not unless he has a bear-trap or one of those traps in which they catch wild antelopes." If any fashionable lady friend wrote to me in the peculiar jargon that they use: "Can you give us from July the twelfth at half-after-three till the fourteenth at four?" I replied: "Madam, take the whole month, take a year, but leave me in peace."

Such at least was the spirit of my answers to invitations. In practice I used to find it sufficient to send a telegram that read: "Crushed with work; impossible to get away," and then stroll back into the reading room of the club and fall asleep again.

But my coming here was my own fault. It resulted from one of those unhappy moments of expansiveness such as occur, I imagine, to everybody—moments when one appears to be something quite different from what one really is—when one feels oneself a thorough good fellow, sociable, merry, appreciative, and finds the people around one the same. Such moods are known to all of us. Some people say that it is the super-self asserting itself.... That at any rate was the kind of mood that I was in when I met Beverly-Jones and when he asked me here.

It was in the afternoon, at the club. As I recall it, we were drinking cocktails and I was thinking what a bright, genial fellow Beverly-Jones was, and how completely I had mistaken him. For myself—I admit it—I am a brighter, better man after drinking two cocktails than at any other time—quicker, kindlier, more genial—and higher, morally. I had been telling stories in that inimitable way that one has after two cocktails. In reality, I only know four stories, and a fifth that I don't quite remember, but in moments of expansiveness they feel like a fund or flow.

It was under such circumstances that I sat with Beverly-Jones. And it was in shaking hands at leaving that he said: "I *do* wish, old chap, that you could run up to our summer place and give us the whole of August!" and I answered, as I shook him warmly by the hand: "My *dear* fellow, I'd simply *love* to!" "By gad, then, it's a go!" he said. "You must come up for August, and wake us all up!"

Wake them up! Ye gods! Me wake them up!

One hour later I was repenting of my folly, and wishing, when I thought of the two cocktails, that the prohibition wave could be hurried up so as to leave us all high and dry—bone dry, silent and unsociable.

Then I clung to the hope that Beverly-Jones would forget. But no. In due time his wife wrote to me. They were looking forward so much, she said, to my visit; they felt—she repeated her husband's ominous phrase—that I should wake them

all up!

What sort of alarm clock did they take me for, anyway!

Ah, well! They know better now. It was only yesterday afternoon that Beverly-Jones found me standing here in the gloom of some cedar-trees beside the edge of the pond and took me back so quietly to the house that I realized he thought I meant to drown myself. So I did.

I could have stood it better—my coming here I mean—if they hadn't come down to the station in a body to meet me in one of those long vehicles with seats down the sides; silly-looking men in colored blazers and girls with no hats, all making a hullabaloo of welcome. "We are quite a small party," Mrs. Beverly-Jones had written. Small! Great heavens, what would they call a large one? And even those at the station turned out to be only half of them. There were just as many more all lined up on the piazza of the house as we drove up, all waving a fool welcome with tennis rackets and golf clubs.

Small party, indeed! Why, after six days there are still some of the idiots whose names I haven't got straight! That fool with the fluffy moustache, which is he? And that jackass that made the salad at the picnic yesterday—is he the brother of the woman with the guitar, or who?

But what I mean is, there is something in that sort of noisy welcome that puts me to the bad at the start. It always does. A group of strangers all laughing together, and with a set of catchwords and jokes all their own, always throws me into a fit of sadness, deeper than words. I had thought, when Mrs. Beverly-Jones said a *small* party, she really meant small. I had had a mental picture of a few sad people, greeting me very quietly and gently, and of myself, quiet, too, but cheerful—somehow lifting them up, with no great effort, by my mere presence.

Somehow from the very first I could feel that Beverly-Jones was disappointed in me. He said nothing. But I knew it. On that first afternoon, between my arrival and dinner he took me about his place, to show it to me. I wish that at some proper time I had learned just what it is that you say when a man shows you about his place. I never knew before how deficient I am in it. I am all right to be shown an iron-and-steel plant, or a soda-water factory or anything really wonderful, but being shown a house and grounds and trees, things that I have seen all my life, leaves me absolutely silent.

"These big gates," said Beverly-Jones, "we only put up this year."

"Oh," I said. That was all. Why shouldn't they put them up this year? I didn't care if they'd put them up this year or a thousand years ago.

"We had quite a struggle," he continued, "before we finally decided on sandstone."

"You did, eh?" I said. There seemed nothing more to say; I didn't know what sort of a struggle he meant, or who fought who; and personally sandstone or soapstone or any other stone is all the same to me.

"This lawn," said Beverly-Jones, "we laid down the first year we were here." I answered nothing. He looked me right in the face as he said it and I looked straight back at him, but I saw no reason to challenge his statement.

"The geraniums along the border," he went on, "are rather an experiment. They're Dutch."

I looked fixedly at the geraniums but never said a word. They were Dutch; all right, why not? They were an experiment. Very good; let them be so. I know nothing in particular to say about a Dutch experiment.

I could feel that Beverly-Jones grew depressed as he showed me round. I was sorry for him, but unable to help. I realized that there were certain sections of my education that had been neglected. How to be shown things and make appropriate comments seems to be an art in itself. I don't possess it. It is not likely now, as I look at this pond, that I ever shall.

Yet how simple a thing it seems when done by others. I saw the difference at once the very next day, the second day of my visit, when Beverly-Jones took round young Poppleton, the man that I mentioned above who will presently give a Swiss yodel from a clump of laurel bushes to indicate that the day's fun has begun.

Poppleton I had known before slightly. I used to see him at the club. In club surroundings he always struck me as an

ineffable young ass, loud and talkative, and perpetually breaking the silence rules. Yet I have to admit that in his summer flannels and with a straw hat on he can do things that I can't.

"These big gates," began Beverly-Jones as he showed Poppleton round the place, with me trailing beside them, "we only put up this year."

Poppleton, who has a summer place of his own, looked at the gates very critically.

"Now, do you know what *I'd* have done with those gates, if they were mine?" he said.

"No," said Beverly-Jones.

"I'd have set them two feet wider apart; they're too narrow, old chap, too narrow." Poppleton shook his head sadly at the gates.

"We had quite a struggle," said Beverly-Jones, "before we finally decided on sandstone."

I realized that he had one and the same line of talk that he always used. I resented it. No wonder it was easy for him.

"Great mistake," said Poppleton. "Too soft. Look at this"—here he picked up a big stone and began pounding at the gate post—"see how easily it chips! Smashes right off. Look at that, the whole corner knocks right off; see?"

Beverly-Jones entered no protest. I began to see that there is a sort of understanding, a kind of freemasonry, among men who have summer places. One shows his things; the other runs them down, and smashes them. This makes the whole thing easy at once. Beverly-Jones showed his lawn.

"Your turf is all wrong, old boy," said Poppleton. "Look! it has no body to it. See, I can kick holes in it with my heel. Look at that, and that! If I had on stronger boots I could kick this lawn all to pieces."

"These geraniums along the border," said Beverly-Jones, "are rather an experiment. They're Dutch."

"But my dear fellow," said Poppleton, "you've got them set in wrongly. They ought to slope *from* the sun you know, never *to* it. Wait a bit"—here he picked up a spade that was lying where a gardener had been working—"I'll throw a few out. Notice how easily they come up. Ah, that fellow broke! They're apt to. There, I won't bother to reset them, but tell your man to slope them over from the sun. That's the idea."

Beverly-Jones showed his new boat-house next and Poppleton knocked a hole in the side with a hammer to show that the lumber was too thin.

"If that were *my* boat-house," he said, "I'd rip the outside clean off it and use shingle and stucco."

It was, I noticed, Poppleton's plan first to imagine Beverly-Jones' things his own, and then to smash them, and then give them back smashed to Beverly-Jones. This seemed to please them both. Apparently it is a well-understood method of entertaining a guest and being entertained. Beverly-Jones and Poppleton, after an hour or so of it, were delighted with one another.

Yet somehow, when I tried it myself, it failed to work.

"Do you know what I would do with that cedar summer-house if it was mine?" I asked my host the next day.

"No," he said.

"I'd knock the thing down and burn it," I answered.

But I think I must have said it too fiercely. Beverly-Jones looked hurt and said nothing.

Not that these people are not doing all they can for me. I know that. I admit it. If I *should* meet my end here and if—to put the thing straight out—my lifeless body is found floating on the surface of this pond, I should like there to be documentary evidence of *that* much. They are trying their best. "This is Liberty Hall," Mrs. Beverly-Jones said to me on the first day of my visit: "We want you to feel that you are to do absolutely as you like!"

Absolutely as I like! How little they know me. I should like to have answered: "Madam, I have now reached a time of

life when human society at breakfast is impossible to me; when any conversation prior to eleven a.m. must be considered out of the question; when I prefer to eat my meals in quiet, or with only such mild hilarity as can be got from a comic paper; when I can no longer wear nankeen pants and a coloured blazer without a sense of personal indignity; when I can no longer leap and play in the water like a young fish; when I do not yodel, cannot sing, and, to my regret, dance even worse than I did when young; and when the mood of mirth and hilarity comes to me only as a rare visitant—shall we say at a burlesque performance—and never as a daily part of my existence. Madam, I am unfit to be a summer guest. If this is Liberty Hall indeed, let me, oh, let me go!"

Such is the speech that I would make if it were possible. As it is, I can only rehearse it to myself.

Indeed, the more I analyze it the more impossible it seems, for a man of my temperament at any rate, to be a summer guest. These people, and, I imagine, all other summer people, seem to be trying to live in a perpetual joke. Everything, all day, has to be taken in a mood of uproarious fun.

However, I can speak of it all now in quiet retrospect and without bitterness. It will soon be over now. Indeed, the reason why I have come down at this early hour to this quiet water is that things have reached a crisis. The situation has become extreme and I must end it.

It happened last night. Beverly-Jones took me aside while the others were dancing the fox-trot to the victrola on the piazza.

"We're planning to have some rather good fun to-morrow night," he said—"something that will be a good deal more in your line than a lot of it, I'm afraid has been up here. In fact, my wife says that this will be the very thing for you."

"Oh," I said.

"We're going to get all the people from the other houses over, and the girls—" this term Beverly-Jones uses to mean his wife and her friends—"are going to get up a sort of entertainment with charades and things, all impromptu, more or less, of course—"

"Oh," I said. I saw already what was coming.

"And they want you to act as a sort of master-of-ceremonies, to make up the gags and introduce the different stunts and all that. I was telling the girls about that afternoon at the club, when you were simply killing us all with those funny stories of yours, and they're all wild over it."

"Wild?" I repeated.

"Yes, quite wild over it. They say it will be the hit of the summer."

Beverly-Jones shook hands with great warmth as we parted for the night. I knew that he was thinking that my character was about to be triumphantly vindicated, and that he was glad for my sake.

Last night I did not sleep. I remained awake all night thinking of the "entertainment." In my whole life I have done nothing in public except once when I presented a walking-stick to the vice-president of our club on the occasion of his taking a trip to Europe. Even for that I used to rehearse to myself far into the night sentences that began: "This walking-stick, gentlemen, means far more than a mere walking-stick."

And now they expect me to come out as a merry master-of-ceremonies before an assembled crowd of summer guests.

But never mind. It is nearly over now. I have come down to this quiet water in the early morning to throw myself in. They will find me floating here among the lilies. Some few will understand. I can see it written, as it will be, in the newspapers.

"What makes the sad fatality doubly poignant is that the unhappy victim had just entered upon a holiday visit that was to have been prolonged throughout the whole month. Needless to say, he was regarded as the life and soul of the pleasant party of holiday makers that had gathered at the delightful country home of Mr. and Mrs. Beverly-Jones. Indeed, on the very day of the tragedy, he was to have taken a leading part in staging a merry performance of charades and parlor entertainments—a thing for which his genial talents and overflowing high spirits rendered him specially fit."

When they read that, those who know me best will understand how and why I died. "He had still over three weeks to stay there," they will say. "He was to act as the stage manager of charades." They will shake their heads. They will understand.

But what is this? I raise my eyes from the paper and I see Beverly-Jones hurriedly approaching from the house. He is hastily dressed, with flannel trousers and a dressing gown. His face looks grave. Something has happened. Thank God, something has happened. Some accident! Some tragedy! Something to prevent the charades!

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I write these few lines on a fast train that is carrying me back to New York, a cool, comfortable train, with a deserted club-car where I can sit in a leather arm-chair, with my feet up on another, smoking, silent and at peace.

Villages, farms and summer places are flying by. Let them fly. I, too, am flying—back to the rest and quiet of the city.

"Old man," Beverly-Jones said, as he laid his hand on mine very kindly—he is a decent fellow, after all, is Jones—"they're calling you by long-distance from New York."

"What is it?" I asked, or tried to gasp.

"It's bad news, old chap; fire in your office last evening. I'm afraid a lot of your private papers were burned. Robinson—that's your senior clerk, isn't it?—seems to have been on the spot trying to save things. He's badly singed about the face and hands. I'm afraid you must go at once."

"Yes, yes," I said, "at once."

"I know. I've told the man to get the trap ready right away. You've just time to catch the seven-ten. Come along."

"Right," I said. I kept my face as well as I could, trying to hide my exultation! The office burnt! Fine! Robinson singed! Glorious! I hurriedly packed my things and whispered to Beverly-Jones farewell messages for the sleeping household. I never felt so jolly and facetious in my life. I could feel that Beverly-Jones was admiring the spirit and pluck with which I took my misfortune. Later on he would tell them all about it.

The trap ready! Hurrah! Good-bye, old man! Hurrah! All right. I'll telegraph. Right you are, good-bye. Hip, hip, hurrah! Here we are! Train right on time. Just these two bags, porter, and there's a dollar for you. What merry, merry fellows these darky porters are, anyway!

And so here I am in the train, safe bound for home and the summer quiet of my club.

Well done for Robinson! I was afraid that it had missed fire, or that my message to him had gone wrong. It was on the second day of my visit that I sent word to him to invent an accident—something, anything—to call me back. I thought the message had failed. I had lost hope. But it is all right now, though he certainly pitched the note pretty high.

Of course I can't let the Beverly-Joneses know that it was a put-up job. I must set fire to the office as soon as I get back. But it's worth it. And I'll have to singe Robinson about the face and hands. But it's worth that too!

—*Frenzied Fiction*

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## OXFORD SMOKING



o my mind these unthinking judgments about our great college do harm, and I determined, therefore, that anything that I said about Oxford should be the result of the actual observation and real study based upon a bona fide residence in the Mitre Hotel.

On the strength of this basis of experience I am prepared to make the following positive and emphatic statements. Oxford is a noble university. It has a great past. It is at present the greatest university in the world: and it is quite possible that it has a great future. Oxford trains scholars of the real type better than any other place in the world. Its methods are antiquated. It despises science. Its lectures are rotten. It has professors who never teach and students who never learn. It has no order, no arrangement, no system. Its curriculum is unintelligible. It has no president. It has no state legislature to tell it how to teach, and yet—it gets there. Whether we like it or not, Oxford gives something to its students, a life and a mode of thought, which in America, as yet, we can emulate, but not equal.

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The lack of building fund necessitates the Oxford students living in the identical old boarding-houses they had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Technically they are called "quadrangles," "closes," and "rooms"; but I am so broken in to the usage of my student days that I can't help calling them boarding-houses. In many of these the old stairway has been worn down by the generations of students; the windows have little latticed panes; there are old names carved here and there upon the stone, and a thick growth of ivy covers the walls. The boarding-house at St. John's College dates from 1509, the one at Christ Church from the same period. A few hundred thousand pounds would suffice to replace these old buildings with neat steel and brick structures, like the normal school at Schenectady, N.Y., or the Peel Street High School in Montreal. But nothing is done. A movement was indeed attempted last autumn towards removing the ivy from the walls, but the result was unsatisfactory and they are putting it back. Anyone could have told them beforehand that the mere removal of the ivy would not brighten Oxford up, unless at the same time one cleared the stones of the old inscriptions, put in steel fire-escapes, and in fact brought the boarding houses up to date.

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The effect of the comparison is heightened by the peculiar position occupied at Oxford by the professors' lectures. In the colleges of Canada and the United States the lectures are supposed to be a really necessary and useful part of the students' training. Again and again I have heard the graduates of my own college assert that they had got as much, or nearly as much, out of the lectures at college as out of athletics or the Greek letter society or the Banjo and Mandolin Club. In short, with us the lectures form a real part of the college life. At Oxford it is not so. The lectures, I understand, are given, and may even be taken, but they are quite worthless and are not supposed to have anything much to do with the development of the students' minds. "The lectures here," said a Canadian student to me, "are punk." I appealed to another student to know if this was so. "I don't know whether I'd call them exactly punk," he answered, "but they're certainly rotten." Other judgments were that the lectures were of no importance: that nobody took them: that they don't matter: that you can take them if you like: that they do you no harm.

It appears further that the professors themselves are not keen on their lectures. If the lectures are called for they give them; if not, the professor's feelings are not hurt. He merely waits and rests his brain until in some later year the students call for his lectures. There are men at Oxford who have rested their brains this way for over thirty years. The accumulated brain power thus dammed up is said to be colossal.

I understand that the key to this mystery is found in the operations of the person called the tutor. It is from him, or rather with him, that the students learn all that they know: one and all are agreed on that. Yet it is a little odd to know just how he does it. "We go over to his rooms," said one student, "and he just lights a pipe and talks to us." "We sit round with him," said another, "and he simply smokes and goes over our exercises with us." From this and other evidence I gather that what an Oxford tutor does is to get a little group of students together and smoke at them. Men who have been systematically smoked at for four years turn into ripe scholars. If anybody doubts this, let him go to Oxford and he can see the thing actually in operation. A well-smoked man speaks and writes English with a grace that can be acquired in no

other way.

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Now, the principal reason why I am led to admire Oxford is that the place is little touched as yet by the measuring of "results," and by this passion for visible and provable "efficiency." The whole system at Oxford is such as to put a premium on genius and to let mediocrity and dullness go their way. On the dull student, Oxford, after a proper lapse of time, confers a degree which means nothing more than that he lived and breathed at Oxford and kept out of jail. This for many students is as much as society can expect. But for the gifted student Oxford offers great opportunities. There is no question of his hanging back till the last sheep has jumped over the fence. He need wait for no one. He may move forward as fast as he likes, following the bent of his genius. If he has in him any ability beyond that of the common herd, his tutor, interested in his studies, will smoke at him until he kindles him into a flame. For the tutor's soul is not harassed by herding dull students, with dismissal hanging by a thread over his head in the class room. The American professor has no time to be interested in a clever student. He has time to be interested in his "department," his letter-writing, his executive work, and his organizing ability and his hope of promotion to a soap factory. But with that his mind is exhausted. The student of genius merely means to him a student who gives no trouble, who passes all his "tests," and is present at all his "recitations." Such a student also, if he can be trained to be a hustler and an advertiser, will undoubtedly "make good." But beyond that the professor does not think of him. The everlasting principle of equality has inserted itself in a place where it has no right to be, and where inequality is the breath of life.

Viewing the situation as a whole, I am led then to the conclusion that there must be something in the life of Oxford itself that makes for higher learning. Smoked at by his tutor, fed in Henry VIII's kitchen, and sleeping in a tangle of ivy, the student evidently gets something not easily obtained in America. And the more I reflect on the matter the more I am convinced that it is the sleeping in the ivy that does it. How different it is from student life as I remember it!

—*My Discovery of England.*

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## AN APPRECIATION



Do you remember Col. Hogshead in the "Literary Lapses?" He claimed that there was a character called Saloonio in the "Merchant of Venice," though no one else had ever heard of him. He was "the man who came on the stage all the time and sort of put things through."

Well, I am in much the same case as Col. Hogshead. In preparing to write this paper I have read everything I could find about Stephen Leacock. But no one else seems to have seen the Stephen Leacock who has had a place of honor in my gallery of favorites for over thirty years. Of course I find him in the books and, like Saloonio, he is on the stage all the time—or at least very often—and sort of puts things through. Worst of all, he doesn't look a bit like the published portraits of Leacock, and I couldn't imagine him making one of those brilliant after-dinner speeches that I see reported in the papers from time to time. But to me he is the real Stephen Leacock, and no learned doctor, nor professor of political economy, nor brilliant author, nor lecturer who can make even old England laugh, can make me give him up. You may not be able to find him in the books, even after I describe him to you, but for me he is there all the time, "concealed behind the arras or feasting with the doge."

The reviewer who said that Mr. Leacock's work received instant recognition and appreciation fell short of the truth. His humour was current among the students of Toronto University even before he began to write. The first example of it that was repeated to me by one of his youthful admirers has never been published, but it is still as fresh to me as his latest production. It was a burlesque account of Noah building the Ark, that he used to give for the amusement of his immediate circle of friends. Noah, with his mouth full of nails, was issuing orders to Shem, Ham, and Japhet about bringing in the animals. They had a lot of trouble getting the hippopotamus out of the river and, meanwhile, the neighbors stood around and geyed Noah. They didn't think it was going to be more than a shower anyway. And Noah hit his thumb with the hammer while trying to drive a nail. And so on, and so on. You can imagine what Leacock could do with such a theme.

Then came the first published article, "A, B, and C." From that moment Stephen Leacock was what he has continued to be ever since. He was the humorist of youth, and in spite of later lapses into humor for sophisticated grown-ups he will always continue to be the humorist of youth. "A, B, and C" captivates every school-boy and school-girl at once. Charles Lamb and Mark Twain may be beyond their grasp, but to find the mathematical symbols that they use every day given life and personality brings a sudden hilarity into the routine of school life.

It was shortly after the publication of this sketch that I had my one and only glimpse of Stephen Leacock in the flesh. I had reached the last hour of a visit to Toronto when a friend told me that Leacock was having a game of billiards in a near-by billiard parlor, and offered to introduce me. When we reached the billiard room the game was over and I carried away a mental picture of a slender young man putting away a billiard cue and looking at me over his shoulder. The interview did not last for more than five minutes, and I do not remember a word that was said. I have never been able to decide whether the impression he made was of being shy or of being stand-offish. Anyway, we didn't get very far in our interview. And he didn't look a bit like the pictures of him that appear so often in the papers. But that quiet, youthful Stephen Leacock has come down the years with me and persists in walking before me on every page he publishes.

His next published article was "My Financial Career," and I am willing to contend—if necessary, with "grinded lances"—that no grown-up person ever fully appreciated the abundant humor of that little masterpiece. It is an outburst of reckless, effervescent youth that only the young can enter into fully. Of course, if you read it first when you were young, its full humor may have remained with you, but no person of mature age, reading it for the first time, can appreciate its joyous insolence. Just think of it! He has dared to be merry with a bank. What awful blasphemy! To the grown up man a bank is a combination of a temple and a tomb. It is the holy of holies of that which he worships and serves every hour of his life. And his chief tragedies are connected with it. Overdrafts, "equitably rationed credit," and "selective curtailment" have made the bank a charnel of dead hopes. How many of his dreams of avarice have been shattered by the refusal of an unfeeling banker to extend the necessary credit. No! No! You cannot expect a grown-up man to indulge in care-free laughter at "My Financial Career."

I am in a position to back up my opinion on this point. For some years past I have been using "My Financial Career" as a reading on the public platform and have watched its effect on many audiences. The young are always the first to laugh and the last to stop laughing. The mature join in of course, but to even the most successful men a bank recalls unpleasant moments. And if there happens to be a banker in the audience the older people look towards him and sober up at once. I

have known even a branch bank manager—a man no more impressive than Peter Pumpkin—to check the enjoyment of all the mature people in an audience. But the young just let themselves go. Most of them have run a message to a bank or have been inside of one, and they have experienced the same feelings that Leacock expresses so poignantly. They do not realize that their future in life may depend on the smiles of a banker, and they let themselves go, no matter who may be offended.

It has always seemed to me that "My Financial Career" could have been written only by a young man who was exquisitely sensitive. Contact with the inexplicable grown-up world made him feel shy and awkward, and perhaps it hurt a little. In self-defence he turned it all to ridicule—just to bluff the young people of his own age. He was like a boy taking a dare to throw a snowball at the schoolmaster or the minister. He would let his contemporaries see that even a bank couldn't overawe him. And in all his later dealings with club-men and the idle rich there is a touch of the same bravado. I doubt if either the student or the professor has been wholly at ease with the solid citizens and solid institutions of the world. And he gets back at them by having a joke at their expense. The same solemn boy (wearing a grey suit by the way) who walked through the awful adventures in the bank, now walks through the Mausoleum Club and glares defiantly at Mr. Doomer and the other worthies of High Finance. (Oh, I know all about that "infectious smile," but the boy is there just the same, "behind the arras.") The same sensitiveness sharpens his powers of observation, and he turns them all to ridicule—not for the boys of his own generation, but of this generation, and for all generations of boys to come. He is youth making laughter for youth, and the laughter will continue while the young are shy and awkward and sensitive.

Although scholarship and experience of life have given him a wider range of themes than when he wrote "My Financial Career" his art is the same. He has never dealt much in epigrams and "lapidary phrases." With individual and inimitable skill he takes ordinary incidents and by the use of ordinary language—though of unusual clarity—he builds up situation after situation that is electrical with laughter. For sheer audacity of irresponsible fun-making some of his little sketches are unique. They have a spontaneity that is not surpassed even in the poems of Calverly.

A careful reading of Mr. Leacock's works with a view to discovering the man back of them, is an exhilarating, but somewhat bewildering task. He has expressed opinions on every conceivable subject, and has expressed them with impetuous vigor. Usually his dominant note is one of rebellion.

"The rewards and punishments in the unequal and ill-adjusted world in which we live are most unfair." His comments are at all times penetrating. But he seldom offers a solution of any of the problems he scornfully analyzes. Why should he? Others have been offering solutions down through the centuries and piling foolishness on foolishness. The great fact to be gathered from all this is that the contacts of life have not made him callous. His sympathy with all human hurts and needs is never failing. He rages at the impossibility of setting things right and then finds refuge in his marvellous gift of laughter. If he cannot help us, he can make us laugh and forget. Possibly he finds forgetfulness himself in his outbursts of fun-making. In any case, it is something to be thankful for that his fun is without malice. It is an anodyne for the miseries that he cannot correct. To laugh with him in his gay moods is to be refreshed for the battle of life—to share in his high spirits. And if, after laughing with him, the world goes back to its cares and thinks of him only as a frivolous entertainer, who deserves attention only in idle hours, it is only making the same mistake it has always made in dealing with those who bring good gifts and enrich life. He has equipped himself as a scholar and thinker to deal gravely with the gravest problems—but all that his ever-increasing following sees is the sparkle of his wit and the antic nimbleness with which he turns life's hypocrisies and stupidities to laughter. Surely it is excusable if he has moments of cynicism and bitterness. The more he is acclaimed for his humor the more he must feel the futility of things. It was after his fame had been established that he wrote:

"An acquired indifference to the ills of others is the price at which we live. A certain dole of sympathy, a casual mite of personal relief, is the mere drop that anyone of us alone can cast into the vast ocean of human misery. Beyond that we must harden ourselves lest we, too, perish. We feed well while others starve. We make fast the doors of our lighted houses against the indigent and hungry. What else can we do? If we shelter one, what is that? If we try to shelter all, we are ourselves shelterless."

Mr. Leacock's most ambitious book is the series of "Sunshine Sketches" that reveal the town of Mariposa and its typical inhabitants. In commenting on it himself he points out all the faults that could be pointed out by the most censorious critic.

"I wrote this book with considerable difficulty. I can invent characters quite easily, but I have no notion as to how to make things happen to them. Indeed I see no reason why anything should. I could write awfully good short stories if it were only permissible merely to introduce some extremely original character, and at the end of two pages announce that at this point a brick fell on his head and killed him. If there were room for

a school of literature of this kind I should offer to lead it. I do not mean that the hero would always and necessarily be killed by a brick. One might sometimes use two. Such feeble plots as there are in this book were invented by brute force, after the characters had been introduced. Hence the atrocious clumsiness of the construction all through."

As a story, "Sunshine Sketches" has no plot. Very well. After reading it, we prefer our novels that way. The reader is satisfied, even though nothing happens. It has no suspended interest. True, but it has a sustained chuckle that keeps us going from page to page without any thought of skipping or stopping. And often the fun of the book bubbles over in hilarious nonsense, as when Mr. Bagshaw, on his return from Ottawa, "Went into Callahan's tobacco store and bought two ten cent cigars and took them across the street and gave them to Mallory Tompkins of the *Times-Herald* as a present from the Prime Minister."

The characters are such as you would find in any small town, and the things they say and do and think in the book are the things they are saying and doing and thinking in a thousand small towns to-day. But in real life we have no chuckling master of ceremonies to bring them out and show their weaknesses and absurdities—and human decency. The people of Mariposa are revealed in another sunshine than that of the every-day sun—the sunshine of a spirit that is wise and tolerant and amused. He reveals the law-breaking and cunning of Josh Smith—now legally extinct—as ruthlessly as if he were an investigator of the muckraking period, yet makes the fat rascal so human and deep-read in human frailty that we know he must be descended from a younger scion of the Falstaff family who adventured to the New World in the days of Elizabeth or James. The prohibition wave may have swept the saloon from existence, but it breaks in vain against the colossal figure of "JOS. SMITH, PROP." And it is doubtful if the waves of time will submerge him any more than the prohibition wave.

There is not a character in this book that is not in place in a New World small town, and nothing happens that would not happen in any other small town. Only a touch of literary gloom would be needed to make this picture of contemporary life as sordid and mean and futile as any to be found in the most depressing "best seller." But the sunshine in which it is revealed has transfigured it. And the sunshine never fails. Judge Pepperleigh and Dean Drone and Henry Mullins, and all the rest of them, move through the years, aureoled in kindly light and laughter. The art of "Sunshine Sketches" successfully blends the keen observation of the realist with the glamour of the idealist. Whether the book ranks as a classic time alone can tell, but for the present it is very satisfying.

"Nonsense Novels," whose success established Stephen Leacock's fame, deserve attention for a number of reasons. He ridiculed the best sellers—and in doing so produced a best seller. But these little novels are sheer fun from start to finish. It is not as parodies on current fiction that they excel. Their chief merit lies in the opportunity they gave Mr. Leacock to give full scope to his genius for attractive nonsense. More than anything else they are just what he has named them—"Nonsense Novels." They can be enjoyed even by those who know nothing of the types of novels they start out to parody. Every character and every incident gives the humorist a chance to bubble over with delightfully inconsequent nonsense. If Hazlitt could have seen this book he would have devoted a special essay to it. He claimed that nonsense is an essentially English form of fun that is unknown to other people.

"I flatter myself that we are almost the only people who understand and relish *nonsense*. We are not 'merry and wise,' but indulge our mirth to excess and folly. When we trifle we trifle in good earnest; and, having once relaxed our hold of the helm, drift idly down the stream, and, delighted with the change, are tossed about by every little breath of whim or caprice,

"'That under Heaven is blown,'

All we want is to proclaim a truce with reason, and to be pleased with as little expense of thought or pretension to wisdom as possible."

Of this nonsense which Hazlitt admired, Stephen Leacock is a master—and also he is almost its slave. Whether writing burlesque, or satire, or humor or even pathos, he must stop every little while to indulge in an outburst of nonsense. That Mr. Leacock agrees with Hazlitt is shown by his admiration for "Alice in Wonderland"—that world masterpiece of nonsense. But his own nonsense in its way is just as masterly as that of Lewis Carrol, and even more mirth-provoking. It may not have the poetic whimsicality of "Alice in Wonderland," but it is just as unexpected and even more lavish.

As a single book "Nonsense Novels" does not deserve a word of censure, but as a turning point in the development of Mr. Leacock's art it raises a doubt. Since its appearance the public has demanded more nonsense novels, and the publishers have tried to make it appear that all his later work has been of the same class. This is not true. He has

allowed himself a wide range, which embraces pathos as well as nonsense, but publishers, critics and readers have seemingly conspired to make believe that all his productions are nonsense sketches. Of course the same care-free nonsense appears in the later books and perhaps dominates them, but not to the exclusion of other forms of humor with which he made us familiar in his earlier books. The aggrieved boy still appears, full of fierce but funny indignation—as when Melpomenus Jones exclaimed with hollow, despairing laughter:

"Another cup of tea and more photographs! More photographs! Har! Har!"

When he appears in the last book he is just as aggrieved and indignant and funny as ever. The chairman at one of the lectures had announced:

"This year we are starting a new line, and trying the experiment of cheaper talent."

"Let anybody who knows the discomfiture of coming out before an audience on any terms, judge how it feels to crawl out in front of them labelled as *cheaper talent*."

The satirical master of ceremonies is there also and gives us such comments as this:

"The Rasselyer-Brown residence was the kind of cultivated home where people of education and taste are at liberty to talk about things they don't know and utter freely ideas they haven't got."

If Mr. Leacock's later books were as advertised and popularly acclaimed they would be mere imitations of "Nonsense Novels," but fortunately he has not allowed himself to be submerged by his first success. There are elements of even greater success in other phases of his humor. Many of his sincerest admirers wish that his work had developed along the line of "Sunshine Sketches" rather than on the line of "Nonsense Novels."

Like everyone else, I have read Mr. Leacock's writings as they have appeared in periodicals and from time to time in books, but never with the purpose of appraising his powers and achievements. Now that I have re-read his books I am forced to a number of conclusions. To begin with, I cannot confine my mental picture of him to the shy and sensitive boy. I must admit that he has somehow developed into a man with a competent chuckle, who laughs at things, not because they hurt, but because he knows them and sees through their solemn pretentiousness. Then this man is sometimes aroused to indignant scorn and plies a satiric lash, that is none the less lacerating because it is light. Sometimes, for he is human, he blunders into something like peevishness and might almost be accused of scolding. But in every book, and in almost every article, I still find flashes of the boy, and am glad. I do not want to give him up, for that would mean giving up one of the last outposts of my own youth. To laugh with Leacock in his boyish moods is still to be in one's twenties, and is very precious.

So much has been said about Leacock as a satirist that a word of consideration is indicated. Somehow I cannot class him with the great satirists. Although he has decided satirical power, it is slight compared with his genius as a fun-maker. I should never think of applying to him the quotation from Milton that Hugh Miller applied to Voltaire:

"I forewarn thee, shun  
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope  
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,  
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,  
Save He who reigns above, none can resist."

It is true that his ridicule can provoke laughter at many things that deserve the lash of satire, but it is not the laughter that one associates with the great masters of the lash. The subtle malignity of Swift, the delicate, brilliant savagery of Pope, and the indignant scorn of Dryden, are nowhere in evidence. Mr. Leacock's lively mockery does not voice the rancours of his time. While his treatment of enemy statesmen, generals and rulers, for instance, moves us to laughter, the average man will prefer to leave the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs and their retinues to the fierce invective of Henry Watterson and of others who are skilled in expressing the unprintable opinions of their fellow men. The ordinary reader is not satisfied to see these great offenders tapped with a bauble. He wants someone to go after them with an axe. Mr. Leacock lacks the cold ferocity of the master satirist. And it is a good thing that he does. In spite of Pope's boast that those who are:—

"Safe from the pulpit, bar and throne  
Are touched and shamed by ridicule alone,"

it is doubtful if the satirists ever accomplished much for the good of mankind. When the world is ready to dismiss any man or institution with contemptuous laughter, it is as likely to seize on some accidental phrase or some unmeaning "Lillibulero," as on a prepared satirical masterpiece. It is quite true that on many occasions Mr. Leacock has essayed the role of a satirist with undeniable skill, but he finds it hard to hold the part. He often lapses into joyous and irrelevant nonsense, or pours out his indignation in every-day wrath, as when he ended his satire on "Night Life in Paris" with the comment:—

"Nothing is too damn silly for people to pay money to go to see."

Mr. Leacock need not mind if one admirer—for I make no pretense of speaking for any one but myself—does not join in the chorus of praise that has greeted his satire. All satire is much overrated, and its value to humanity is doubtful. It gives expression to emotions that should not be cultivated. But wholesome laughter, such as he has evoked so freely, has a tonic effect, and we cannot be too grateful to him for his contributions to the bewildered sanity of the trying period through which we have passed.

Though the war affected the writings of Mr. Leacock, as it did the writings of all who came through that terrible experience, it is not in his humorous and satirical books published during the war and after that his real thought is revealed. Moved to the depth of his soul by the problems developed by the conflict, he dropped his role of jester for democracy, threw aside the cumbrous instruments of the political economist, and revealed himself as a man keenly alive to human needs. "The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice" is the truest expression of himself that he has given. And, moreover, it is one of the most serious and purposeful books published since the war.

"But it is serious!" protests the average admirer of Leacock.

Quite true. But unless you can appreciate this book to the full you have never caught a glimpse of the man who has been amusing you. Unless you can enter into the spirit of this book you have missed the pathos that underlies so much of his humorous work.

"Pathos! Stephen Leacock writing pathos!" I can hear a chorus of laughers exclaiming.

Certainly!

What is the story of the "Little Girl in Green" that is tucked away in the burlesque narrative of Peter Spillikins but a little masterpiece of pathos? And Peter Spillikins himself—enthusiastic, clean-minded, futile, innocent—who is vamped because of his wealth, is almost a tragic figure. And he is presented in an atmosphere of burlesque. Because of the wide range of his observation and sympathy, Mr. Leacock is one of the best interpreters of conditions in the United States and Canada. In his writings the sordidness of things is not made repulsive. It is pathetic. Even his wildest burlesqueing and most boisterous laughter has an undertone of pathos. The impossible aspirations of Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown are absurd and laughable—and pitiful. The mocker sees through them so clearly that one could weep for them. These things all hurt—and he covers the hurt with laughter.

Take the case of Mrs. Rasselyer-Brown. Her name is burlesque and her friends are all burlesque characters. The people of an old and aristocratic civilization no doubt find her very amusing. The strivings of such people are favorite jests with the comic papers. But if you read the chapters in which she appears with any appreciation, you will feel that the crude yearnings for culture, and the follies and swindlings to which they lead, are fully as pitiful as they are laughable. In the same story, the suddenly wealthy farmer, Tomlinson, and his vague wife and their immature son, are portrayed with a pathos that has not a false note. The real laughter in "The Wizard of Finance," and its sequel, "The Arrested Philanthropy of Mr. Tomlinson," is all directed against the greed and hypocrisy of the financiers and bunkum educationists and parasites who always fasten themselves on financial success. Their greed makes them just as blind as the simplest "come-on" who ever listened to the glozings of the gold-brick artist. Mr. Leacock gives us plenty of fun and satire directed at the shams of the world, but his mockery does not glance at the innocent. If they blunder into laughable foolishness, the pathos of their simplicity is not overlooked. When you have once glimpsed the man back of the fun and fooling, you will realize that only the man capable of writing "Social Justice" could possibly have written any of scores of his most-applauded and laughed-at sketches. We needed this passionately earnest book to reveal the true man to us.

Although Mr. Leacock has written extensively on political economy and occupies a position of authority as an instructor in that science, it is not proposed in this essay to follow him—to quote his own phrase—"into the jungle of pure economic reasoning." He confesses that he is "well and wearily familiar" with this science, and reveals his opinion of

its present status in a sentence:—

"When I sit and warm my hands, as best I may, at the little heap of embers that is now political economy, I cannot but contrast its dying glow with the generous blaze of the vainglorious and triumphant science that it once was."

But though I find it convenient to quote him in my own defence when I wish to put by his serious work and confine the present essay to his popular successes, it would not do to follow this method too far. In his various essays and books he has dealt with almost every phase of his own work that a critic might be disposed to consider. It might be shown that even this essay is an impertinence, for he concludes his essay on American humor with this paragraph:

"One is tempted in such an essay as the present to conclude with a discussion of the writers of the immediate moment. But discretion forbids. Criticism is only of value where the lapse of a certain time lends perspective to the view. Of the brilliance and promise of a number of the younger humorists of to-day there can be no doubt. But it is difficult to appraise their work and to distinguish among the mass of transitory effects the elements of abiding value."

Mr. Leacock's stand on such controversial subjects as prohibition and public ownership have attracted so much attention that one cannot help at least mentioning them. The roar of anger that has risen against him all bears the burden that he is a professor and a humorist, and consequently is not qualified to discuss matters so profound and practical. The best reply to this attitude that occurs to me is a quotation from his own essay on Charles II.

"The man of real enlightenment is inevitably reckoned a trifler and is accused of shallowness and insincerity, while a dull man, heavily digesting his few ideas, is credited with a profundity which he does not possess."

But if time should prove Mr. Leacock to be right—if prohibition and public ownership of the railways should prove to be failures—it is highly probable that he would find himself the victim of one of the keenest ironies of fate. An attempt to remedy conditions would probably force him to elaborate from his personal experience two more of the economic paradoxes with which he deals from time to time in his serious writing. For instance, in an American State where prohibition has been in force for many years it was found impossible to repeal it, not because of the strength of the prohibitionists, but because all the bootleggers and blind-piggers who profited by the illicit traffic in liquor supported the law. Under a licensing system their profits would disappear, so they supported the law they were breaking. Similarly, if the public ownership of railways should prove a failure it is logical to suppose that the chief opposition to a change would come from the powerful private railway interests that found competition with the government easy, and consequently would not want to face the keener competition they would find if the railroads were denationalized.

In addition to his literary success, Mr. Leacock has made an unusual success as a humorous lecturer. England, Scotland and Wales, as well as the United States and Canada, have listened to him and laughed—and the only complaint is that audiences cannot listen enough because they laugh so much. It has not been my good fortune to hear and see him as a lecturer. From those who have heard him I understand that seeing is just as necessary to a full enjoyment as hearing, for he is an actor as well as a speaker. When he tells a story, it is his habit to assume a part in it and act it during the telling. The following report from the *London Spectator* gives a suggestion of both the matter and the method of his lectures.

"Once he was playing in that wonderful piece, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' The audience would remember that the climax of the play was when Eliza crosses the river on lumps of ice. At the beginning of the run he was one of these lumps of ice, and he described how he put his very heart into it, and swayed and shifted as Eliza stepped on him, and when the manager saw that lump of ice he knew that his heart was in his work. Then his chance came. Just as Eliza had to cross the ice one of the characters had to say to her: 'Hark, they have put the bloodhounds on your track already!' and then a dog had to howl off. They had had a real dog to do it, but one day the dog was sick. You know how we actors climb on one another's shoulders. I was sorry for the dog but—' Anyhow the manager had said to him, 'Mr. Leacock, can you howl?' Blushing Mr. Leacock had admitted that he thought he could howl, and from that day the part had been his."

The critic of the *Spectator* makes a comment on Mr. Leacock's humor that may be passed on without comment:—

"His jokes are oftenest produced by the magnifying-glass method, which is the same as the method of exaggeration, which, again, is the same as the *reductio ad absurdum*."

An American critic of Mr. Leacock's method as a lecturer is less learned, but more illuminating:

"Leacock hurt me at the Brunswick yesterday. He strained my stomach. I was wearing a suit that was made in 1902, and I split the back of the vest. I laughed until I had a sort of reflex, double-acting come-back of the diaphragm that was really

painful. And he was merciless. I would straighten out my face and determine not to be an absolute fool; but Leacock kept coming back at us with Harry Lauder stuff, and Mark Twain stuff, so far as acting goes; and Jim Riley stuff, and all of it Stephen Leacock's home-brew, absolutely fresh and full of kick. And bang! would go a ligament of my vest and a sinew of my will. I then cast all discretion to the winds and joined the merry throng. I have heard no such cachinnation in a sedate audience before in years.

"He should be fined for cruelty to sedate people. He should pay me for the back of my vest. I will bet that the janitor picked up a bushel of buttons from the floor after Leacock got through.

"It is a wonderful gift, this histrionic power over audiences. It is a form of auto-intoxication, too, when it attacks a professor of political economy and sets him to going around and making the world laugh, even against its set and fixed habits of declining to laugh at anything.

"This Canadian professor, with his hair in a bang, his twinkling eyes, his sturdy figure, his outdoor bronze, his deep voice, his sort of 'Behind the Beyond' imagination that turns laughs against himself, can doubtless move to tears, if he please, as easily as to laughter."

The fundamental characteristic of Mr. Leacock's writing, both serious and humorous, is intellectual fairness. He takes the trouble to know what he is writing about, whether his purpose at the moment is to instruct or to amuse. Many of his lighter sketches are scarcely humorous. They are singularly clear studies of things as they are, and these things seem funny because we never before saw them so clearly. Of course every serious observation or statement is inevitably followed by an absurd, nonsensical, or humorous afterthought, but that does not detract from the soundness of the serious part. When he burlesques the modern problem play in "Back of the Beyond," it is at bottom a searching analysis of that particular form of the drama.

But though in his serious writing historical dignity is never violated, the humorist was nevertheless awake and storing up material that emerges as burlesque later on. For instance, it seems very good burlesque when the rector of St. Asaph's "bowed to Episcopalians, nodded amiably to Presbyterians, and even acknowledged with his lifted hand the passing of persons of graver forms of error."

But Leacock, the historian, records gravely that in the days of "John, by Divine permission, first Bishop of Toronto," this description was seriously embodied in a public document. We find that in a petition addressed to Parliament Bishop Strachan had protested against an educational programme which "placed all forms of error on an equality with truth"—truth in that case being Anglicanism.

Although his volume in "The Makers of Canada" series gives evidence of much research and sets forth impartially the establishment of responsible government, there is no reason to suspect that it was a piece of drudgery and hackwork. The grave historian quotes with evident relish from the fierce polemics and fiery speeches of that embittered time. And in spite of the fact that Mr. Leacock mentions with evident pride that he is a Conservative he sets forth justly the great work performed by the Reformers who fought the battle of popular rights against an intrenched Toryism.

While he voices freely his disrespect for classical political economy and, as one critic has said, "has applied to it the cruel test of common-sense," His "Elements of Political Economy" is a work of academic thoroughness, based on a wide survey of that overcrowded field. Only "a tough capacity for reading" could have enabled him to familiarize himself with the cloud of witnesses when bringing this subject into court. He must have "swallowed libraries whole" and digested them before producing this lucid and orderly presentation of political science, which is now used as an authoritative text-book in our schools and colleges. And if you read one of his satirical sketches, such as "A Little Dinner with Mr. Lucullus Fyshe," you will find that his knowledge of business methods and conditions is searching and accurate. The amazing thing about Mr. Leacock is that, with his thorough grasp of the serious aspects of life, he has not lost his sense of boyish playfulness. He can lay aside his books at any time and "play at push pin with the boys." But no one who makes a survey of his work as a whole can doubt that if he chose to stick to his books and to cultivate a pose of unshakable seriousness, he could have been as dull and dependable as any college professor or eminent editor of them all.

Fortunately his high spirits could not be subdued to that that it worked in, and now that his fame as a jester has obscured his authority as an educationist, he need feel no regrets. The world has many sober-minded citizens who can deal with history and political economy, and altogether too few who have the genius to make life more endurable with humor and laughter.

But there is one point that gives me some disquietude. Mr. Leacock has poked fun at everything and everybody—except the modern enterprising publisher. And yet the publisher has deserved his satire more than anyone else. If any one has done Mr. Leacock harm it is the publishers, syndicate managers and directors of lecture bureaus. It is true that he gives them a love tap in his essay on O. Henry. This shows that he is aware of the danger of listening to their blandishments, and that is a hopeful sign. But they have already tried to direct the current of his literary output, as is shown in the following announcement which ushered "Winsome Winnie and other Nonsense Novels" to the public:

"It is in response to repeated requests that these new novels have been written."

Quite so. Because "Nonsense Novels" were a wonderful success the publisher wanted more of them. I can imagine him beside Leacock's desk, "squat like a toad," and urging the certain profits to be made from a new book of burlesques. Or perhaps he took him to the top of a high mountain and showed him the world full of people laughing at "Nonsense Novels"—and the rich royalties pouring into the bank account of the author. If so, it is a pity that Leacock did not push him over a cliff and watch him land in a squashy mess among the fossils and geological specimens in the talus at its base.

The curse of modern literature is the enterprising publisher. If one book succeeds, every publisher tries to lure or bulldoze the author, and every other author over whom he has influence, to write another book like it that will be a sure winner. And if the harried author cannot do it the enterprising publisher takes whatever book he writes and puts a jacket on it that will fool the public into thinking that it is like the prosperous best seller of the hour.

Some day an enterprising publisher will undertake to publish the Bible along up-to-date lines. When a society novel makes a hit and sets the fashion, he will issue the Bible with a jacket by Montgomery Flagg, showing Vashti or the Shulamite. When "he man" stories are the rage, he will issue it with a Lyendecker jacket, showing Samson leaning on the jaw-bone after doing his day's work. A rage for "Back-to-Nature" novels will inspire a new edition with a jacket by Livingstone Bull, showing Nebuchadnezzar out to pasture.

Up to the present the publisher has not done Mr. Leacock as much harm as he has to most modern authors who have had a measure of success, but I shall not feel satisfied until he turns and rends him. Only then can we be sure that he has realized the danger and that his genius is free to develop along its own lines.

Not that the later burlesques are without merit. The trouble is that they are following an indicated line of success—and that way badness lies. Although Mr. Leacock's later books have been hailed with delight and an unvarying chorus of laughter, there are many sketches that have as much pathos as humor. Take the "Hohenzollerns in America," for instance. The study of the deposed Kaiser is essentially pathetic, and, although it may seem to many a broadly comic touch to marry off the faithful princess to the iceman, one cannot help hoping and believing that she lived happily ever after.

If the publishers and the public could get over their hysterical demand for comedy and read Stephen Leacock's writings with discernment, they would soon realize that his power of pathos is never less artistically sure than his command of laughter. His great danger is that he may be misled by an insistent and profitable demand into the modern evil of specialization—an evil with which he has dealt in his literary essays—and will give too free a rein to his genius for fun. As matters stand he is one of the truest interpreters of American and Canadian life that we have had; but by giving free play to all his powers he may finally win recognition as a broad and sympathetic interpreter of life as a whole.

In the classical masterpieces of the past great scenes and speeches and characterizations were shown against a background prepared by the poet or literary artist. In the lapse of time the great passages tend to become separated from their matrix and are enjoyed by themselves without the cumbersome machinery by which they were introduced. The conditions of modern literary expression—through magazines and serial publications—are such that a writer elaborates his fine scenes without other background than the evanescent interests of his own time, that may or may not have served as their inspiration. To the casual student this gives to much contemporary writing a fragmentary aspect. It may even give a sense of discouragement to the artist himself. Mr. Leacock somewhere expresses a sense of the trivial character of his sketches, as compared with the broad canvases of the great masters of the past. This dissatisfaction is unwarranted, for against the background of his own time the mass of his productions has a scope and richness that will enable it to bear comparison with the work of master artists working in other times and in other circumstances. As time passes, his finest work will tend to enter into comparison with the great passages that embody the literature of the past. How it will bear this comparison no critic can determine, but Mr. Leacock need not fear for the future of his work on the ground that it lacks breadth and volume. He has produced under the conditions and limitations of his own time, just as the acknowledged masters produced under the conditions and limitations of their times, and in the final verdict of mankind

his work will be judged with the same impartiality as that of the established master writers, whose power he admires and applauds.



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**Transcriber's Notes:**

Several peculiarities of spelling, grammar, punctuation and usage have been left as in the original without comment.

1. page 1—corrected typo "biogarpher's" to "biographer's"
2. page 3—corrected typo "acquision" to "acquisition"
3. page 38—corrected typo "surburban" to "suburban"
4. page 119—corrected typo "student's" to "students"
5. page 133—corrected typo "spontaniety" to "spontaneity"

[The end of *Stephen Leacock* by Peter McArthur]