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# COLOURED SPECTACLES

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*By the Same Author:*

THE STAFF AT SIMSON'S  
OLD SOLDIER  
THE FLYING YEARS  
TRIUMPH  
MRS. BARRY  
THE THREE MARYS  
THE RICH WIFE  
THE PAISLEY SHAWL  
A WILDERNESS OF MONKEYS  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE  
ELLEN ADAIR  
A TALE THAT IS TOLD  
THE S.S. GLORY  
ETC.

# COLOURED SPECTACLES

**FREDERICK NIVEN**

**COLLINS · PUBLISHERS  
FORTY-EIGHT · PALL MALL · LONDON  
1938**

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THIS BOOK IS SET IN FONTANA, A NEW TYPE  
FACE DESIGNED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE  
HOUSE OF COLLINS, AND PRINTED BY THEM  
IN GREAT BRITAIN

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**TO**

**H. M. TOMLINSON**

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Some portions of this book originally appeared in *Country Life*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Glasgow Evening News*, *Graphic*, *John o' London's Weekly*, *Library Review*, *London Daily News*, *London Evening News*, *Morning Post*, *Nation and Athenæum*, *Saturday Night*, *Scots Pictorial*, *Sunday Times*, and to the editors of these journals I would make due acknowledgment.

F.N.

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**PART I**  
*Scotland*

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# SCOTLAND

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## I

There is a season of the year in the land in which I am writing this, six thousand miles or so from the Grampians, when—to speak in the wild manner of the Psalms, in which we read of the mountains skipping like rams—Scotland comes to me. Upon most days here (in the Upper Country of British Columbia) you could, if you cared, count the trees upon the sky-lines five miles off, but a day arrives when the distances instead of being set in clear and seemingly magnifying crystal are empurpled. You only know, you do not see, that the far mountain sides are clad in pines and firs.

The creeks, tom-tomming in the gulches, clutching wanly at protruding rocks, delaying in trembling amber pools become, in fancy, Highland burns in their glens. Kootenay Lake is changed to a Scots loch. A stipple of rain is on the polished water; the hazed slopes, seen through that *smoor*, might be of heather, with a birchwood yellowing here and there. Nothing is asked of imagination save to turn the odour of wood-smoke to that of peat—and the trick is done. All Scotland is mine then, from forsaken St. Kilda and the roar and crumble of the Atlantic on its cliffs to the piping of a piper, on a Saturday night, by the Broomielaw.

The Broomielaw! When, I wonder, is James Bone going to give us *The Perambulator in Glasgow*? The voices of Glasgow buddies in exile demand it. It would be the perfect book for that season here in which I relive the old Glasgow days, the days when W. Y. Macgregor, Arthur Melville, Joe Crawhall, Roche, Lavery, Christie and Guthrie, Harrington Mann, D. Y. Cameron and Walton, George Henry and Hornel had shown—shown yet again, for they had great painting predecessors there, though these had appeared more singly than *en masse*—that out of an industrial city art could come, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh was making the walls, the ceilings, the floors, the chairs, the tables, and the very spoons of the tea-shops of Miss Cranston memorable.

There was a small paper-covered guide to "doon the watter" on sale then at the station bookstalls and hawked on the streets. It was illustrated with reproductions of pen-and-ink drawings. Was I right in thinking them works of genius? I showed it to my chosen mentors, trustful of confirmation, and, "Muirhead Bone," they said at a ratifying glance. I fancy that must have been his first published work. It is a rarity now, I suppose. One of the regrets of my life is that my copy has disappeared from the portfolio in which I kept such treasures. (It was on sketching-blocks, not writing-pads, that I first thought to appease the inherent whim to portray, to communicate, what I saw.) There was a spirit of renaissance in Glasgow then—as now. The very flames of Dixon's Blazes over our city were as banners of proclamation.

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## II

Out of these distant years I have a memory of a visit to a house somewhere near the top of Bath Street—in Blythwood Square, I think—where a sturdy and rather paternal young man was our host. He was the eldest of three brilliant brothers, both of whose parents, I believe, were then gone. He was Muirhead Bone, and James Bone was also there, dark and eager. The door opened and a lad came in, wearing brass-buttoned blue, and the eldest brother, as this youngest joined us, said, "This is the sailor-laddie," by way of introduction. That was the only time I saw Muirhead Bone and David Bone but James I used to see, years afterwards, when I was in Fleet Street, silk-hatted, with furled umbrella, strolling slowly (the best journalists seldom hurry) under the arch that leads to the Temple where he lived. He was by that time London editor of *The Manchester Guardian*.

One day I saw him there and, a little further along the street, as if for contrast, David Hodge in unpressed suit, large and easy, a cigarette hanging from a corner of his mouth, strolling into the ancient cottage (long since pulled down) in which

the Glasgow *Evening News* had its London office. In that office and, later, across the street in a modern block, I used occasionally to drop in on Hodge for the refreshment of his tolerance and geniality and to hear the rich Scots burr of his voice as, looking up from his littered table, he gave me welcome, the cigarette wagging at a mouth-corner.

But I run too far on. We are still in Glasgow and I am still a boy there. Harrington Mann was good to that boy and the boy adored him. I hear again the clash of brass rings as he draws a curtain in one of his Glasgow studios, coming out on to the landing to find me there. He is sorry that he is just going off, he says.

"Going off?" say I. "To Italy?" I ask.

I had somehow the idea that *going off* meant departure to Italy. He smiles down at me, says he wishes he was going to Italy, is only *going off* for the day, and tells me to come and see him another day.

I cannot place that studio though I recall the clash of the curtain-rings. It was on the north side of a street, up some stairs and along a corridor; that's all I remember of its situation. I recall the whereabouts of another of his studios: it was in St. Vincent Place—on the south side, and had an ante-room in which he sat one day tossing a scrap of pencil from one hand to the other and drawing now with the left, now with the right in an attempt to show me how to do it. When I said that I thought it was time for me to go he took a skull from the mantelpiece, wrapped it in brown paper, and told me I could have a loan of that to draw. I see him again in his people's home after he came back from what I presume must have been a second visit to Italy, sitting on a cushion on the floor accompanying himself, on a guitar, in songs the models sang at Anticoli-Corrado and in "As Villikins was a-volikin in his garden von day . . ."

I remember him coming once to our house in search of a spinning-wheel. He wanted a big one, such as is used in Hebridean crofts. Ours was an elegant drawing-room one (it had belonged once to the Boswells of Auchinleck—the family of Dr. Johnson's biographer) but it would serve him, he said, and carried it off. It had served me in earlier years when, standing behind it, I had spun the wheel to port and starboard, navigating imaginary ships across the carpet-ocean. When he brought it back there were whorls of fleecy wool around the distaff. I remember him also by Loch Lomond side, striding along a hedge-lined road—head thrown back, eyelids slightly lowered as if focussing the scene—easel and canvas hanging from a shoulder, on his way to a beechwood to paint; and the painting I can see still, the sun among the beeches and a small figure of a girl in it, an inch or two high, in distance, and recall how I recognised that portrait, marvelling how a few adroit flicks of paint, so small, could let me call her by name at a glance.

All the members of that family could see. My own eyes, by merely being with him, or with his people, seemed to be aided; and still to-day for me (across fifty years) the morning dew-drops remain glistening on an iron railing round the garden of their country home by Loch Lomond as I saw them then on a week-end visit. That guide to "doon the watter" with the pen-drawings of Muirhead Bone I cannot find but still I have a few pages of a *Scottish Art Review* of that time with reproductions of wash-drawings by Harrington Mann done in a village of the Apennines to which he had gone on winning the first Slade School Travelling Scholarship.

One of his brothers, Ludovic, well known to-day as an archæologist and anthropologist, used often, in summer-time, to leave the town house of an evening—after seeing to the garden there, gardening one of his hobbies—and "stepping westward" through the cool night, street lamps behind, stars overhead, arrive in the dewy Highland morning at the house by Loch Lomond in good time for bath and an early breakfast. I saw him setting out one evening for the tramp in an easy, rhythmic stride. Perhaps in these tramps under the stars, till the dawn put them out, there was the beginning of another interest that led to his astronomical researches and discoveries. I never think of any member of that gifted and generous family without a sense of gratitude. Benefits they conferred more often than they knew.

Among the treasures of those days that have survived many packings and removals, along with the pages of that *Scottish Art Review*, I found, on my last unpacking, a copy of the *Black and White Handbook to the Royal Academy and the New Gallery Pictures of 1893*. Easy to realise why it was preserved. Following a brief history of the Royal Academy by C. Lewis Hind it contains an article entitled "The Outsiders, Some Eminent Artists of the Day NOT Members of the Royal Academy," by R. Jope-Slade, and many short biographies of these—a goodly number of whom, by the way, later became Academicians.

Among these brief biographies is one on Harrington Mann (the photograph reproduced above it like enough to what he was in those days as I recall him), and one on Lavery, and one on W. E. Lockhart whom once when young—before my School of Art days—I met. He was painting the portrait of an old friend of my folks in a house from knolls in the grounds

of which the glass top of the Cloch lighthouse could be seen twinkling in the sun and yachts flickering back and forth and steamers thrashing along in the broadening estuary of Clyde. I remember a boy of about my own age who led me away for a while to play, remember sunny gardens, enclosures of warmth and flowers surrounded by red brick walls. We did something to annoy a hirsute old man in shirt-sleeves, obviously a gardener. I remember him bellowing at us in indignation. Vaguely I recall that our sin had to do with climbing a wall to get into a section of gardens the gate of which was locked.

I recall a panting return to the house and then that small boy disappears, and in a cool interior a lady is asking the bearded painter if the visitors may see the portrait though it is not finished. I go tagging along behind a rustle of skirts into a room where it stood on an easel, framed, only some last touches to be done upon it. The subject's wife, I think, must have doted upon her husband. She drew the attention of the elders in front of me, between whose bustles and hips I peered, to this and that characteristic of her husband that had been discerningly observed and accurately limned by the artist. He and his wife stood back, and as they did so they looked one to the other and exchanged a smile which still I can see, and then looked sharply round on discovering that some one was behind them—only me, only a youngster.

Then there is a dining-room and our host and Lockhart are on their feet and I am standing with them, the ladies having just gone. They sit down again, and I sit down, and these two bearded men, after some chat about this and that over my head, turn to me. Our host asks me if I have begun Latin and I say Yes, and the painter asks if I can decline *Columba*. I marvel at the appropriateness, for I have a pigeon-house—a "doo-cot"—at home and am then what Scots boys used to call, and no doubt still call, "doo-daft." I decline *Columba*, the two men listening soberly. Our host of the portrait remarks that the manner in which I do it is slightly different from the usage when he was a boy, and asks of the painter, "Is that not so?" Lockhart nods and smiles. I know what they mean—only too well I know; for I did my declension, for ease, not as I would have done it in school. I did it as if I saw a page in columns and read down instead of across. I began by chanting, "Nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, ablative," and then, with the ground thus rapidly cleared, started. By the time I came to the third column I was winded, or flustered, or diffident. I had it all clear enough in my mind, all the way down to "by, with, or from a pigeon," but I let translation go. "Plural," I had announced, and plunged on.

The painter continued to smile on me after his nod of agreement that that was not how it was done when he was at school. And there they are still, in that dining-room, for me. It was a fine evening. The sunset's brightness was among the trees outside. Not till some years later, when I got that copy of *Royal Academy Pictures*, did I know that the painter for whom I had declined *Columba* had (to quote from Jope-Slade's thumbnail biography) "tarried long in Spain, making Fortuny's acquaintance"—Mariano Fortuny who, as you shall hear, had once brought sunshine for me into a foggy Glasgow night.

Another famous painter of these days was, I believe, in Spain when, shortly after our return from South America, I was taken in tow to his mother's house, and one of the first books to come my way—*Robinson Crusoe*—was given to me by her, the mother of Kerr Lawson. The house was in Shields Road (I do not suppose it stands now), set back a little way beyond a lawn, a few trees round it with spring flourish on them. All that was wrong with the house, I remember hearing, was that on foggy days and nights the screaming of engine-whistles, and the explosion of detonators on the railway tracks near-by, were wearisome. But there was sunshine that day in the book-lined room in which we sat, and sunlight was in the coloured plates of the *Robinson Crusoe* I was given to carry home.

It had an additional interest for me because from Valparaiso, where I was born, now and then parties sailed out to visit Juan Fernandez, the island of the original Robinson Crusoe—Alexander Selkirk, or Selcraig—although Defoe had set his island somewhere off the mouth of the Orinoco. I have that copy of *Robinson Crusoe* still. Even in adventurous times later, when many of my books became a movable feast and passed to the second-hand booksellers in London, I could not part with it.

Tough days! Tough days reveal to us our friends. When I went broke and had to sell books and prints, one was memorably disclosed to me. I had a Whistler etching. It went with the rest. When I was on my feet again Holbrook Jackson arrived one day with a flat parcel under his arm. "A little present for you," he said. It was my cherished and sacrificed Whistler. He had bought it from the dealer to whom I had sold it and kept it till there would be evidence of my financial affairs having improved. I have it still also.

Harrington Mann's mother gave me *Treasure Island*. *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* were none too bad for a start, I think.

The years slipped past. The doo-cot was taken down.

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### III

What age was I then? Well, the doo-cot had been taken down. I no longer kept pigeons but I still made my calls at the bird-fanciers' in Candleriggs, St. Enoch Square and Howard Street to observe the fantails, black and white, the common pigeons—"blue bours"—the pouters and tumblers, the nuns, the ruffs, and the rest. I had gone upon some stages of youth. Peeries and girrs (spinning-tops and hoops) were of the past. The lit windows of the Deadwood Dick and Jack Harkaway and Ching-Ching shop under the roar of the Caledonian Railway Bridge and the small vivid cave of the Papeterie were also in my past. I went in at other doors. I had the urge—it was in the air—to "get wisdom, get understanding."

The Holmes bookshop in Dunlop Street, with its stranger treasures, had the major portion of my pocket-money and Stephen Mitchell my gratitude for dreaming, over his tobacco, to give us the freedom of that library situated, then, in Miller Street. In that street, in an earlier library, it used to please me to remember, my grandfather, William Waterston Niven, had been librarian. Before taking over that post he was in business with his father as a printer which, in those days, meant publishing also. I have a nice specimen of their work an arm's length from me now, with the imprint on a finely-spaced title-page:

Glasgow  
John Niven And Son, Printers  
MDCCCXXXII

Cheek by jowl with that is a volume of essays—doctrinal, experimental, and prophetic—by my maternal grandfather, George Barclay:

Printed For the Author  
and sold by Waugh and Innes, and W.  
Oliphant, Edinburgh; M. Ogle and W.  
Collins, Glasgow; Wightman and Cramp,  
London; and Maxwell Dick, Irvine,  
1828.

I came honestly, evidently, by my interest in printers' ink. But my father, though a great reader, and that in two or three languages, had been, to begin his restless life, a manufacturer—of sewed muslin.

In my mother's family, as volumes that have descended to us testify, there have been many scholars. Inside several of their books were labels upon them to such effect as: *Literis Græcis in Academia Glasguensi . . .* or *Glasgow College . . . Diligentiae et Virtutis . . .* I wanted to be a painter; I wanted—we had had no Great War then—to be a war-correspondent. Pen and ink drawings enthralled me. I went on the quest of reproductions of pen-and-inks in the Mitchell Library and elsewhere, pored over examples, among others, of Edwin Abbey, of Blum and Birch, of Sterner, of Pennell, with delightful discoveries of how their desired effects were achieved, how they rendered what they saw, and after an introduction to Mariano Fortuny (of which you shall hear) was led, by reason of his nationality and friendships, to Vierge and Simonetti.

My folks, sensibly enough, pointed out to me the extremely precarious existence of a painter—even of a war-correspondent—and compromised: How about an applied art? Or how would it be if, to begin with, I went to the Glasgow School of Art in the evenings, on trial, to see if I had the stuff in me, and was apprenticed to the manufacturing business? Designers were required in that business. I recalled that Alexander Smith had been a pattern-designer—which helped to make me amenable to parental reason, and dutiful. But my mother, I believed, regretted that I had not followed in the footsteps of her folk, alumni of the old Glasgow College, never entered its university. I broke a tradition of her

family then—when we humoured each other. That's life.

Art classes were conducted in various schools in Glasgow. Alex Miller, who sent me, the other day, a photograph of his Atalanta that he carved in limewood, was then studying at one of these. With a scholarship from Hutchesons' Grammar School I went to the Glasgow School of Art, a scholarship that granted me two years of evening classes.

Tremendously though manufacturers interested me, and warehousemen, and packers, and weavers, I was not enthusiastic about manufacturing. The intention was for me to pass through the various departments and *learn the business*. I began with winceys and it was Charlie Maclean, head of the wincey department, who informed me, gazing at me solemnly one day, "Freddy, the plain fact is that ye dinna gie a spittle for your work." He used, tolerantly, to seek occasions to get me out of the warehouse. "Here's a letter for you to take out," he would say, "in a hurry. And you can tak' your time coming back." I used to scamper like a harrier to Mann, Byars', Stewart and MacDonald's, J. and W. Campbells', or whoever it might be, and then plunge into the old library in Miller Street, spend a while there (or dive into that bookshop in Dunlop Street and buy another volume of the Canterbury Series or the Scott Library, if I had the price), then dash back to the ware'us like a harrier again. Once a month Charlie would send me out on a private errand: "Ye micht gang doon tae the Papeterie, Freddy, and get me ma copy of *The Celtic Monthly*." Old Charlie Maclean and I, I used to feel, had a quiet understanding about this and that. Well, he's gone—he's gone over thirty years ago.

Watson, the cashier in the office, was another of the salt of the earth, a painter in water-colours on summer evenings and on his annual vacation. His voice was high and husky and when he saw anything he liked in the way of tones of the day on Ingram Street walls he would huskily whisper, "Did ye see yon licht on the chimney-tops the day?"

There were always pranks in the place. If any one handed another a letter there, not at the usual time for letters, it was advisable to stoop and peer at the underside before accepting it, to see that it had not been smeared with gum. If any one called another by an opprobrious epithet and then ran away it was also advisable, if pursuing, to be wary, chasing from one department to another, for probably round a corner some pieces of flannelette or wincey had been placed in a low stack—to be leapt over by the pursued and to bring the pursuer down, *hurdies ower heid*. That side of the life of a manufacturer I took to like a duck to water.

By day I was at least ostensibly forging ahead towards being a worthy burgess in the warehouse of Ingram Street (less, I think, an idle apprentice than one lacking high seriousness in his decreed vocation) and by night I was studying at the School of Art, a happy callant. Then, abruptly, another door opening, I jumped out of the ware'us into a library—which was no doubt in order if heredity was to be considered—and in my new sphere no one ever told me that I didna gie a spittle for my work. The only trouble was that sometimes I would be lost in a book when I ought to have been attending to a subscriber.

Well do I recall the evening on which Francis Newbery, head of the Art School in those days, set me a task for the next night and I asked if I might postpone it till the night after, explaining that on the night which he was arranging for me I had to read a paper on Keats to a literary society. He stared at me and, "Who was Keats?" he asked with a gravity mitigated by a twinkle he could not wholly obliterate. "Was he a painter? What I mean," he continued, "is that the sooner you decide whether you are going to draw or write, the better." He was a great instructor. "I am not here," he would at times remind us, "to put art into you, only to bring it out if it is in you." He also taught me to see.

There was stimulation in the smoky air then. There was diversity of excitement to suit all moods, tastes, temperaments, mentalities. Religious revivalists, both of the preaching and singing sort, filled churches and halls in which "penitent forms" were ranged below the platforms in preparation for those who, saved, would silently testify by advancing at least so far and sitting thereon. After a further gale of prayer it might be that they would come up on the platform to be seen of all men. I attended one or two of these tense gatherings, in the desire to miss nothing, but my heart, truth to tell, was elsewhere with other excitements, other affirmations.

Secular lectures drew large audiences eager for expert information on the planets, or on literature, or on attempts to reach the poles and penguins. I think it was on the New Woman that Richard Le Gallienne lectured. I had a ticket for the course in which he appeared but was abed in the down-beaten soot and fog with bronchitis when he visited the second city. Israel Zangwill I heard, on Ghettos, in the Athenæum hall. Jerome K. Jerome spoke on humour (the New Humour, I think) in a church and his opening remark was to the effect that he felt perturbed, "never having been in a church before—I mean this part of it." In another church Sir Robert Ball lectured on astronomy. I can recall vividly the scenes at the doors and on the pavement when that lecture was over, everybody making exit with head cast back and eyes gazing up

into the darkness above the street-lamps with a new wonder and curiosity.

There were also heady private gatherings around polished tables in some favoured howff, devoted to clamant discussion of life, literature, art, the sense of belonging to Glasgow—or of Glasgow belonging to us, as in Will Fyffe's song, and that Glasgow would flourish, lively in the back of our minds.

We must have loved our city. In retrospect the stickiness of the streets in winter and the smoke-laden atmosphere, pernicious to the bronchial tubes, seem as part of its charm. And that is no sentimental saying. Did not smoke and grime make more couthie the interiors for our for-gatherings?

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## IV

Though electric tram-cars took the place of horse-drawn ones in those distant days (one of the first on its trial trip, I remember, left the rails and crashed into a florist's on the corner of West Nile Street near which MacLehoses' library used to be, with a protest of shattering glass), never have I returned on visits to my old city without missing the group of trace-boys and trace-horses clustering at the foot of the brae of Renfield Street. How adroitly did they slip alongside the cars! There was the click of a chain-end on a hook, the boy swung on to his perch, the trace-horse lunged into the collar to help in the drag uphill to Sauchiehall Street.

Those tea-shops of Miss Cranston's that Rennie Mackintosh was beautifying were part of that era. There was one in Ingram Street close to the place of business where I was ostensibly busy. In its basement smoking-room I used to filch time from my employers—who deserved better of me—making secret sketches of the customers or trying, and failing, to write verses.

One day—it was the week that the darkening news of the death of Stevenson was in all the papers—I sat alone there during the city's busiest and the tea-shop's slackest hour, in an atmosphere of remoteness at the very heart of the hurly-burly. I was looking at a reproduction of William Strang's etching of him in one of the magazines when the waiter brought me my coffee and thrust the ash-tray closer. He noted the portrait and informed me that he had "met that gentleman."

Did he once see Stevenson plain? Why, certainly—when hall-porter in a hotel at Pitlochry at which R.L.S. had stayed a while. He gave me his personal recollections, a little different from those of Gosse, but not without interest. His memories of Stevenson (an early riser, it appeared) were associated with matutinal shaking of mats at the doorway before the guests were stirring. Leaning on his broom he had whiffed a cigarette and passed the time of morning with him while dew was still on the lawns.

A bell buzzes and that waiter hurries away and leaves me thinking, musing, spooning up the brown sugar in the blue bowl and absently watching it sag and cohere. There is a ceaseless drumming outside along the pavement on a level with the ceiling, the drumming of the heels of those who are forging ahead—and I dash up the stairs at last, away from dreams to business.

Where, earlier, I had gone with chums of schooldays guddling for trout in the little burns of the Mearns Moors, I was then going solitary, sketching-block, notebook, and some book I was reading, for company, putting my pockets out of shape. Sometimes I went by the Kilmarnock Road past the Giffnock quarries where we used to look for fossils and adventure in the tunnels, sometimes by Waterfoot and Eaglesham.

The name of Waterfoot still flicks a wagtail over blue-grey boulders for me, and that of Eaglesham brings crowding memories. It was there that one of our heroes, James Christie, made his sketches for *Vanity Fair* that hangs in the Corporation Galleries. The proprietor of a travelling booth allowed him to stand inside looking through a knot-hole, sketching. There was a rumour in the School of Art that when Christie had used all his sketch-blocks he made drawings on the wall. Did the owner, we wondered, know their value? Would he cut out the boards on which they had been made and preserve them? Might we perhaps buy one or two from him? Vain inquiry, that, for some of us—whatever the price

the showman might ask for a sketch. The wealth of most of us was not in coin.

To the hill of Ballygeoch, that John Buchan put into one of his early novels, I tramped often in those days. In Fair Week, when the furnaces were out in Glasgow for their annual redding and the smoke-pall of the city passed away, half Scotland was revealed thence, slumbering in summer sun. Turning about and about one looked into the grey-green storied Borders, into the grim, romantic purple Highlands, away over Ayrshire with its pattern of fields to the Firth and the ragged ridge of Arran, and might even pick out the steamer on its way between Ardrossan and that delectable island. For the sake of Ballygeoch I tried to read Pollok's *Course of Time*, he having lived in a farmhouse nearby. The world, it seemed, went very well then; yet no doubt there was much that was bitter and difficult in those days as in these, but memory winnows.

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## V

Alexander Smith, recollection of whose pattern-designing had made me accept apprenticeship to *the manufacturing* with filial acquiescence, wrote a poem on the Tweed in which he told how it flowed through his imagination "as through Egypt flows the Nile."

The river that most haunts my imagination or flows through my memory I might say, to adapt Smith's phrase, is Clyde. I have been, since those days—and more than once—on that haunting river the Yukon, one of the great water-courses of this planet, that flows north while Mississippi flows south, Amazon east and Congo west; and have seen the pilots (Islesmen some of these, with the Gaelic lilt in their voices) negotiate shoal and rapid, and counted the migrating caribou swimming across the stream till I reached a thousand, all in an hour or two, and then lost count; but, even so, Clyde—a little streak of a river in comparison—flows often through my mind. Though I have an early memory of it in its higher reaches, rippling west under the cone of Tinto—and of Tweed too, winding east, with a stationary heron standing on one long leg among the rushes of a bend—Clyde begins for me, recalling old Glasgow days, at the foot of South Portland Street.

Very much for me it is Glasgow River. I am tagging along with my father again, crossing Clyde by the Suspension Bridge, and he is telling me that when he was a boy a great ploy of youngsters was to tread close behind their elders on it, leaping and dancing to set it atrembling, what to elders was a grand new feat of engineering being as a grand new toy to them. That was the bridge of his early memories. Mine, I find, are of the lower bridge—the Jamaica Bridge, the old Glasgow Bridge. I delay again those who have me in tow to see a *Clutha* approach beneath, and watch for the lowering of its hinged smoke-stack. That was a great event.

Later the old bridge gave other happiness. The Campbeltown boats berthed on the south side of the Clyde close to Glasgow Bridge—the *Davaar*, the *Kinloch*, the *Kintyre*—but never all together, of course. The absence of one or two jogged the mind. If *Davaar* was there then fancy would go in search of *Kinloch* and *Kintyre*. I would picture the *Kinloch* tied up at Campbeltown and jerseyed men on the landing alongside below swerving gulls, and the *Kintyre*, trailing a fallen column of smoke, thrashing across Kilbrennan Sound.

The Campbeltown boats touched at Lochranza and Pirnmill, and going on upon my way I would be only seemingly in Jamaica Street, or cutting along Howard Street (past a fish-shop in the window of which there was often some curious marine monster on view as attraction) and on up St. Enoch Square past Francis Spite's, only seemingly there but truly—or spiritually, if you prefer it—in Arran. Swinging open the door of the old ware'us in Ingram Street a waft of the odours of wincey and flannelette and shirtings would bring me back from a day-dream of chuckling burns among heather and the desultory bleating of sheep.

In the earlier schooldays many a Saturday forenoon I spent on the wharves. My people loved ships—despite some of their experiences of what the sea could do with them. They had gone to South America on a sailing-vessel, a barque, the *Aberfoyle*, on her maiden voyage. It was of nine months, from the Tail of the Bank to Iquique. She was posted overdue at Lloyds as she lay becalmed in the doldrums or drifted backwards. For weeks she fought storms off Cape Horn. I have heard my folks tell of how, hour after hour, they would feel her settle under tons of water, drop, drop, as all held breath,

and then spring up as with desperate effort. The first mate had a way of leaping into the state-room (it was entered not from amidships on the main deck but from the poop by a companionway) for a cup of coffee, with a shout of, "Prepare to meet thy Goad, Mrs. Neevin. The ship's goin' doon!" He would gaily quaff half a cup of coffee, the other half flung out in one of those sudden springs of the barque, and get up again to the fight. Out of green food, scurvy attacked all on board. Arrived at Iquique they found they had been posted as missing. All the crew save the captain and first officer left her there.

The captain came to say farewell to my folks before setting sail for the homeward voyage, a last farewell. She was badly built, he said; he had watched her behaviour during those nine months: she did not rise well to the waves when they pursued her. And the currents, he explained, west to east round Cape Horn would be worse than any from east to west. It had been hard to navigate her westward; to wheedle her round eastward was, he declared bluntly, hopeless.

"I'm taking her out," said he, "to go down with her."

They asked him why, with that opinion, he did not cable the owners and refuse to go. It was, they pointed out, her maiden voyage and he was an experienced mariner.

No, he replied, and repeating again his belief that she would inevitably be pooped, that the seas astern would simply climb over her because of her lack of buoyancy and shove her down—"as a man slips under a blanket,"—he shook hands and departed. She was sighted south of Valparaiso and never again.

The *Aberfoyle* was a wooden ship. The captain of the *Santona*, Captain Mellor, on which we came home, hearing the story of that voyage shook his head. A wooden ship, he remarked, might wallow, derelict, about the seas a long time but an iron ship, such as his, would go down promptly with no prolongation of agony. He was a very cheerful man.

Sails aplenty were still twinkling round the wet curves of the world then and in the docks lay barques and ships, brigs and schooners as well as the tramp steamers from the seven seas. When I was a schoolboy I had often accompanied my father on his Saturday afternoon rambles among the sheds and by the docksides. Later, when he was away on business or upon other pleasures, I went alone among these scenes to which he had introduced me.

Once in Kingston Docks I saw a barque, an iron barque with grey-blue hull and black-painted ports. Where had she come from? From Iquique. Nitrate was her load, so the captain told me—pausing on his way aboard in the manner of genial Jack Ashore to talk to a hobbledehoy admiring his ship. And when I disclosed to him that I was born in Chili and had come round the Horn in a vessel much like her, an all-iron barque also, with the same painted ports, down I had to go with him to tread her from stem to stern. Her last resting-place had been Valparaiso Bay. There she had lain with sails ready to carry her at a moment's notice out to sea should a sudden Norther swoop into the bay, while from the mole to the ships great barges came and went with dark-skinned men hauling on the sweeps, loading and unloading.

"You'll remember that, being born in Valparaiso. Ah, well, there are two ports a sailor is chary of—and the one is Valparaiso with that unprotected bay open to all the Pacific west, and the other is Mozambique open to all the Indian Ocean east. You've always to be ready to cut and run out to sea and safety from these two ports. Steward, steward! Bring this laddie some biscuits. He's been round the Horn on a wind-jammer the split double of this old tub—aye, and with painted ports, he's been telling me."

Valparaiso, Mozambique: there's the romance of Glasgow docks and Clydeside.

Enchanting places, these docks and sheds. Dockside police and shed-watchmen, remembering their own boyhood no doubt, were not too Dogberryish with us. They knew the difference between youth in quest of romance and youth, with pilfering intent, in quest of nuts and oranges. All we had to do was to keep out of the way of the stevedores charging up and down the iron gangways with their trucks. Donkey engines, beside the hatches, coughing their loads up and down, added to the din; but every here and there was an oasis, some shed in which there was a lull in the uproar. Shafts of old gold sunlight leant from smoky glass roofs to dusty floors. Pigeons potted there, picking up scattered grain, and up in the rafters the cooing of others sounded, and the scents in the air were of China, of Malaysia, Valparaiso, Mozambique. Oh, to be a boy again for two hours on a Saturday forenoon or afternoon in late Victorian or early Edwardian days, the war and post-war years casting no shadow before them this chaotic age undreamt, dodging through Kingston Docks!

Clyde may seem sinister on foggy evenings when the reflections of dock-lights struggle wanly in it and steamer sirens are lamenting. But that is only one aspect of it. Few cities own a river of such magic. All in a day it can transport a citizen to

communion with quiet, to haunts more of the weather and the seasons than of men, and back again. The spirit of rural quiescence under the eaves and in the kitchen corners of some old farm in a secluded glen, strong-built against the winter sleets, is still in his mind when he finds himself, home once more, among the calls of the newsvendors and the city's clamour in the ochre twilight.

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## VI

Those foggy nights when sirens wailed up and down the river and the street-lamps were amber blurs, and even indoors there was an attempt at nimbus round the chandeliers, had their own charm. There seems, looking back, to have been some white magic at work in them—granted, that is, there do exist Powers dark and light, malignant and beneficent, that there is not merely chaos.

I did not know, a child in a sub-tropic city with the musical Spanish speech all round me, how the name of Fortuny, Mariano Fortuny, was to become like a spell, a talisman. For I did not know, any more than any other, of the future—how I was to be taken aboard a ship, the *Santona* of the black-painted ports, to see the Andes fade away; from a region of *mañanas* and *poco tiempos*, purple shadows, tall poplars, and tracts of yellow sand, be set down in a land of drawling and sometimes even uncouth speech where the humid atmosphere gets into the bones.

It was in that land, soon after our arrival, on an evening of yellow fog and sticky pavements, that there came into our home a crate of cast-off books and magazines, residue from the library of a scholarly relative—the cast-offs not carried away by the second-hand book-dealer whom the widow had called in to make an offer for the "lot." The scholar whose they were I never knew. I can but gauge his taste from a miniature or two, an old snuff-mull with an inscription on the silver disc upon its lid, a collet ring, and this residue of reading matter.

The widow went to her own place and then these books were dumped upon us. The period is now ancient history, when street cries were more common than now, not so widely prohibited; and in the distance as I pored over these magazines a voice was wailing "Ca-a-ler-ooo!" on a note that recalled to my mind Defoe's *Journal of the Plague* which had been retailed to me by a religious nurse who objected to fairy tales as untruth.

What "Ca-a-ler-ooo!" meant I did not know. It occurred to me, I well remember, that it might be, "Bring out your dead," in the Doric of this country. It was melancholy beyond words and I had not by then come to know the charm of the northern melancholy that is in its voice and its ballads. I thought that people might well die, drop off like flies, on those nights of choking yellow fog. But it was explained to me that the lamentation in the night was only of a man hawking fresh oysters. As they go round with a bell and cry "Muffins and crumpets!" in the forenoon in London so, in Scottish cities, were they wont in the evening to wander forth, these fish men (or should it be bivalve men?), distressing those who did not know that the tone of infinite grief in their voices was neither here nor there—distressing even those who knew, I should think, for though it was only of oysters that they called the voice was that of a lost soul.

Among these magazines thrown away there was waiting for me a face looking out of a page with, underneath, a name I had not heard before but a name that, in those days, sounded far more friendly to me than the names of total strangers who, I was told, were my blood-kin! It was a name that sounded different from those over the shop doors—MacTavish, MacConnochie, and all the others that I was getting accustomed to.

"Mariano Fortuny," I read.

The fog without was so profound and pressing that the room leaked it. In that atmosphere I read of Mariano Fortuny how ". . . he mentioned to one of his friends his childish awe of the great city of Tarragona, in whose market they played, and his frights at night when, lying under the tables of the fish-vendors, he heard the discordant 'All's well!' of the serenos, or night watchmen, or was haunted by a half-famished dog hunting for a bone."

On reading that I had to look back again at the face of this man. He knew. The engraving of him was more real and alive than the faces of many really living people, and as I read on again it was as if I sat at his feet while he and his friend,

Regnault, told me of their coloured travels, told me in that drab night (a night of glamour by then) that:

"We are living, as you know, in a little Moorish house, in a little palace of the Thousand and One Nights. We have heaped above our doors, above the beams of our patio, decorations from the Alhambra, and you shall see shortly a picture begun only a few days ago—a workroom of Moorish women, which represents our patio itself, and in the background the door of our bedroom. Each time that we mount our terrace we are dazzled by the light of this city of snow which descends from our feet to the sea, like a grand staircase of white marble, or a brood of white gulls. Upon a neighbouring terrace the negresses stretch carpets to expose them to the sun, or Moorish women hang upon lines to dry their haiks and their linen, yellow caftans with silver embroidery, caftans of rose-coloured silk, of delicate green, foulards threaded with gold, etc. My eyes at last see the Orient. I believe, God pardon me, the sun which lights you is not the same as ours."

That old magazine is still in my possession and when I look at it again I think what a remarkable storehouse we all have inside our skulls, what a medley of treasures, what strange juxtapositions of these—quaint associations, such as a foggy night in Glasgow and sunlight in Tangier.

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## VII

Sunlight in South America also that magazine brought me. The ways of Tarragona were more like those of Valparaiso, in Chili, than were the ways of Clydeside. Clyde had been invisible the day our vessel bellowed up it. (We had left the *Santona* at Cork and made the last lap of our voyage on a steamer.) No Arran raised so much as a purple silhouette; the rock of Ailsa Craig was only a warning scream in the grey, and sleet was falling in the streets when we arrived in the beloved city of my people.

The child that was I had been puzzled by their ecstasy of home-coming. The child that was I learnt, even thus early in his life, the cult of the magic carpet—was a votary of Mnemosene long before he knew her name.

Valparaiso—Vale of Paradise: I often remembered the mole, or wharf, along which the locomotives hauled screaming trucks, locomotives that clang bells as in the United States and Canada. A long grey-painted tank steamer, like a torpedo boat, used to bring drinking water to the city then. Little tip-tapping burros, with panniers holding water-bottles, came round to the doors, and the brown drivers gave their cry of, "*Agua fresca! Agua fresca!*" Shipping people were agitating for a floating dry-dock to lie in the middle of the bay. They have it now; they have had it a long while.

A great sight was that bay when full of shipping. The P.S.N.C. steamers came and went from and to ports that have (for west-coast folk) music in their names, from Panama to Valdivia. Steamers from Lisbon, London, Cherbourg, lay off shore. South Sea schooners, ships and barques, wooden and iron, many of the old clipper type, lay there with the sailors' washing fluttering on the fo'c'sles, a blue-peter here and there rousing wanderfret and the house-flags and national flags tempting rambles on the mole to consideration of the criss-crossing traffic that goes on upon the high seas. Great scows like Thames barges plied to and fro, loading and unloading, half-naked men swinging and straining on the sweeps.

Up in the town the stranger from colder latitudes noticed the great umbrellas over the drivers, the little straw sunshades tilted over the horses' heads. The people all walked on the shady sides of the streets. One pavement would be nothing but blaze of sun and indigo shadow under the blinds stretched over the warm shops; the other—one could hardly say it was in shadow so much as that there was, on that side, a tempering of the bright day. And there passed in that mellow blueness natives and aliens, Chilanos and Gringos, white, pallid, and brown. Paris fashions touched the señoritas; but the mantilla was still their usual head-covering. I used to enjoy seeing the peons at the hour of siesta, backs against a shady wall, hats tilted over eyes, little ear-rings glinting, with luscious yellow water melons between their knees.

On the magic carpet I returned often to the English Hill, beyond the hospital and Mackay's school. *Tio* Mackay the young ones called him—Uncle Mackay. He is gone these years but we saw him on his occasional visits to the land of his birth

and loved him as greatly as of old. The town of his birth, by the way, was Campbeltown in Argyllshire. Again I saw the bullock-trains coming down from the blue space beyond the sandhills, and heard the creaking of their massive wheels, the lowing of the bullocks that hauled them. The smell of their transit I whiffed again, felt the grit of the sand-cloud that accompanied them, saw the poncho-wearing peons walking alongside, their brown faces powdered grey with dust, brown cigarettes hanging from their lips, watched them prod the big beasts with their poles.

Valparaiso lived thus in the memory chiefly as a sunny place, a place both busy and gay—dotted with priests and nuns, for local colour. Darwin, voyaging there in the *Beagle*, found everything *delightful*, the climate *delicious*, the heavens *clear and blue*. Thus it chiefly remains in the mind, though of course there is a rainy season. But the rains were also memorable. When it rained, it rained. That was no Scots drizzle. The deluge hissed down for days. In the *quebradas* (the gulches, where the less affluent lived) the people were often washed out. In the middle of the sloping streets were orifices, the lids of which were opened at such times to aid in giving the brooks escape into sewers and thence out to sea, below the mole.

Sundays were sacred in the forenoon, but the afternoon was for sport, for going to the races, masses over for the day, or to excursions to outlying pleasure resorts, such as Viña del Mar and Concon. In the evenings, as everywhere in which the Dons dwell, the band played, the plaza showed the rise and fall, like fireflies, of leisurely cigarettes and the twinkle of ringed hands wielding fans. With their fans they talked, these woman, and the men with their eyebrows and the shoulders.

The "Norther" I would sometimes remember—the wind that springs up with great abruptness, sets all the tall and hardy poplars swinging and the palms in the plazas rattling and the eucalyptus trees flurrying, slams all the doors in a house from front to patio, from patio to rear, like a discharge of musketry, and whirls up whatever papers are lying on the desk without a weight atop. It keeps on vigorously for a spell—and then people find that they are shouting instead of talking: the "Norther" is over.

But perhaps the chiefest memory is of waking at night and wondering why—wondering if it was a gentle earthquake, perhaps, that had interrupted slumber, for the quality of the air told me that the night was not half-run. All slept with bedroom doors open, just in case of earthquake, so as to be able to get out if necessary: doors jamb sometimes in a *temblor*. But it was not an earthquake, and all was silent. Then there was a weird wailing of dogs. Yet that did not seem to be a repetition of what had awakened me. Again the pariah dogs, prowling in the streets, gave voice; and—yes, that was undoubtedly what had awakened me before—a far-off faint clatter of steel, and a voice hailing with a mournful note, eerie in the darkness, making the night seem bigger and the glimpses of purple sky and of stars under the stretched outer blind more silent and aloof. It was a sentry, a *sereno*, over at the prison on the next hill, or perhaps at the barracks, intoning, as they intoned at intervals all through the dark hours, "All's well!"

There is another reason, clearly, why that article on Mariano Fortuny in the old volume of *The Century Magazine* was so intimate a find to me in the days before Glasgow ceased to be strange, the days before I understood how my folks could love the place. At Tarragona, in Spain, he had heard in the dark night that same intoning of the serenos and the wailing of pariah dogs.

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## VIII

Occasionally old friends of my folks, from Valparaiso, looked in upon us and sometimes stayed a few days. Mr. Mackay, of the English school there, came twice in a few years. I remember going with him one day to the station to see him off and, a minute late, seeing the train glide away. He smiled after it and remarked easily, "Oh, well, there will be another one!" That, however, was not a boat-train. He was only going visiting for the day and was to be back in the evening.

On the day of one of his departures he moved about leisurely after breakfast and anon said that perhaps he had better pack. Off to his bedroom he went to the packing. Time passed. He did not appear. The cab was at the door to take him to the boat-train. Still he delayed. We had better, it was suggested by some one, go and help the old man.

We entered his room and there he was on his knees with paper and pencil. Neatly, all over the floor, were stacks of

shirts, stacks of pyjamas, of underwear, suits of clothes perfectly folded. A row of suitcases stood along one side of the room, all open but empty.

"The cab is at the door, Tio," we told him.

He smiled up at us.

"I am just tabulating," he explained.

What a packing that was! Everybody helped, and off he went with a beatific expression on his face as though easefully considering that there is always another boat.

Tio Mackay one night, in Valparaiso, being waukrife (in the old Scots word), unable to sleep, rose and went down without a light to the pantry and fumbled out a handful of biscuits from a canister. He began to eat them as he walked back along the airy gallery and upstairs to bed. He must, he thought, have passed through a spider's web. He brushed his cheek with a sleeve, but more than web, it seemed, was on his face. He brushed again and then, coming into his lit bedroom, he discovered that ants had got into the tin. They were on the biscuits in his hand; they ran in his beard.

Talking of ants—I remember going across the patio in our home in Calle Abtao (all changed by now, I suppose) and looking in at Manuela, the Chilean cook, dark-eyed and copper-hued, who was clambering up from a chair to a table, a brush in hand. I wondered what she was doing. A fitch of bacon hung from a rafter. Up one wall was a dark line that continued along the ceiling to the bacon and then on to the opposite wall and down it. She drew the brush—it had been dipped in paraffin—across that band and promptly a space showed in it. It was of ants. They were going methodically up one wall and across the ceiling to the bacon, then on to the further wall and down it. At the smear of the brush that broke the line those approaching the fitch turned about and the ones behind them turned about also, and all returned by the way they had ascended. Beyond the bacon the streak of ants moved on its way, along the ceiling, down the wall. Manuela smeared the top of the twine by which the fitch hung and then, content, descended panting and, upturning a bucket at the kitchen door for a stool, sat down there to light her little pipe and have a whiff of tobacco.

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## IX

When living in Glasgow we used often to go down the river. The island of Arran, in the broadening estuary, the firth, we all loved. I set my heart once on walking round the island that now motor cars, whisking round it, have changed as they have changed practically the whole world.

We were at a house at the south end during the summer in which I had my desire. The sea broke on Pladda and smashed ceaselessly against Bennan Head. On the flat-topped hills above the coast-road to right a wind piped thin and shrill in the long tufted grasses. Four hard-boiled eggs and the quarter of a loaf, that were my provender for the day, made my pockets bulge and caused my arms to swing in semi-circles that made me feel like a swaggering stage bully. To carry the eggs and the quarter of loaf inside seemed a simplification of the only hitch in the day; so, although I had but started out, I sat down and ate.

Then, my pockets bulging no more, I swung upon my way. An occasional farm twinkled a window-pane in a fold of the hills above. An occasional thatched roof peeped up, half-hid by twisted trees in some dingle below the road when it left the shore and swept inland over a promontory. In occasional fields the grain ripened in the sun and wind; the heather-slopes basked in the warmth. Now and then a sheep rose and paced along a narrow trail in the heather, like a granite boulder come to life. Kilmory, Lag, Slidery and the butt end of Glen Scorradaile I came to and left behind, and still the road was deserted. Ever and again it seemed a Jacob's ladder passed between field and moor into the blue of sky; then, at the summit and the bend, it showed another stretch twinkling ahead. The wind in the trees, as I write this, might be the lingering sound of the sea in Machrie Bay as I heard it roar on that distant day.

The Isle of Arran was to me then and on many subsequent visits, and as still in memory it seems, an island of enchantment. No myths of kelpies, or of færies, no legend of King Robert the Bruce in "King's Cave," are necessary to

enhance its glamour for me. The romance of its reality suffices. The heather, the winds, the dancing waves weaving in and out of themselves in Kilbrennan Sound, and ever and again the sudden desolate yet moving outcry of gulls at their fishing, the flashing of white as they rise—these are enchantments enough. And as for the place-names: to speak them over is to some of us almost as good as chanting a ballad. Kilbrennan Sound might serve as a refrain to one with the sea and the heather in it.

The eggs and the loaf having shaken down, and my legs having got into the steady pacing as of an automaton, there came upon me the ecstasy of the open road, hackneyed phrase of many a lyric, many an essay—and anthology. After a dozen miles or so of that steady plod I was suddenly seized by the feeling of being looked at. Self-consciousness on such a road as that, an open road twining over the ends of falling hills, swerving round their bases, sweeping round bays, seemed ridiculous. It was an emotion out of place. A man may well be pardoned (honoured and respected, indeed) for feeling self-conscious when standing at attention awaiting decoration; but on a vacant highway between a hurrahing sea and the leisurely roll of coloured moors, great clouds, white and gold, high overhead, self-consciousness calls for inquiry.

I felt so strongly that sense of being looked at that I sat down on a boulder of the road-side to dissect myself. I was determined to discover the reason for that unreasonable feeling. Was it the four eggs and the quarter of loaf? No. Had I been drinking too much strong tea or smoking too much? No. I felt very fit. As I sat there considering the matter a tall tuft of sere grass swayed on the crest above the road and I thought that perhaps out of the corner of my eye as I swung along engrossed on the colours of the sea and the contours of the bays, that grass had been responsible for the emotion. All along the crest as the wind ran by the tufts rose and fell like people spying down.

The explanation did not entirely satisfy; and just as I had told myself so, and that I must inquire further, there did come up over the hill a man's head, shoulders—the whole man. On the ridge he halted and two dogs that had followed stood taut beside him, rigid as he. I would not have been astonished if man and dogs had suddenly disappeared. I gazed up at them and they down at me. The man did not smile but frowned heavily. When he decided to be no longer as a statue on the skyline and came down toward me I felt a sense of relief. Perhaps he had only been examining me to discover whether I was a native or a summer visitor, so as to know if he should proffer his good-day in Gaelic or English.

Having given me a greeting in the latter tongue he asked where I had come from and whither I was going; and on hearing that I was walking round the island, he smiled and asked if I had sworn to walk every step, or if I would care for a lift. I told him I had made no resolve against accepting a lift.

"You're tired already?" he asked.

"No," said I.

"You're sitting down," he remarked.

"That's only because I felt as if some one was looking at me round this bend," I explained, "and I sat down to think out the reason for that queer sensation."

On hearing that, he frowned again as he had frowned down from the roll of hill above. His dogs crouched close, looking up at him ever and again in canine anxiety.

"So you felt like that, did you?" he said, and gloomed, opened his mouth as if to speak, then fell silent.

It was at that point there came to us the sound of plodding horse-hoofs and the lumbering roll of wheels. Round the bend from southward (the direction in which I had come) a horse and cart swung into view. The horse was a great heavy beast, but it reared and baulked like any high-strung cayuse. The driver's face had a look on it not far from terror. Up reared the horse again, snorting; the metal disc, below the collar, flashed wildly to and fro.

"Is it afraid of the cliff here?" I asked the man with the dogs, but he seemed not to hear, intent upon the carter's horsemanship. Then:

"I don't know," he replied, without turning his head.

The dogs at his heel whined and cowered close. The cart came rattling nearer.

"Give this lad a lift, will ye?" he hailed. "There ye are. That's all right. When it gets round the curve it will quaten, whateffer. Jump in ahint. That's it—up wi' ye. Good-bye."

Clambering over the tail-board I called my thanks and farewell. Cannily, and with many a "Whoa!" and a "Steady!" and admonitions bilingual, the driver guided the frightened horse round the bend near which I had sat down to play psychologist upon myself because of the inexplicable sense of being looked at where there was no one to look at me. Over my shoulder I had a glimpse of the man with the dogs as he turned about to watch us, still frowning and puzzled, the collies cowering close. Then we took the curve and by degrees the horse overcame his terrors.

"He's in a lather," I remarked to the carter. "What took him?"

"I don't know."

The man spoke in a tone that I thought surly and explained to myself by thinking that perhaps he was an independent fellow who would rather have offered me a lift himself than have been ordered to give me one. Being in too fresh a mood to be snubbed silent and let the amenities of conversation lapse, I voiced aloud a thought that had come into my head.

"Did you notice," I said, "that those two dogs seemed frightened as well as the horse?"

The carter did not look at me, still intent upon the horse's ears.

"You saw that too, did you?" he replied.

His manner was much like that of the man with the dogs when he said, "So you felt like that, did you?" In his turn the carter then (dismissing the subject I had broached), asked me where I had come from and where I was going. Those questions duly answered, I said:

"I had a funny feeling back there that I was being looked at and sat down to try and puzzle it out."

He turned his head and, gazing upon me with a deep interest in his grey eyes, gave a brief ejaculation in his chest. On we rolled and anon, still pondering my remark evidently, he gave another grunt.

"It is a queer thing," he said, and looked over his shoulder; "a queer thing," he repeated. "I am interested at you feeling that way. Dogs and horses and sheep all feel something queer there. I was driving a flock of sheep round that road last year, the idea being to tak' them by the shore road easy during the night, to Lamlash Fair. But when we came to that place"—and again he glanced over his shoulder—"they would not go farder. I tried to get the dogs on the outside, thinking maybe the sheep were feart of the drop below; but the dogs wouldna leave me. I tried to get the dogs to turn them. It was nae use, whateffer. They tried to stop the rush, but even that they did half-he'rted. I tell ye what—they dogs sympatheesed wi' the sheep."

He looked over his shoulder again and reined in. The horse stopped without any terror, seemed indeed glad to halt and rest.

"They ran back helter-skelter as far as here," said the man, "where we are now. And then the dogs worked again and gathared them—but back they wouldna go, sheep nor dogs. The upshot o't was that I got them up there"—he pointed ahead towards a glen—"and into that fauld there for the night, and in the morning I drove them across the island over the hills instead. But this is what I stoppit for to show ye, seeing ye felt like that. Look. Ye see the ruins of a house there?"

Below the cliff where I had felt as though gazed upon, where the horse had shied and the dogs had trembled (which I had seen for myself), and where the flock of sheep, as I had heard, succumbed to terror, I could just pick out the low ruins of a cottage on the shore.

"It looks as if it had been between low and high tide," I said, for I saw a line of seaweed trailed through the toppled parallelogram of stones that had once been cottage walls.

"Oh, that's just the spring-tide mark, or the remains frae some unco storm," he replied, and continued, "I don't know if it's any explanation at all, but there used to be an auld wife lived there her lee lane and ae nicht a ship was wreckit there. Naebody kens anything about it. Two of the sailors were found exhausted a mile doon the coast, and anither in Machrie Bay lashed tae a spar. They were the only ones alive; the ithers were a' drooned. But in the morning after that wreck the

auld wife was found—just aboot where ye climbed intae the cairt—wi' her throat cut."

I was about to ask, for he appeared to be at an end then, if there was any suspicion that the wrecked sailors had had a hand in the atrocity, when he went on:

"Naebody kens anything about it. I don't see that any of these sailors that was picked up could have done it. One had lashed himself tae a spar and hadna strength to loose himself. He was a' but by wi't. The ither twa were lying exhausted a guid way south o' where she was found wi' her shawl blown over her heid and her throat cut."

We were twisted round in the cart looking back at the place, which we could clearly see from there, having passed into the curve of the bay. All round the horseshoe sweep of the shore the waves rolled in with foaming crests and that sound as of cheering.

"Get up," he said to the horse. He drove on a little way, then he stopped. "Well, I'll have to drop you here," he said. "I go up the glen."

Thanking him for the lift, I put foot to hub and leapt down to the white road. Up the track to farm he went. As I tramped on I could hear his voice now and then, with an encouragement to the horse, and the roll and jolt of the cart over stones. Trudging on, I glanced back at the point behind, across the curve of sand and pebbles where the sea came shouting in. I felt a sense of relief, even on that day of blazing sun, when the road took me over the next promontory. For a long while as I walked I heard a dreary note in the sea-wind that had escaped me earlier in the day, and when suddenly a cloud of fishing gulls volleyed up, twinkling off-shore, mewing and calling, there seemed something sinister as well as desolate in their voices.

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## X

The other day I met a lady who deplored that I do not play bridge.

"What will you do in your old age," she asked me, "if you do not play bridge?"

I left it at that, trying to look doleful about my old age. I shall probably, in memory, row a boat out of Millport till I arrive at that glint upon the face of the waters, off Fairlie, that signifies the sandbank there, and fish for flounders again; or climb Goatfell with the heart and wind of youth, tack a lug-sail in Kilchattan Bay and often visit, propping my old head with a withered hand, a certain little seaport on the Clyde.

The *Queen Mary* could not have come within a mile of the harbour. The ships that lay by its old wharf were of a draught not much deeper than that of the vessels in Columbus's fleet. There were a couple of comparatively modern derricks, and there was a highly modern contraption for loading coal into the gobarts, or the vessels that were in direct descent from the coal-gobarts, a great steel fist that opens as it drops into trucks, closes there and swings up full, with just a sifting of black dust between the knuckles.

But there was also much loading and unloading done there by devices as simple as those the Phœnicians knew. A rope, a pole, a pulley, and a basket served the turn of the sailors of most of the smacks, men who looked as though they belonged less to any given country than were simply descendants of sea-rovers. Some wore little gold ear-rings. Their sheath-knives, on hip, might have been bought of some water-front ship chandler at Greenock, some little quay-side *fournisseur de navire* at Quimper, or in one of their own little dusky stores across the cobbles.

Before the railway came it had been one of the chief ports of Glasgow, ships from Jamaica and Virginia unloading their sugar and tobacco there, and the carriers' carts coming and going. Ghosts of my ain folk trod its planestanes. My mother's father and his father before him (with John Galt's pawky eye on him) had expounded the gospel in sermons—doctrinal, experimental, and prophetic—preached from pulpits in that port. To see my great-aunts there—Janet and Margaret Barclay—Daniel Macmillan (who founded the Macmillan publishing house in London) often went, a hundred years ago. "I say all manner of out-of-the-way things," he wrote to his brother Malcolm, "just to pester them. Is that not amiable? It

is such fun to see them open their eyes." They often played to him as he lay on the sofa in their drawing-room. "This does me more good than all the doctors," said he.

Edgar Allan Poe went to school there, strange though that might seem. He, I am sure, would be aware of the rooks, before sunset, cawing overhead from the foreshore to their tree-top villages inland.

With aeroplanes crossing the Atlantic, and liners like hotels (on which one feels inclined to say "waiter" instead of "steward" at table), and the cargo boats of to-day like liners of yesterday, doing their fourteen knots, fitted with wireless and all modern conveniences, my little seaport seems very near to Homer's sailors, to Jason, to Odysseus. The men I saw there were very definitely in the succession from Hakluyt's originals. Fishing boats, with their shining load, tacked in and lay alongside, and the fishermen peddled their catch through the town in barrows.

Much of the basic simplicity and directness of life remained. Along the water-front the marine stores displayed iron bolts and nuts in the windows. Seamen's boots and yellow and black oilskin coats hung gleaming at the doors. The interiors were dark, with flicks of brasswork reflecting light—ship's lanterns, gimbals with their screws, or the locks on sea-chests. The smell was of tar, of ropes, of tarpaulins and paints, of seaweed and the light off the sea flickered over the houses facing the wharf.

Two streets away was the railway station, and beyond it the town had a different feeling. Farmers' traps stood at hotel doors with pigs or hens under nets behind the seats. Herds of cows went scuffling and joggling past, driven by red-faced lads in corduroy or moleskin. The men in the blue jerseys seldom came so far inland from home. Even those who were old lived where they could see the little ships come in, see, from the window, a red sail or a pointing bowsprit. They must be able to hear a "yo-ho," or the clatter of a capstan, or the chirping of blocks (that seaside sound so quaintly in tune with the shrill piping note of a herring-gull) that tells of the tide being at turn and the smacks preparing for sea.

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## XI

In a mustard-coloured dusk of gas-lit Glasgow (much like that one in which I was introduced to Fortuny) my father brought home to me, from the Athenæum Library, Catlin's *North American Indians* and McLean's *The Indians of Canada*.

Thereafter was a change in the neighbourhood of my week-end playground. The hill of Ballygeoch was no longer the knob of rock on Robinson Crusoe's island whence I searched an imaginary sea for a sail. Ballygeoch became a butte of the Western plains where I looked out over the domain of Blackfoot and Cree.

That I might have more data for my play I begged for more books to a like tune. Thus Ballantyne and Butler—of *The Great Lone Land*—came my way. A serial story in a *Boy's Own Annual* of that period, called *The Silk-Robed Cow* (which was a buffalo cow), helped. The old family atlas made me conversant with the whereabouts of the far-scattered trading-posts—from the frontier posts of Millbrae, by way of the Bad Lands of Giffnock Quarries, to the Mearns Moors—which were the rolling prairies of the far west.

According to accounts that I read of that company known as The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay it seemed that they had their adventuring done for them chiefly by Scots; and the annals of their rivals, the North-West Company and the X.Y., were starred with such names as Findlay and Fraser, Stewart and Mackenzie, Livingston and MacDougall, Angus Shaw and Donald McTavish.

In my late teens, at the urge of a restlessness both national and of my family (all my folks, on both sides, were world wanderers), I got leave of absence—deaving them near to death till I got it, I fear—and within two weeks of dropping Rathlin astern (not without a gulp in my throat) I saw a camp of veritable Blackfeet, saw the smoky-topped tepees, the herds of their horses, blacks and greys, roans and pintos, sorrels and blues.

For a year or two I wandered in the West, no settler, working in lumber camps and railroad camps—arduous work, enough to make or break one. Briefly I ran a store for a man too lazy, or too fond of beer and skittles and sitting around

with the boys, to run it himself. The confinement between walls was irksome, however, so again it was roll and go. I went into the hills on old Indian trails and had my introduction to the odour of red-willow smoke.

Then, homesick, I suppose, I turned east. At Montreal I shipped in a cattle boat which sprang a leak in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and helped to comfort frightened long-horned steers and perturbed bulls while a steamer, fortunately sighting us (for that was before the days of wireless) stood by, and another, called out of the horizon by the blasts of our duetting sirens, went for assistance.

At last it came. Tugs towing enormous salvaging scows thrashed down the gulf to us. On one of these (with the steers and the bulls) I returned to Montreal. Back there, I reconsidered the notion of returning to the Old Country, tossing a coin for a decision; and on another cattle boat (laden with steers and bulls, stallions and sheep), with a return ticket guaranteed, I saw, for the second time in my life, the land of my forefathers loom up through mists.

It was not till some years later that I tried, in my book, *The S.S. Glory*, to give an account of life on these old cattle boats that brought meat on the hoof instead of in refrigeration across the Atlantic; but immediately on my arrival in Scotland I wrote a series of sketches dealing with those youthful stravaigings and it seemed that the editor (of the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*) who accepted them was, unaware, to cancel what my father had set agoing—for the publication of these sketches led to the offer of a job on the staff of a newspaper. So I remained in Scotland instead of returning to the West, and journalism carried me from Glasgow to Edinburgh, to Dundee, to London. That hejira of my teens was of the past, almost as dream-like as my hobbledehoy flights to the Blackfoot country of the Mearns Moors.

A few years later I was offered a roving commission through Western Canada—that I had not even expected to see again. Of course I went, and what changes I found! Wheat was ousting cattle. The great lone land had become the great loan land with real estate men more in evidence than Hudson's Bay Company factors. The buffalo-wallows (those dimples in the prairies in which once the buffalo took their mud-baths) were ploughed under. The buffalo had gone before my first visit; the wallows were gone on my second. But there was still romance in reality there for me. And still, from lieutenant-governors in the land to brakemen on the trains rolling through it, name after name was of the heather—such as Bruce and Wallace.

I have met visitors to that region who complain that it has "no history," but I had read some of its history, had read it in the old Mitchell Library in Glasgow, and in the British Museum in London. In the Public Library of a changed Calgary I read more on that return. Human history, I grant, does not go back there so far as in the Old Country, but in relatively brief time it is packed and rich, and to a Scot especially so. The Douglas firs were named after a young gardener of Perth who went to Kew Gardens and there was asked to go West to make a collection of the flora. From old Fort Colville in Washington (that used to be Astoria) to the middle of British Columbia (that used to be New Caledonia) he wandered alone with his vasculum, a buffalo-robe for bed. Fraser River, Mackenzie River lapsing north, received their names from Scots explorers paddling their canoes, cutting their trails, into unknown land. Place-names there, instead of mossy walls, hint of history—and that history continued to fascinate me. My hobby was the collecting of volumes on it and on what the booksellers' catalogues style Amerindiana.

After the war, free again, much as when I used to tramp out to the Mearns Moors, I returned to the West. I went to a country fair in Saskatchewan where kilted pipers opened the proceedings; attended a Hogmanay celebration in Alberta at which fiddlers played for us strathspeys and reels, schottische and petronella; was asked, the year after that, to "say a few words" at a St. Andrew's dinner, and wished I had some Gaelic, for the Gaelic speech was round me, though those who spoke it had never seen Scotland—sons and daughters, born in Canada, of those cast out during the Clearances.

"What do they know of England who only England know?" Kipling once asked. Scotland, thought I, is a kingdom of the mind. I thought so again, a year or two later, at a Highland gathering at Banff—the one in Alberta, not in Scotland. When Robert Burnett gave us his rendering of the ballad *Edward*, and Jeanne Dusseau and Mary Stuart sang (although it was Bow River, not Deveron, that rippled outside the windows in the moonlight), Scotland was with us.

I went to a Burns' night gathering. Pipers piped in the haggis. I talked with old men who remembered the days of the buffalo, who remembered the Red River cart brigades and how the screaming of their wheels sounded over the horizons before they appeared in the still immensity, elderly men who recalled also how the Hudson's Bay Company factors donned the kilt—the garb of old Gaul, jabot, ruffles, and all—on days of celebration in the heart of the wilderness.

What a cavalcade! What a pageant! Alexander Ross with his Okanagan Indian wife, who became quite the *grande dame*

when they retired at Fort Garry; Macaulay at Jasper House with his library; Mackay at Fort Ellice; Colin Fraser at St. Ann's; William MacTavish, governor of Assiniboia; Colonel MacLeod, coming West with the Red-Coats to save the aborigines from the whisky peddlers and naming his fort Calgarry, later to be called Calgary, after his birthplace; an engineer of the name of Fleming surveying the railway route; Scots foremen from Bruce County and Glengarry, Ontario, bossing the track-layers.

But I have wandered far from that happy fog-enfolded and entranced evening in Glasgow when my father brought home for me, from the Athenæum Library, Catlin's *North American Indians* and McLean's book.

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**PART II**  
*Still Scotland*

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# STILL SCOTLAND

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## I

Regret over the removal of my folks from Glasgow, where I had many friends, to Edinburgh, where I had none, was eased by what I knew of the capital's past. You can touch the walls, there, brushed by Dunbar's sleeve in passing, hear your voice echo in closes where Johnson boomed as he *sir-ed* his correction to some remark by Boswell, go your way forgetting the present with ghosts, at ease with all, even those of the most troublesome or dangerous men, they being no longer harmful, merely as characters in an old story, names in an old song.

I had to admit, even though the admission seemed slightly traitorous to Glasgow (a city I had learnt to love) that the paving-stones of Edinburgh had an average appearance of cleanliness not the norm in Glasgow. There was something very pleasing in the sight of these, bone-dry and bleached after rain.

Yet the name Edinburgh conjures up for me less the city than the Pentland Hills. They undulate south-west, through Midlothian and into Peebleshire east and Lanarkshire west, mounting over eighteen hundred feet and fanning to a breadth that wavers between a little less and a little more than four miles. From their summits you may see, northward over the carse where Edinburgh lies veiled in smoke (the castle protruding on its crag), the Forth, blue or grey as the day decrees, and across the Forth the "Kingdom of Fife," the contours of the Ochils and, in purple distance that is the Highlands, call by name Ben Aan, Ben Ledi, Ben Voirlich, Ben Lomond, fifty miles away. For a humid land that is fair visibility.

Such is the landscape from Allermuir or Caerketton, with startled swallows (that have their half-yearly homes along the cliff-fronts there) like ærial dolphins overhead. From Scald Law or Carnethy, looking south and west, the view is down heathery slopes and over the tops of copses and the roofs of Penicuik (the film of smoke at Leadburn only a trifling smudge) to far fields backed by streaks of green and purple, and the swell of other hills—the Moorfoot Hills and Lammermuir:

"I saw rain falling, and the rainbow drawn on  
Lammermuir. . . ."

As with most parts of these islands historical associations are on all sides, even when there is nothing to be seen but bracken-filled dips, knolls of heather, brown shoulders of hill, and nothing to hear but the bleat of sheep, the bubbling of a morass, the curlew's whistling call, and the "pee-wee!" of the crested lapwing. Monk's Burn tells, presumably, of an old-time rest-house for Cistercian monks from Glasgow. When one comes to details in such matters it is advisable to say *presumably*, for there are as many opinions regarding details of past history as on the history we are making to-day. On the hill above Monk's Burn (a little to south from the right-of-way through the pass from Bavelaw to Nine Mile Burn) is a rough font-stone, filled by the rain.

Temple Hill perpetuates the memory of the Templars, once powerful in the neighbourhood. Causewayend is believed by many to mark the end of a Roman way; and against those who doubt their belief they bring the evidence of coins of Vespasian and Marcus Aurelius unearthed near by. Colinton is, of course, the Colintoun near which Cromwell's army camped, whence they marched after the Scots towards Corstorphine:

". . . but because the English feared it was too near the castle of Edinburgh they would not hazard  
battail there; wherefore both armies marched to Gogar . . . and played each upon other with their  
great guns."

Men have played each upon other with great guns in many places round the Pentlands. It was at Rullion Green, over the fanning base of hill near Glencorse, that the Covenanters, numbering nine hundred horse and foot, were routed by Dalziel's forces of six hundred horse and two or three thousand foot in the year 1666. Some in their flight were killed by peasantry toward Penicuik; others, taking to the hills, were caught in bogs and perished in them. One was succoured by a cottar on the Medwin Burn but would not stay there, pushed on along the hills determined to win home to Lesmahagow.

A mile from the cot his strength failed and he lay down and died. There the cottar buried him, and a hundred and six years later his body was disinterred from the preserving peat, reburied on the Black Law, and a stone was set up over him to tell his story.

On September 15th, 1745 (the hills would be tawny and the grouse chirring), the long exhortation from the pulpit of Glencorse Church interrupted by news of the coming of the "wild heelandmen." Farm produce was commandeered by them from the crofts nestling at the hill foot. Inns were looted of their ale and usquebaugh. Protests were lodged and the Prince promised punishment upon the thieves. And sometimes farmers found small parties of the invaders—twos and threes—and looted them of their loot. Ever and again, since the ice-fields slid away northward from the hills, leaving their hieroglyphics scrawled on the rocks, men's voices have been raised loud there. Many volleys have been fired for the hills to echo a moment. The shouting has gone past; the old quiet has reigned again.

When last I walked from Eddleston by West Linton, the melodious chatter of Eddleston Water for company, and up through the Cauld Stane Slap, motor cars had come but had not conquered, and no one, thought I, descending the western slope of Pentlands above Harper-Rig, however little blessed (or cursed) with a feeling for place, but must feel there as though he walked into an earlier century. He would not have to be told, looking down over the ridges, that the ribbon below was of a turnpike road. He would hardly be astonished to bear in the keen air the sound of a post horn, to see suddenly, across the distance, the speeding bulk of the stage-coach from the Grassmarket for Clydeside, to hear a clatter of pails come from the yard of the inn below. Little Vantage, Bol o' Bear—these names and their like, quaint to our ears, belong to other days. They are the names of ghosts of inns. The turnpike road was falling into the state of the old drove roads then, these roads that spasmodically show, winding green among the heather, lost, glimpsed again. Only so, in patches, can we see the past. Yet for those who are alive to-day it is less, perhaps, what men have done along the flanks of these hills than just the hills that matter, with their quiet, their odour of wild mint, the drumming of their burns that were before the drums of Cope and Cromwell.

One day of a phenomenally dry summer I tramped out from Edinburgh to Colinton and over the saddle to Glencorse reservoir. Because of the heat the sheep crouched anxiously in the shade of bushes. Even the mauve butterflies (or day-moths), no bigger than your little finger-nail, seemed languid in their flutterings. Everywhere was the odour of scorched grass and heather stalks. The hills had the quality of old tapestries. What lurks in Robert Reid's *Ballad of Kirkbride*, in Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*, in Lady Nairne's *The Rowan Tree*, in Violet Jacob's *The Gean Trees*, was everywhere that day—a spirit on the basking rolls, an influence in the blue air, an emanation from the soil.

The sheet of water there is really a reservoir. In that parched August the Logan and March burns had shrivelled, the chapel of Saint Katherine (or all that was left of it), usually submerged by the reservoir, was disclosed for the first time in many years. I traced out the place of the walls and, scraping the sun-dried mud from the chiselling on a great tombstone, read the date, 1623. Some lettering on it I could not decipher, but a man like Old Mortality whom I encountered later in the saddle of the hills toward Currie, and with whom I chatted a while, assured me it was *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*.

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## II

Further afield than the Pentlands I often went. There was, for example, that June day on which, just before the church bells of Edinburgh began to ring for morning service, I *took the gate* for Peebles.

There were still more sparrows than people on the pavements round the Register House. I had crossed the Bridges and was well out beyond the university and the blank blinds of Thin's before the iron clamour began in the air overhead, and the rustle of Sabbath gowns and squeak and tip-tap of new shoes filled the streets.

The sun made a promisory patch of brightness on the shoulder of Arthur's Seat, glimpsed down side streets and over roofs that trailed films of blue smoke. The din of the greater church bells turned into a solemn roar, and the lesser jangled on rapidly. I thought of minnows squirting about among carp. I began to be my own pacemaker.

"Thus far shall I get before the bells stop," I thought, and legged it out, and I had sighted the Braids and the dome of Blackford Hill Observatory by the time quiet again descended on the city.

For a moment I felt lost and thought of Adam cast forth, but the climbing of the steep last hill out of town gave me hope; I seemed more like Bunyan's Christian on the way. I made up on a young man in a Norfolk jacket as he was pushing his bicycle up the last lap of that climb—and he made up on me a little later (where the hedgerows began on either side), pedalling easily and sitting erect. The loose flapping belt of his coat flickered away ahead on a long straight stretch and just as he took the curve he free-wheeled, then glided from view. A thrush (or, in the Scots, a mavis) tossed a roulade from the hedge, showed his speckled breast and flew away.

Three cyclists went by as I reached the curve of the road. Of the Norfolk jacket there was no sign ahead. It had taken the next distant bend. Birds were singing, eddies of wind fluttered, leaves danced in the light. I passed a heavy man who sat on a gate smoking and spitting, and had tramped on not many yards when I heard a volley of profanity and sculduddery from ahead. Looking to the road, instead of into the copses and across the fields, I saw a couple of whippets coming like small racehorses towards me. Behind them ran a group of men of the same genus as he who sat on the gate. As the dogs went by I looked over my shoulder to watch their amazing movements, and noticed that the man behind had come down from his perch and was in the middle of the road waving a flag.

The backers of the dogs passed, all giving tongue with scant vocabulary but, clearly, with one or two pet and inappropriate adjectives. A cyclist male and a cyclist female overtook me with a flurrying of rubber tyres in the dust, and to judge by their voices—which had the tone of making conversation—and by a glimpse I had of the expression on their faces, they had come upon these men during the height of the argument regarding which whippet had won. But their embarrassment over what they heard may be condoned, I think, for that was years ago.

Above, with a creak of wing and a sudden upward swerve, went a lapwing, and called. As the smell of balsam that comes aboard when nearing Nova Scotia; as the first smell of peat-smoke that subtly enters the railway compartment when travelling into the Highlands; as, nearing London, the first gigantic cow made of board, standing in the fields and announcing So-and-So's tinned milk—so was that bird's cry to me. It promised an arrival. It promised that soon I would come to the moors. The Pentland Hills bounded the view westward—crest after crest (of Castle Law, Turnhouse Hill, Carnethy—like a great brown bear-skin spread to the sun—Scald Law) and base after base into the blue of the country toward which I journeyed.

Quietly these ranges almost undid my resolve to go to Peebles for I knew how the Logan Burn would be drumming down the gorge above Glencorse, the tall grass waving along the ridge above Nine Mile Burn; but neither the hills nor the invitation at the cross-roads made me depart from my original intention suddenly conceived in Auld Reekie over breakfast. The road to Carllops, the road to West Linton invited; but I held on to Leadburn, where the cultivated fields fell back on either hand and whence the Pentlands had the appearance of marching off at a tangent under high pink clouds that towered into vaporous snowy Alps. Streaks of ochre and purple and green filled the wide prospect to the Moorfoot Hills south-east. The wind blew keen, chill, despite the sun, and up and down, and to and fro with their leisurely flapping and sudden swerves, abrupt as butterflies, the lapwings wavered and called. It was the cry for the scene, lonely yet happy, somewhat tinged with melancholy, yet ecstatic.

The ecstasy of the day was with me when, Eddleston passed and the roofs and steeples of Peebles ahead, the sound came across fields of church bells ringing for evening service there. Then, cycling toward me, I saw the young man in the Norfolk jacket whom I had overtaken when he was pushing his bike uphill where Edinburgh ended and who had left me behind where the first hedges began. Somewhat weary he looked, and I wondered how far he had been. To Yarrow and St. Mary's Loch perhaps, I hazarded. He, on his Side, by the way in which his glance showed sudden recognition, recalled where he had passed me in the morning. He considered the dust on my shoes as he pedalled by.

With all the bells for evening service ringing I came into Peebles High Street.

Among the best of all leisurely occupations is to lean on Peebles Bridge and watch, and listen to, the stream flowing past.

Andrew Lang loved that sound. There seems to be a cult of detraction of his work, in these days, among some of his compatriots. Beyond the border it is otherwise. Max Beerbohm, though he wrote an account that was not without malice of his meetings with Lang, has recorded his superlative admiration for the translations from Theocritus, Bion and Moschus; and H. V. Morton in his *Scotland Again* wrote:

"It has always been a mystery to me why Scotland . . . has extended to Lang only a lukewarm admiration. He was a genius who—with the possible exception of his book on St. Andrews, the town he adored—illuminated every subject that attracted his fertile and questing mind."

E. V. Lucas recently wrote of Lang that "he truly possessed all the talents," and added, with his bent for anthology and selection, "I wish that we could have one of these new omnibus books containing his best works."

That would indeed be a fat volume, but I hope some publisher will consider the suggestion.

Manifold were his interests; anthropology, history, fishing (somewhere he tells us that on Tweedside a "fish" means a salmon), the origin of religions, the Greek anthology, golf, ballads and ballades, curling, and much else from Homer's wine-dark sea to the last crinkly fresh carnation such as we see in his buttonhole in Alvin Langdon Coburn's photograph of him.

One's thoughts roam back, leaning on Peebles Bridge: Andrew Lang, Veitch, Shairp (of *The Bush Aboon Traquair*), Mungo Park (sometime a medical practitioner in Peebles), Alexander Smith, who heard:

". . . something more in the stream as it ran  
Than water breaking on stones."

At the cross-roads for Traquair and Yarrow is the Gordon Arms, one of those "inanimate objects that have participated." On its walls once drifted the shadows of the Shirra and the Etrick Shepherd as they walked slowly down the road, the ageing hand of Scott heavy on Hogg's shoulder. These two had in common a great love of the borders—the land, the place, the scene.

"And what saw ye there  
At the bush aboon Traquair:  
Or what did you hear that was worth your heed?  
'I heard the cushie croon  
Through the gowden afternoon  
And the Quair burn singing doon to the vale of Tweed."

Far beyond Scott and Hogg the mind goes probing when leaning on Peebles Bridge, the sunset golden above the red plantations and Neidpath, and red and gold coils of light in the river pools. The cross of Peebles was erected before the days of Bruce. From Cademuir, that hump of hill above the stream to south, the Romans looked down on the winding river. The Beltane Sports of May, held in Peebles,

"At Beltane, when ilk bodie bownis  
To Peblis to the Play,  
To heir the singin and the soundis,  
The solace, suth to say. . . ."

have their origin in very ancient days, are in direct descent from pagan festivities before Baal.

Once upon a time there were no motor cars in Scotland. My memory of those days takes me to Aberdeenshire, a shire I did not ever revisit after the motor car age arrived. It remains for me, thus, honkless in memory.

The train I travelled in from southward was late. All the vehicles at the station seemed to have been engaged in advance. I walked up to Union Street, where, instead of a vista of lit windows, there was just the diminishing perspective of void pavements under the kerb-side lamps. To be sure a door here and there, with dull glass panels illuminated, told of the interior warmth of a hotel where perhaps a sleepy waiter was sitting up to greet a delayed guest, but it was my hope—it had been all day since the train glided out from under the glass roof of the London terminus—to complete the journey in one swoop; and the city of Aberdeen was not my goal, only the "jumping-off place" for it.

The last cab was gone from the rank in Union Street. I put my plight to a policeman, monumental in his greatcoat, stolidly breaking the keen draught at a corner, and he directed me to a livery stable—but no answer came to my knocking or my hail except the kicking of a horse's hoofs. Under the gas-jet that fluttered in its glass globe over the entrance to the mews I stood on the cobbles and quoted to myself:

"I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell."

Was this a case of inherited memory and the memory very dim indeed? No, I did not think so. Once at an exhibition in Edinburgh in which there was a house set up in the style of some old house of years past I essayed the tirling pin on its door and had the emotion suddenly, with the thing in my hand and hearing the noise it made, that there were corpuscles in me from far beyond bell-pushes, bell-pulls, and knockers. It seemed I had, long ago, in circumstances forgotten, tirlled a tirling-pin. This was different from that. There was no suggestion of the possibility of pre-existence or the probability of inherited memory.

The memory, I decided, was only of many a tale of romance. Standing among these wavering shadows—for the gas-jet in the big glass globe overhead was got at and agitated by the eddying night wind—I realised that I was as a character all ready for Chapter One of a long Scott romance. Then a window sash creaked and a head showed in the wall of the wynd above me.

"What are ye wanting?" a husky voice inquired from aloft.

There was no doubt about it. It was Chapter One. Would that Andrew Lang and A. E. W. Mason were lurking in an entry looking on, thought I, before I answered that question, for here and now they would receive the jog toward another *Parson Kelly*. The creak of that sash, the dim projection of that head, the kicking of the horse's hoofs within, the interchange of dim light and shadow in that alley. . . .

I explained that I was wanting a conveyance. The voice at the window informed me that it had no connection with the deserted stables. From what I could see of his tousled head, I decided that I had got that character for a new Jacobite romance out of bed, so apologised for the din I had created. He mumbled an acceptance of my apology and told me that he didna ken where I could get a conveyance. By his humming and hawing I had a suspicion that some one should have been there, and that the man at the window had a private guess where that missing one was to be found. Despite the fact that he had "nae connection" with the stables he yet asked me abruptly where I might be going. I argued that the inquiry came less from empty curiosity than to help him to decide whether or not I was a customer for whom the people who ran that livery stable would be grateful at so late an hour.

When I replied that I wanted to get to Echt that night there was a long pause. The fare was not exactly to be sneezed at, Echt being about twelve miles or so from Aberdeen. I awaited his next remark, but when he broke our silence it was to advise me to try elsewhere. I surmised that he had come to the decision that it was better to lose a client for a friend than to run the risk of being damned by that friend for being kept out of bed. He gave me full directions by which to find another livery stable. The creak of the window responded to my thanks and, thinking of the Shirra, and of Andrew of the brindled hair and his clean-shaven English friend, I came back to the main thoroughfare from which I had gone fumbling into that mews, to find that the policeman had strolled after me. He was standing at the corner of the alley talking comfortingly to a cold cat that leant atilt and rubbed against him.

"Nae luck?" he asked.

"No, not there, but I have been advised to try So-and-So's."

"Aye, that's richt. Ye might get a machine there," said he, using *machine* in the Scots sense as applicable to almost everything on wheels except a perambulator.

Following the directions of the man at the window, which were ratified and amplified by the policeman, I came to another wynd with another flickering gas-jet set in a glass case and more Méryonesque shadows. One window was lit and the interior glow made plain the legend thereon—*Vehicles for Hire*.

I opened the door and found a clerk in attendance in a little office that consisted of a telephone receiver (telephones had arrived though no motor cars), a speaking-tube, a tall stool, some tall ledgers and a counter. All was ready for business, exactly as if I were in some wide-awake new mining town of America where *Open Day and Night* is a proud motto. The clerk was reading in an evening paper and smoking a blend of stationery and tobacco, the acrid fumes of which got into my lungs and set me coughing, newly out of the good, keen air. He nipped off the red end of his smoke with thumb and forefinger, and asked what he could do for me.

Within a quarter of an hour a great-coated Jehu thrust his head in at the door to announce that all was ready. The horse was fresh, tossing his head to the tangling night outside. The dog-cart lamps burned cheerily and sparkled on the harness. I climbed to a seat and the driver tucked us both up. Then we were off.

In Union Street I looked for my constable to shout to him, "It's all right now," but there were only the dead windows in the blank walls and the rows of street lights. The whole place was like a stage scene awaiting the players.

The rhythm of the horse's hoofs was excellent but very loud and sharp. The stones of Aberdeen are hard. Hearing that reverberating clip-clap I realised that I was truly in the Granite City. I imagined a trail of awakened sleepers in beds to left of us and beds to right of us. When we passed a dim-lit window I wondered if we disturbed at his construing some student of the old university (founded in 1495, by the way), or perhaps a nurse, worried for some "sick body" even more than the "sick body" was disturbed, for those who are very ill seem often hardly aware even of noises, our raucous actualities all remote from them.

The perspective of the lamps stretched before us in converging lines. With a shocking abruptness, as we came near the last, the clatter of the shod hoofs ceased. The sudden cessation of the clatter was really so—shocking, shattering. To the horse, there was dual cause for amazement; the loud sound dwindled and under his hoofs was earth instead of stone. He snorted and reared, jibbed; but being ably and kindly pacified he suddenly swung valiantly forward again and fell once more into his rhythmic stride. The beat of his hoofs was the merest pianissimo to the earlier clatter and we all—horse and driver, and I—were as ghosts in a world not realised.

The city lamps having been left behind, our eyes were no longer blinded to what was above us. The little stars grew larger and others, unseen before, were suddenly created. The cold, high, dark-blue and velvet-like cavity of the heavens was glittering with them. There was Orion atilt with his belt and sword; there was the Plough with its pointers. The trapeze of the Pleiades was clearer than I have seen it anywhere, save at sea in the tropics or on the high plateau of the American west. Cassiopeia was a great W, or an M, as in some stellar pyrotechnic display.

I leant back, cast my head back, the better to see all that—and had the experience of a lifetime. Aberdeen does not mean to me woollen goods, or such ballads as *Cauld Kale in Aberdeen*, or even granite, so much as stars and the whirl of the Milky Way. The beat of the horse's hoofs went on in perfect rhythm, without a slur, so muffled that it was more like the sound of wings. It seemed that we had left the solid earth and were urging along through space. I think we must have had the pick of the livery-stable steeds for that drive. For many miles, with the exception of the one jib at the beginning where causey and earth met, and another when something ran in the hedge, that gelding went at a steady and swift gait that gave the impression of being tireless. Our destination might have been Jupiter. We were surely heading that way, between Taurus and Andromeda, when the driver said, "Here we are!"

Yes, there we were—back to earth. I looked ahead and saw by the roadside a black bulk of a house, a splash of light from an open door stretching over a space of frosty gravel. There were lights also in the windows. A faint odour of hot scones and oatcakes came to me. I had never been to Echt before, it was as new to me as Jupiter would have been, but all it was to me then was a dark base for a dome of glittering and distant worlds. But the room into which I was ushered was clearly on this planet by evidence of a portrait of Queen Victoria and a large photograph of a Highland gathering with some one performing a sword dance.

It is, perhaps, not so wonderful as driving between the planets but there is a great charm in arriving thus at any place for the first time, without any conception of what it looks like. It was imagined that my delay was due to the fact that I had dined in Aberdeen and so no dinner awaited me, only something "to warm ye after the drive." Having sampled buttered scones—those with a sift of flour over them—and oatcakes, and drunk a cup of tea and nibbled a piece of cheese (for still, as the grumbling Johnson found on his travels, the Scots "pollute" tea with cheese) I went to the bedroom that awaited me.

Before turning in I raised the blind and looked out. Nothing was to be seen so far as this world was concerned. All was quiet. Orion had moved a little way and the Plough had taken a fresh tilt. Only the frosty air sent me from the window to bed.

I seemed for some time still to be coasting the solar system on the winged horse—then poised, Mohammed-like, in the midst of immensity. Pigeons on the window-sill woke me in the morning upon the planet called Earth.

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**PART III**  
*Four Men—and some Horses*

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# FOUR MEN—AND SOME HORSES

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## I

"Richard Bullock, the original 'Deadwood Dick,' has died in a Californian sanatorium, at the age of 75. He was of Cornish birth."—*Daily Paper*.

Anatole France once said that he proposed to speak of himself apropos of Shakespeare, Racine, Pascal, and Gœthe. I would somewhat adapt the phrase and say that I here propose to speak of Deadwood Dick apropos of us all. My *moi* will surely serve for many men.

When I was a boy there was a great wave of objection to all save hard facts. At its height it caused even *Robinson Crusoe* to be barred to some boys. They had to plead that he was founded on Alexander Selkirk (or Selcraig) of Fife before his bonfire on a rocky ledge and his coloured parrot could be theirs. The yearnings for picturesque romance were responsible for many young people's knowledge of Borrow's *With the Bible in Spain*. To the well-intentioned elders the title was that book's passport. To the young people, as they read, the title seemed as what, during the war, we called camouflage. Sometimes, indeed, the young enjoyed it so obviously, pored over it as they could not pore over *Ministering Children*, that suspicions were aroused. As for Jules Verne: he must be mentioned in spite of those who, missing the point, may say that here is a lumping together of names without "critical faculty." As for Jules Verne, then, he was looked upon too often not as the great author of that trilogy *Dropped from the Clouds, Abandoned, The Secret of the Island*, but as—I do not use the phrase in any but the literal sense—a Damned Liar.

In those days there arose to our succour a firm called the Aldine Press, which published the "O'er Land and Sea Library," the "Ching-Ching Library," (for once I am moved to obey the advertisements of a certain typewriter firm and put the force of emphasis into my typed matter) AND the "Deadwood Dick Library."

One day in Glasgow years ago I espied a brightness among the schoolbooks of one of my fellows, and the brightness lured me.

"What's that?" I inquired.

He produced a slim booklet, which he handed to me. I held it, I gazed upon it, I felt a wonderful—how shall I call it?—something deeper than thrill. That bibliophile, my grandfather, William Waterson Niven, must surely have smiled down on me from Elysium. He would understand. My parson grandfather on the other side of the house may even have done so too.

On the cover of this find in the realms of print was the glamorous picture of the head of a man. He wore a big hat and a mask was over his forehead and cheek-bones. The eyes looked out splendidly. Over him was written:

DEADWOOD DICK

(I should like the printer to put his name in the centre of the page), and underneath were the words,

THE OUTLAW OF THE BLACK HILLS

"You can have it if you like," said my schoolfellow. He told me part of the story but only enough to whet my interest. "I won't tell it all. I don't want to spoil the reading for you," said he.

I have forgotten how it was that I knew I had to keep my possession secret from the adults in whose care I was at that time and it is scarcely worth while to fidget over a *résumé* of the possible collection of reasons. The possible reasons are obvious. I recall that sometimes I urgently desired to communicate the stories for the benefit and delectation of those very adults who condemned such form of bookishness. From the brink of that self-exposure I retired, on such occasions, holding my peace. The only way to communicate, if communicate I must, would be to say that a boy had told me the yarn!

But such a method might have led to complications and I realised that silence was best. I recall that when I was at home with my folks and my propensity for penny dreadfuls was discovered, my father did not larrup me for it. On the contrary he gave me pennies to buy the things, dipped into them himself, heels on the mantelpiece in his reading pose, and discussed with me their merits—or demerits. Looking back on those adventures in criticism I suspect he was probably trying to wean me from them in a man to man fashion.

How I cherished my Deadwood Dick! Well do I remember the shop under the Caledonian Railway Bridge in Argyle Street with a bright window full of him and his fellows. But even in fiction his terrestrial life could not last for ever and his son (*Deadwood Dick Junior*) lacked some of his sterling qualities, although bringing other sterling qualities that the father lacked. Dick junior was a detective, retrieving the family honour, the father having been a hold-up man. *A chacun son gout*—mine was Deadwood Dick. I have forgotten exactly how he robbed the stage-coach that ran from the Platte through the sandhills of northern Nebraska and on into the Black Hills and Deadwood. I have forgotten even if the express messenger was killed by him, but I have never forgotten the country into which he led me. I think, though it is long since I combed these classic volumes, that the descriptions of the mining camps must have been well done. I know that the first mining camps I saw, when I went west, reminded me, in the most insistent way, of those cherished booklets.

When I was a boy and could travel only on the atlas, Deadwood Dick took me up winding roads between scattered bull-pines into quick-rising hills. The trees were very tall. The forest glades were very quiet. I sometimes wish I had a complete set of the stories in my library now to turn to occasionally from some of the discoveries of the coteries which are thrust at us with an intolerance worse than that which accompanied the advocacy of *Ministering Children*. What are these compared with Deadwood Dick donning his mask and riding down the North Platte road in the golden light of youth?

His flights into the hills were tremendous. They atoned a hundredfold for the egg-like weals upon our wrists delivered by a soulless mathematical master for deficiencies in trigonometry. By the valour of Deadwood Dick I learnt how to take a trouncing from that callous teacher. It was, by the way, only a literature master, I remember, who had any sympathy with our affection for the Outlaw of the Black Hills. Finding us at our devotions he used to tell us of books that would delight more, seeing we liked these, instead of robbing us of them and chastising us for possessing them.

To return to Deadwood Dick: he led me through the mountains, they drawing closer and wildly dark. He turned aside from the wagon-road where a trail led off. That trail was fairly clear. Here and there between tree-tops was a glimpse of a mountain wall beyond. Shafts of sunlight swept down into these hushed "mountain fastnesses." From that trail again he went on, after stopping and listening in the silence a moment and breathing his horse. *Breathing his horse, watering his horse*: what good phrases they are! No boy and no healthy man but should be moved at the sounds. I followed Dick through the solitudes of tall timber awash with the scent of balsam, on into the thickest forest, on into a cañon. Cañon is another great word. It is one of the *open sesame*.

Up this cañon, then (the stairs up to, and the corridor of the top flat, leading to my bedroom, used to be the cañon), Deadwood Dick guided me. He went over a "divide" (at the top of the stairs), and came down into a "pocket" in the hills, a grassy little valley (where the passage widened), and there, having unsaddled, he left his horse free to graze. My rocking-horse, which I had grown beyond, stood there and had not, at that time, passed to a little pensioner of my people.

Deadwood Dick strode to some bushes and breasted into their midst. I strode to my bedroom door and breasted against it, having first turned the handle. The bushes whipped back into place and right ahead was a precipice and a cave—for Dick. I presume he kept his treasure trove in the cave but I have forgotten the details of his loot, what he gave me, to last for ever, was a horse, big timber, and silent mountain paths.

In my cave (my little room) was carefully *cached* in different places my treasure trove, and that trove was various numbers of the Aldine and kindred publications. There were one or two other heroes there. One I recall was "Always on Hand, the Sportive Sport of the Foot-Hills." He was a wonderful fellow, for ever arriving in the nick of time. His Colt was a forty-five calibre one and he rested the barrel of it on his left forearm, the left hand being turned towards the people whom he caused to leap round when he exclaimed, "Ha-ha!"; and on that palm was the word *Always* printed. But Deadwood Dick was, to my mind, more of "the goods." He was the touchstone. By him I measured "Always on Hand," Jack Harkaway, and the rest.

I shall never forget my joy when once the bell-pulls went wrong and a man came and felt along the walls of the attic rooms, then, with a look of satisfaction, bent down and made careful incisions into the wallpaper with a penknife,

disclosing a little door about eighteen inches square, that led on to the rafters under the eaves. He crawled through and mended the wires, came out, and went humming away with his tools on his shoulder—leaving me hopeful that the wall would not be repapered. The good fates were with me. The slits in the paper round that door were not considered unsightly and nothing was done.

So I took my Deadwood Dicks from under the carpet and climbed on a chair to cull others from the top of the wardrobe. Then, slipping open that little door, I crawled in over the rafters with a stump of candle. There I kept my library. There was my real cave. The bedroom thereafter became the grassy pocket in front of it. There I kept my heaven-sent library, thence I educed such volumes as the little boy next door had not read. He preferred *Deadwood Dick Junior*, *Deadwood Dick Junior at Galveston*, and the like.

Those were great days. They had their pathos and their misery, doubtless, but they had also great joys. And among the greatest of these was Deadwood Dick—in fiction.

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## II

I feel sure, from words he wrote on the reading of boyhood, that Andrew Lang would take no umbrage but rather find a certain pleasure in here following Deadwood Dick.

I saw him only once—and that was in Edinburgh, thirty-seven years ago. He had just arrived (as I heard later from one who knew him, and to whom I announced with youthful joy my glimpse of him) from St. Andrews, had been examining the bookshops, book-dips, in the neighbourhood of the University and, with an armful of volumes, was returning from the auld toon to the new one on his way to Mackay and Chisholm's in Princes Street to buy an opal ring.

That was a Mind coming down from the auld toon to the new. I stared—and recognised him from the portraits I had seen: nut-brown skin, silver hair, jet-black eyebrows and moustache. He made me think of Thyrsis of the abstracted, meditative air. Knowing that few, visiting Auld Reekie, could be as well aware as he of the history in its every wall and entry I fancied, by his mien, that he might be musing, as he strode along, upon that history, walking with the ghosts.

That was a splendid moment for me. I was then just twenty and a hero-worshipper—as young men used to be in those days—and he was one of my heroes. I had many of his lyrics, his sonnets, his ballades by heart. Across the years I recall the impression he conveyed: I saw him as one who might as readily know the feel of a fishing-rod or an oar in his hand as of slim duodecimos, "Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs." All day I went about in a heady and beatified state because of that glisk of the man who had written the sonnets on Homer, the man who had written "Twilight, and Tweed, and Eildon Hill," the *Ballade of his Choice of a Sepulchre*—"where the wide-winged hawk doth hover"—the *Letters to Dead Authors* (my copy was the old original small square blue volume with the initials *A.L.* thereon), in a heady state such as the young Henry James used to feel after meeting Turgenieff.

At the school to which I had been sent to be educated in Glasgow (a city I learnt to love but that seemed a dusky place to me at first in contrast with the South American city of my birth) scholars had to choose, or more accurately their parents or guardians had to decide for them, *Classical* or *Modern*. The former meant Latin and Greek and one modern language (French or German), and the latter Latin (as a philological base, I suppose), French and German. A decree of modernity being made on my behalf all the Greek I know came to me after schooldays, chiefly in such editions as those of Bohn and Loeb; but my first cicerone and interpreter through the Greece of Homer and the Sicily of Theocritus was Andrew Lang.

Born at Selkirk on March 31st, 1844, Andrew Lang was educated at Edinburgh Academy, St. Andrews University, and Balliol College Oxford. Then he took a Classical First Class and was elected Fellow of Merton. He was made LL.D. of St. Andrews and elected first Gifford Lecturer there. His collection of fairy tales are still read by the young people, I notice, not yet entirely ousted by books on aeroplanes and bombing. His biographical and historical volumes and his studies in the origins of religions and folklore are still, by their research and clarity, read and quoted. No anthology of the sonnet may well omit his *Homeric Unity* or *The Odyssey*, and his rendering of *The Burial of Molière* may not be forgotten. In collections of light verse he, as surely as Præd, must be present and his *Almæ Matres*, with its sound of

surge and driven spray in the street, I feel certain the poet of *The Forsaken Merman* would not have disesteemed. One of Lang's finest essays, by the way, is upon that poet.

There are many legends about Lang's manner. It has been called lackadaisical, supercilious, superior, affected, even insolent—all that—and his accent provoked annoyance in many. Joseph Pennell, who worked with him (himself sometimes cranky in converse) was able to overlook Lang's manner and utterance, get behind these, and like the man—despite the unfortunate little incident of Lang giving him, instead of a letter of introduction to a friend, the one that should have gone direct to that friend; it contained a warning that Pennell's accent was "wonderful," which Pennell, reading, did not like.

That drew from him a tirade upon Lang's vocal style: "Accent, indeed. If any one had a more perfect Oxford accent than Andrew Lang, with a bit of a Scotch burr thrown in, I never heard it. And the squeaking scream in which he talked beat any Middle West schoolma'am's cackle."

Max Beerbohm, who met him twice, could not abide either voice or manner and had to indite an essay upon his antipathy. "No man," he wrote, "can easily be popular who has the Oxford manner in even a rudimentary degree: the perfection of that manner is a sovereign charm against popularity. Oxford I have never ceased to love; but its manner—as exemplified not in writing but in social intercourse—I began to abhor very soon after I went down." But "the incomparable Max" did, elsewhere, happily inspired—as was mentioned earlier—pen his admiration for Lang the writer, unreservedly pronounce his pleasure in the prose of the translations from Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus.

Sometimes I wonder if perhaps the words *aloof*, *detached*, might not be as fitting as those I have quoted—lackadaisical, supercilious, and so forth. Detachment is not, of necessity, impudence. If there were more detachment in the world to-day, if a certain sort of detachment were a possession common to the majority of humanity, would not Europe be a happier place? Sir Sidney Colvin wrote of Lang that his abstracted air was sometimes looked upon, especially by women, as rudeness, but towards his friends, said he, "there was no man steadier in kindness, or more generous in appreciation, as I for one can testify from more than forty years experience." And Professor Grierson in his lecture entitled *Lang, Lockhart and Biography*, comparing him with Lockhart, remarks that both were considered difficult, prickly, rude, but adds that "Lockhart, or so Lang was convinced, like himself, hid under this prickly and repellent surface a depth of loyal affection for his friends and a sincere regard for moral worth."

The man who wrote sympathetically of Sir Walter Scott's obvious love of the servitors in his romances, and of how he permits them frequently to rise up and steal the play from their masters, the man who in his preface to his translation of *Aucassin et Nicolette* commented on a sudden touch of sympathy with what is called "the people," the folk, expressed by the unnamed *jongleur* despite the fact that he was singing to the idle rich was, by these and similar pieces of evidence, whatever his utterance or manner, not arrogant at heart, not inhuman.

This alleged "rudeness" of Andrew Lang interests me. It is possible that he founded his manner, as some do, consciously upon the manner of another. Of the works of that great predecessor at Balliol—Matthew Arnold—he was a devoted admirer. May he, in hero-worshipping youth, have studied the kid-gloved "Mat Arnold's" manner? There is a tendency for imitation to produce travesty. Or must we inquire otherwise for the explanation of the deportment that irked many? There is sufficient evidence in his work to let us know him a highly sensitive man. His "rude" behaviour may have been as protective moat and drawbridge. In view of the affection of his friends I fancy these *few remarks* are not far from the heart of the matter. I tender them at least as possible explanation.

But enough, perhaps, on that head. Before another decade has gone we shall be celebrating the centenary of his birth, and it is his work that matters. The personality in that is lucid, wise kindly, lovable. There was surely not much amiss with the inner man, the man behind that barrier. He is distinctly one of those in whose work the native spirit of place has had a part. He is national and international, of the soil but not of the parish pump. His work has racial qualities without being provincial. It is far from that. He belongs to Selkirk, and to the world.

In the preface to his translations of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, he speaks of a passage of Theocritus regarding the sheep bleating on a hillside and the cows coming home at dusk, and is led thereby to an aside on the personal vision evoked for him—"a memory of a narrow country lane on a summer evening, when light is dying out of the sky, and the fragrance of wild roses by the roadside is mingled with the perfumed breath of cattle that hurry past on their homeward way." That takes me back to the lanes about Selkirk on summer evenings. Lang, like Theocritus, was coloured by his native place. The dawns and the moons and the twilights by Tweedside went into his work, and the music of his loved

Tweed. But he was not, any more than Theocritus, though both lived great part of their lives upon islands, insular.

Beyond the borders of his own land he has long had appreciation. Early in his career he had found honour in America, was a leading contributor to *The Critic* and other journals of those days, and is still frequently referred to and quoted by critics there. Brander Matthews, when *Letters to Dead Authors* was published, hailed it as a "minor classic," and Time, by the evidence, is proving Professor Matthews not in error.

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### III

Most of us, sometimes, I suppose, observe some small boy engrossed upon his youthful affairs and wonder what he will become, what he will make of himself or what life will make of him, what sort of man he will be to look upon after forty years. W. E. Henley has left us a self-portrait of himself when young, topped by a broad-ribanded leghorn, "antic in girlish embroideries" and wearing "silly little shoes with straps," carrying home a great treasure—a Book with "agitating cuts of ghouls and genies:" and, for background to that picture from memory of the boy he was, are the docks of Gloucester thronged with galliots and luggers, brigantines and barques that came in those days "to her very doorsteps and geraniums."

There are still many alive who knew him as a man grown and can speak of him from personal recollection. And we have various glimpses of him, the man grown, in books. We can hear him puffing up the stairs to the Pennells' flat in Buckingham Street, off the Strand. We can see and hear him, in the office of *The Art Journal*, in conference with the editor, Marcus Huish, and the assistant editor, Lewis Hind, and the proprietors, the partners of the old firm of Virtue and Company. His shock of hair (that passed speedily from red to grey, from grey to white in the fifty-four years of his life) is disordered, his beard ruffled, and he gives vent to bellows of laughter—but at what, the others do not know. We have evidence regarding the man's hat as well as the boy's, for William Nicholson not only made a portrait of him with it on but a still-life painting, called *Henley's Hat*, in which it lies on a table (brigandish of crown and brim) atop a clutter of things of diverse texture, the sort of still-life for which Nicholson has a penchant.

To judge by photographs and by that Nicholson portrait, W. E. Henley had a powerful frame. But a physical disability, result of a mishap in youth, forced him, for example, when wanting to consult a book out of reach on his table, to lay hold of the table's edge and haul himself up and round, as was once described to me by one who saw him often and dared not, in the incident I cite, get the book for him lest so doing he annoyed Henley and brought upon himself a volley of abuse. And in his walks abroad Henley laboured with a crutch and stick. This disability, it seems, gave him days of testiness, patience slipping from him. He could be more than testy, would curse and swear to beat all cursing carmen, and use phrases of opprobrium regarding those he disliked that were violent and inaccurate, as that part of him that was devotee of *le mot juste* must surely sometimes have realised. A sort of thwarted viking of a man ones sees him, labouring along, his head defiantly cast back,

"Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody but unbowed,"

and his bright blue eyes puckered, trailing a wisp of cigarette smoke. It may well be that on a hard day of bitterness over his burdens, physical and financial, and dark musings on the tough time he had had in life, the Balfour biography of his old friend Stevenson (who had made money and gained sympathy for his disabilities, and laud for his courage, and conducted family prayers in his middle years—disgustful to Henley) came into his hands. Anyhow, he made his attack on it, or rather on Stevenson through it, in *The Pall Mall Magazine*—a Christmas number too.

There were those who, irked by what seemed to them excessive adulation of Stevenson, were willing to condone it and others—Stevensonians who were also admirers of Henley—who regretted it greatly. For it was splenetic. It was malicious. It imputed. And for one such as Henley, with his manner (or pose) of a downright fellow, his air of being honest John Blunt, its innuendoes made it additionally unhappy. G. K. Chesterton, apropos of that deplorable affair, told us of the strong man who can crack the shell of an egg, set upon a table, with a swing and a tap of a twenty pound

hammer, and of the other man who, swinging the hammer to show that he also can do it, that he too is strong, smashes egg and table. Henley, in fact, was more he-man than man at times in his manner and more justly might he, instead of Stevenson, be cited as an example of those in whom invalidism creates excessive, somewhat hectic, admiration of robustiousness.

At the time that Henley launched his tirade at the book and the dead Stevenson my friends were almost all painting, etching, drawing, or book-illustrating instead of book-writing young men, for I had been recently studying at the Glasgow School of Art. Henley, though not a painting man, though sitting at a desk instead of standing at an easel, was one of our idols. He knew about art—our art! He had edited not only *The Scots Observer* (afterwards *The National Observer*) but also *The Magazine of Art* and had been called in as Consulting Editor of *The Art Journal* to give it life. As editor of *The New Review* he was not only publishing Conrad but giving us, each month, a Nicholson print, and Nicholson was one of the Beggarstaff Brothers. He and the other "brother," James Pryde, we raved over.

We regretted that article on Stevenson. We wished that Henley had not done it. He disappointed us there. We were not taken with, "I read that, included in the plenishing of his [Stevenson's] ideal house, were 'a Canaletto print or two,' and I recall the circumstance that his taste for Canaletto prints, even as his Canaletto prints themselves, came through and from me." Too much of that sort of thing and worse, much worse, was in the article. It savoured—nay, it reeked—of envy and uncharitableness. We read what *The Saturday Review* had to say of it in an article entitled *Literary Leprosy* and left it at that. For Henley loved the visible world. He had kinship with Claude Monet in his eye for the play of light, and not Méryon was more aware than he of the magic of tones on spire and wall and chiaroscuro under city eaves and sills, and how doorways might be sinister.

The volume entitled, simply, *Poems* (containing *A Book of Verses* and *London Voluntaries*) was first published in 1898. My copy, taking the place of an earlier one lost, is dated 1917 and is the seventeenth edition in these nineteen years. From 1917 till now I don't know how many printings there have been. It is interesting to note the demand for it in view of some words—words of bravery and acceptance typical of Henley—in the preface:

"The work of revision has reminded me that, small as is this book of mine, it is all in the matter of verse that I have to show for the years between 1872 and 1897. A principal reason is that, after spending the better part of my life in pursuit of poetry, I found myself (about 1877) so utterly unmarketable that I had to own myself beaten in art, and to addict myself to journalism for the next ten years."

No doubt there is money in writing, as the many advertisements of correspondence schools for teaching how to make it by writing tell us; but on inquiry into the lives of many eminent writing men it would appear that they took no such courses, if such existed in their day. Bills bothered them. Only their devotion to their craft made them continue in its practice. Even in journalism Henley did not become wealthy. Yet surely he had a happy life. Books and pictures and music and scenes in the real world, urban and rustic, stocked his mind. His *Views and Reviews*, in two volumes—one subtitled *Literature*, and the other *Art*—divulged something of the rich lading of his mind. He had a knowledge not only of English literature and art but—as is of course essential for a critic—of the literature and art of other lands and wrote, as Oscar Wilde said, the prose of a poet.

In talk he was vociferous with contempt for those he dubbed decadents, but there was an article by Arthur Symons in an old *Harper's Magazine* (for November, 1892, to be precise), entitled *The Decadent Movement in Literature*, in which Henley was given a leading place. There he looked out from the page, in the company of Maeterlinck and Mallarmé and Verlaine, with tousled locks and rumped beard in a photograph by Hollyer; and no one said, *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?* It seemed right he should be there. We were glad to see him acknowledged as a poet who mattered, however labelled—and the label, mark you, was not, to most, objectionable then. Of the *Hospital Rhymes*, that had once gone abegging, Arthur Symons wrote: "The poetry of Impressionism can go no further, in one direction, than that series of rhymes and rhythms." And Henley was in that galley by reason of his "sincerity and the impression of the moment followed to the letter," which was a phrase adapted by Symons from Verlaine to describe what he meant by "the decadent movement in literature." There was no shame then in "decadent"—*fin de siècle*. These terms stood for being in the swim, or in the van, rather than being in at the death.

There was a small volume in those days often in my pocket. I got it, I remember, in Holmes' bookshop in Dunlop Street, Glasgow—*Ballades and Rondeaux* in the Canterbury Series. On a preliminary turning of the pages there seemed to be a disproportionate amount of Henley; but on reading the preface by the anthologist (Gleeson White) that was explained:

"In a society paper, *The London*, a brilliant series of these poems" [ballades] "appeared during 1877–8. After a selection was made for this volume it was discovered they were all by *one* author, Mr. W. E. Henley, who most generously permitted the whole of those chosen to appear, and to be for the first time publicly attributed to him. The poems themselves need no apology, but in the face of so many from his pen, it is only right to explain the reason for the inclusion of so large a number."

Henley, for me, is one of those poets on whom it is hard to write impersonally. This is something that all must have felt of certain writers: they are part of our lives. Among my first expeditions on going to London was one to the crypt of St. Paul's to see Rodin's bust of Henley and another to Richmond, thence to walk by the riverside to Kew for the sake of,

"On the way to Kew  
By the river old and grey . . ."

My first lodgings were in Pimlico. A Cockney friend told me I should say East Belgravia, but I liked the name of Pimlico. Sir John Squire had not made it comic then with his parody of Masfield. A step or two from my diggings brought me to the River of which Henley wrote:

". . . See the batch of boats,  
Here at the stairs, washed in the fresh-sprung beam!  
And those are barges that were goblin floats,  
Black, hag-steered, fraught with devilry and dream!  
And in the piles the water frolics clear,  
The ripples into loose rings wander and flee."

In those days there was hardly a motor car in all London. Its music was of drumming horse-hoofs and the steely, the silvery, jingle of harness, unforgettable. Those who came too late to hear it have lost something. There were things before our war worth remembering—yes, I sometimes think worth going back to, if only we could! The turning into Great Smith Street from Victoria Street was always romantic, the orchestration dying away behind, and the arrival there always so—coming out of that quiet tributary to the roll of the drums and the chiming of the triangles.

Sometimes I went home from Fleet Street late at night. City cleaners with their hose would be making the wood-blocks of Broad Sanctuary gleam like gun-metal under the lamps, and Big Ben would be booming, high and remote, as the last bus for The Monster, Pimlico, swerved into Great Smith Street. We would come to Vauxhall Bridge Road and a wind, with a slight freshness among its staleness, running there, a draught from the river; and then, the brake of the old horse-bus sprung off, we would wobble on again—to the region of pillared porches beyond broad, shallow steps, and of little iron balconies and occasional passages of piano-music coming from some open window; and there would be the area railings, and Henley's

". . . rake-hell cat—how furtive and acold!  
A spent witch homing from some infamous dance—  
Obscene, quick-trotting, see her tip and fade  
Through shadowy railings into a pit of shade!"

It was that vision of his, and that way of portraying, that caused Symons to place him among the "decadents"—the impressionists of those days, such passages as that and such similes, no doubt, as the one he used to convey a sense of the abomination of spiritual desolation and abandonment by happiness:

"Like an old shoe  
The sea spurns and the land abhors."

We have all seen that old shoe. I remember (on a visit to Edinburgh to see my "folks" who had moved there from Glasgow) walking once, by the Firth of Forth, from Granton to Cramond, and the sight of one put secondly in my mind the shimmering sands and the eddying of the gulls and the distant huzzaing of the tide far out, sent me on my way musing on the work of Henley, less upon any special example of it than just on its aroma as it were, its quality, its texture, the

quintessence of it.

Wilde once wrote of him, "He is never forgotten by his enemies, and often forgiven by his friends." Often forgiven by his friends! Well, we Stevensonians, I think, have all forgiven him his attack on Stevenson. They share the same shelf in our book-cases. Perhaps, were they to know, that would please them both.

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## IV

The name is arresting, like the personality for which it stands: Cunninghame Graham. Lavery painted two portraits of him, one (somewhat reminiscent of Raeburn's *Sir John Sinclair*) showing him afoot, the other—an equestrian portrait—with a remarkable effect of movement in it. I never see it even in reproductions but I have the impression that in another moment horse and rider will be gone beyond the frame, leaving only the background of the empty pampa.

The words that follow I wrote before he had gone from us and I shall let the present tense stand. In a sense he is not gone.

He has a passion for horses and has written many an essay in which they are leading characters and one book devoted to them—*The Horses of the Conquest*. William Rothenstein has recorded him in lithograph and in oils and in *Men and Memories* includes a reproduction of a painting of him in fencer's garb. Belcher did a charcoal drawing of him—it appeared in *Punch*—with a lightly-indicated background of Hyde Park Corner and a horse or two, in a dexterous mere line or two, clipping past. There is a word-picture of him in the epilogue to Bernard Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* and another in George Moore's *Conversations in Ebury Street*. Writer, Scots laird, Spanish hidalgo, South American ranch owner, he has ridden and bivouaced in Texas and Patagonia and may be found this month in Morocco, next month in London, or in Venezuela, or enjoying a brow day (or a snell day for that matter) in Perthshire.

R. B. Cunninghame Graham is a Figure. Once seen he is not forgotten. It is told of him that a lady once asked him if some rumour she had heard of his royal lineage was true and he replied, "Madam, if I had my rights I would be king. And what a six weeks that would be!"

It really did not need the lighting effect of my first sight of him, some years past, to make him remain always in my memory as he does, as clear as though seen only a moment ago. There was a ceiling-light in a corridor smashing down heavy shadows and a glare, and a plain wall was backcloth to the hidalgo carrying a silk hat and gleaming cane. He stood at the corridor's end—it was at the Court Theatre in Sloane Square—talking to W. B. Yeats who had come round in front to see how the play went. They parted. Yeats drifted away into the Celtic twilight behind a curtain and Cunninghame Graham, raising his head so that his beard seemed to point the way, and with his cane held in advance like a rapier, charged back up the slope of that corridor into Sloane Square as though he were going to swing into the saddle of a horse waiting there eager to step up as his foot touched the stirrup and send the sparks flying from the causey, clattering home. But there was no causey—there were only the wood-blocks, lustrous and dark in the rain and street-lamps of that London evening—and no horse. The interior of a taxi received him and I stood in the portico of the theatre with a medley of thoughts.

All who read this no doubt know moments when a whole swarm of thoughts or images, diverse yet linked, rise together in their minds. I thought, all in a moment it seemed, of Barbey D'Aureilly and Count d'Orsay, of Buffalo Bill and Chief Crowfoot, of the way to Valparaiso via Mendoza, the Andes rising beyond the pampas as do the Rockies on the verge of the prairies of Alberta, of the magic of the arrangement of words, and of "The style is the man." I had quite definitely seen the author of *Mogreb-El-Ackra*, of *Progress, Faith, Hope*, and the rest. Once again I saw him, passed him in Rotten Row to the muted, muffled rub-a-dub of hoofs on the red tan of that course, and rider and horse abide together in my memory from that occasion.

Years later, with half the world between us, we began to correspond and one of my chief treasures now is a bundle of letters from him, letters on many themes—on Indians and the Indian sign-language, on horses (criollas and cayuses), on horse-breakers and their methods, on saddles, on painters he met—Leslie Hunter, who did some sketches of him, one of

these—and old frontiersmen. In one letter he mentioned: "Hickman of the Texas Rangers was over in summer and rode with me in the Park, complete with Stetson and two guns." Many of these letters bore, besides his signature with its Spanish rubrica, a drawing of his ranch brand, registered in the *policia* of Gualeguaychu, Entre Rios, Argentina. "That brand, I am sorry to say," he commented in one of them, "was not registered yesterday. . . . It is my best coat of arms (or crest) and is the only thing I want cut on my grave." It may be seen, though unexplained either on the dust jacket or in the introduction, stamped in gold on a corner of the cover of the selection from his work called *Rodeo* that A. F. Tschiffely gathered together.

He gets down what he wants to get down and for all his clear love of words, plangent and coloured words, is occasionally wildly careless, at times indeed slightly cavalier towards laws of grammar, though winning his effects. I note his tendency to the excessive use of *just as* and *as if* and a sort of flaunting ever and again into *just as if*. They splash the pages of some of his books, perhaps verbal evidence of a mental idiosyncrasy or *slant*, or perhaps just surface mannerism. Stevenson once wrote to Henry James in appreciation of one of his novels—*Roderick Hudson*—but begged him "the next time it is printed off to go over the sheets of the last four chapters, and strike out 'immense' and 'tremendous.' You have simply dropped them there like your pocket-handkerchief." *Just as, as if, just as if* are the dropped handkerchiefs of Cunninghame Graham. And I surmise he would but say, were his attentions drawn to that addiction of his, "Well, what of it?" I would be willing to agree—well, what of it?—so much else there is.

There is a passage in one of his early books that I often reread. It deals with a spot he visited upon the southern pampas that was also visited by Darwin, and the gualichu tree there—in Darwin spelt almost phonetically, walleechu tree. If ever I compile, for those who might care for it, the anthology that is but in my mind so far for my own private delectation (every man no doubt has his own anthology), the passage from Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle* and the one from Cunninghame Graham's *Success* will be in proximity.

"You in the future who, starting from Bahia Blanca pass the Romero Grande, leave the Cabeza del Buey on the right hand, and at the Rio Colorado exchange the grassy Pampa for the stony southern plains, may you find water in both wells, and coming to the tree neither cut branches from it to light your fire, or fasten horses to its trunk to rub the bark. Remember that it has been cathedral, church, town-hall, and centre of a religion and the lives of men passed away; and, in remembering, reflect that from Bahia Blanca to El Carmen, it was once the solitary living thing which reared its head above the grass and the low thorny scrub. So let it stand upon its stony ridge, just where the Sierra de la Ventana fades out of sight, hard by the second well, right in the middle of the travesia—a solitary natural landmark if naught else, which once bore fruit ripened in the imaginations of a wild race of men, who at the least had for their virtue constancy of faith, not shaken by unanswered prayer; a tombstone, set up by accident or nature, to mark the passing of light bands upon their journey towards Trapalanda; passing or passed; but all so silently that their unshod horses' feet have scarcely left a trail upon the grass."

He is no sentimentalist. He can see the steel edge of life, as witness that story of the old German couple, settled on a wide plain of huisache and mesquite scrub who, on Christmas Eve, in the old German usage of such simple and credulous folk as they, put a shoe outside the door with hope and in the morning opened to see what Santa Claus had left them. "Something was in it of a truth, for Santa Claus, who never disappoints people who trust in him, had filled it up with snow. As they stood looking at it ruefully, the long-drawn howl of a coyote sounded far out upon the plain." He is no sentimentalist, but he does not suffer the callous gladly. He does not consider that men should be ruthless though nature, on occasion, is as cruel as kind. Hugh Walpole recently made the comment, in an article on contemporary literature, to explain the coldness towards the work of Galsworthy he had discovered in some quarters (whether representative or not), that humanitarianism is out of fashion. Whether in fashion or out of fashion, humanitarianism remains in Cunninghame Graham. He may seem somewhat fiery at times for a pacifist but when he blazes it is over injustice or callousness. There are writers with peccadilloes that we condone as we condone the peccadilloes of a friend. And if now and then he launches a gibe that some others might withhold, we let that go but as part of the intrepid quality of the man. That fiery spirit has capacity for pity—and for tenderness. Not *Beattock for Moffat* only (which appeared in the volume called *Success* and was later included in another entitled *Scottish Stories*) informs us of that.

There is a kaleidoscopic quality in his work. It is vivid. Tangier has coloured it. Fortuny and Regnault I think of often when reading his north African sketches. There is a phrase of the western plains that obtains from the Saskatchewan to the Rio Grande. It survives even in these days of petrol. When you ask a man if So-and-So knows about horses he may

reply, "Horses are where he lives," or it may be, "*Horses* is his second name." Horses are where Cunninghame Graham lives. And though no Rosinante is his mount there is a touch of Don Quixote about him, in the finest sense (his intimates call him Don Roberto), in the sense that makes the word *Quixotic* one not of derision but of tribute, or even of affection.

When these words first appeared in print—in *Library Review*—he wrote in a letter to me: "Yes, my second name is horse! There is no doubt about it, 'that is where I live.' Thanks for pointing out 'just as' and 'just as if.' I am aware of it, but cannot cure myself. There is a Spanish saying, 'a perro viejo, no hay Tus, Tus.'" And he went on to tell me that if the *justs* were dropped handkerchiefs he could still pick them up from the saddle—and he was then eighty years of age.

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## V

There have been too many famous horses in the world to get them all into one round-up, or remuda, famous horses both in the flesh and in paint, and in bronze, stone, verse and prose. Bucephalus, the horse that Alexander the Great rode into India; the horse of Achilles; the too magnificent charger of General Prim (in Regnault's picture that visitors to the Luxembourg may recall); the horses of Boadicea's chariot rearing up on Westminster Bridge as though startled by the passage of some top-heavy lumbering County Council tramcar; Dick Turpin's horse, Black Bess; the horses that brought the good news with onomatopœic hoof-fall, thus: "I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;" the horse with the lavender eye, which was a horse on a merry-go-round: to mention these is only to make a scrambling beginning.

My own first was a rocking one. He lived in the attics' corridor of a house in Glasgow. His name was Charley, after a horse ridden by George Catlin, one of my boyhood's heroes. Another personally memorable horse—more recent in my life—was a cayuse behind which I rode once up a pass in the Rockies. To see him, at some place where canted trees made a dubious letter A over the trail, joggling a little this way to slip the pack upon one side through, joggling a little the other way to slip the other through, and then with a snort of satisfaction striding on, was to realise he had intelligence. His solicitude for the safety of the load was remarkable. Not but what, one day, his intelligence was otherwise manifest. Weary of the burden, he walked into the woods and bucked and rubbed it off against low branches. The annoyance of the packer was dispelled when, gathering up the parfleched boxes strewn over the scene, and looking into them he found that not an egg was broken. Some packing! Some packer!

But I must tell you about Baldy, whether you believe me or not. We were companions on many a long trail but he seemed, on the first day I rode him (on my way to the Lake of the Hanging Glaciers in the Selkirks), to be a practical joker. He found amusement in stepping abruptly off the trail when he saw a stump nearby on which, by his sidestepping so, I might stub a toe. Once or twice, in fact, I had evidence that he had a gay notion to crack my knee-cap on a tree-trunk. Suddenly, in the late afternoon of that first day out, when I was wondering how long I should be affable over his fun, he found himself in a cloud of wasps. After the performance of some thrilling gyrations on the brink of a cañon he obeyed my orders to be still and let me dismount and with my sleeve clutched down over my wrist sweep the demented and dementing wasps off him.

After that his attitude to me was entirely changed. His chief aim in life (even ahead of eating blueberries) appeared to be to see that I did not crack a knee or stub a toe, moving clear of obstructions without any guidance from me. I can almost hear the throat-clearing of the incredulous but there are those who will not doubt my veracity in the matter—such, for example, I think (should he happen to read this), as Mr. Tschiffely, he who rode two criollos, the South American relatives of the North American cayuse, from Argentine to Washington, ten thousand miles, and told of his experiences in *Southern Cross to Pole Star*.

Sometimes these cayuses I have mentioned come to melancholy ends. During the last years, in the grassy secluded valleys among the eastern foothills of the Selkirk Mountains, there has been much rounding-up of the wild herds, driving of them down to corrals by the railway tracks and shipping them away to become tinned meat in France and Belgium. Trickish work it is and often dangerous, and that not only because of the abrupt ups and downs of the country and the wild stampedes, the right-about turns on hillsides, the sudden crashings through belts of woods. I know of one young man who, helping to round up a bunch, had a snorted warning from a stallion and, ignoring it, was grabbed by the challenging

beast and hauled bodily from the saddle. The stallion had to be shot and left there for the coyotes to devour.

In these herds driven in from the ranges are often such fine beasts that horse-fanciers watch for their coming and frequently for but a dollar or two more than the price paid by the tinned-horse contractors gain possession of an animal that, carefully broken to bit and saddle, may be their favourite mount. And just a year or two ago the Indians in the Nicola Valley of British Columbia—to raise a sum of money for the fighting of a dismal case for them in the courts—were rounding up wild horses and selling them at seven dollars each for dog-feed and feed on fox-farms.

Talking of Indians reminds me of the horse, the performing horse, that Buffalo Bill presented to Sitting Bull after that chief had toured with him through the States and Canada (Sitting Bull never went to Europe) in his Wild West Show. From brass bands and the arena he went to one of the Sioux reservations in Dakota—Standing Rock—where he was greatly prized by Sitting Bull. Then came the day—it was during the Ghost Dance trouble of 1890–91—when the government ordered that Sitting Bull was to be arrested. It is common belief that it was hoped by the powers that were that he would resist arrest. It is common belief that ways of arresting him less likely to create disturbance, less likely to be resisted than the one finally ordered, were vetoed by the powers that were, in the hope that he would resist and thus give opportunity to get that unbroken chief out of the way.

Be that as it may, a few moments after Sitting Bull had come out of his cabin in answer to the summons, shooting began. There was the crack of a rifle—and another—and volleys of firing followed. Suddenly, from a corral nearby, came galloping into that arena the performing horse that Buffalo Bill had presented to his Indian friend; and, as the old unbeaten chief fell, there, among the fusillades, the horse sat down on his haunches, raised a foreleg and waved it to the audience, raised the other and saluted, and bowed and bowed again—and wondered, perhaps, why the usual ovation of clapping hands and laughter was absent.

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**PART IV**  
***Ships and the Sea***

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# SHIPS AND THE SEA

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## I

On a certain Saturday and Sunday I was in Glasgow—having come north from London to have a look at it again. On the Monday afternoon and early evening I had a long tramp beyond the tram terminus at the Braid Hills, in Edinburgh, taking a final sniff at the Old Country scenes, hearing for the last time (that year, at any rate) the sweet plaintive call of lapwings across the fields beyond Fairmilehead.

On Wednesday evening we had dropped the pilot where the Solent becomes the English Channel and the coast lights were blinking or waving horizontal columns to us. A wonderful old world! I turned up my coat collar and, leaning on the taffrail, watched the channel lights flick one to another and to us.

The hiss of the sea, the throbbing of the engines, the vista of deck planks, the deck lights, the old familiar ship-smells and sounds, the striking of the bell on the bridge and the response forward from the crow's nest: these filled me with a sense of elation and freedom. I found it hard to turn in. When I woke at morning, felt the easy and buoyant lurch, heard again the rhythmic creaking as of a basket and through the brass-bound port saw the South Tors of Devon dropping astern and a tramp steamer with a poth of foam urging ahead of her bows, the ecstasy was renewed.

Going on deck I was told that we had lain-to during the night, tinkering some engine-trouble. Thus it was that England gave me a second adieu on that voyage—with a scent of narcissus flowers blown out from the Scilly Isles through a pink haze. It was good to be aboard ship again.

I do not suppose a man can ever unreservedly love the sea. It is a suggestion that, if I remember rightly, Joseph Conrad (that Pole who did such wonders with the English tongue) scouted while agreeing that a man may easily love ships. The sea is too terrible for perhaps any to love it, but its allure is known to many.

Out of sight of land, Ireland dropped astern, the great Atlantic waves swinging in and out of each other, it is easy to realise that we are living our lives on an amazing globe spinning round the sun, and that life is not a little parochial affair of rates and taxes, of the price of coals, or the scarcity of sugar, or of chicanery passing for politics.

There are always one or two world-wandering stewards or old salts with whom we can get into a corner when they are not on duty or in their bunks; and from them we can hear the stories of those who go down to the sea in ships and see the marvels of this world. One old seaman told me of a voyage out of the Mexican gulf on an oil-tanker that took the green seas like a breakwater, of how on only certain parts of the ship could the men smoke because of the safety-valves emitting the gases generated. Another told me of landing for a day in a bay of the Bight of Benin and seeing a fish that walks on the land from one stream to another, of trying to catch it and suddenly finding a witch-doctor making incantation round him, the fish that can walk being sacred there. I had read of this fish, but here was the first man I had met who had seen one. He interested me as men from the sea with strange stories interested Herodotus and Hakluyt. He also told me of how he wandered on through the jungle and found a black man whose trade was making calico breeches for a tribe that wore no other garment.

"And there he was," my informant ended, "sitting in front of a grass house like a bee-hive, nothing on but a loin-cloth, a-making loin cloths and a-hemming them with a Singer sewing-machine!"

There were several Canadian lads, blinded in the Great War, returning home. They laughed much and were, apparently, very gay when together. When one sat, unattended, listening for the coming of his comrades, he seemed to be very solitary. On landing they would part company with valedictory merriment, the war finally over for them, even to its camaraderie, all over. There were Canadian mothers on board who had been over to France to see where their sons lay far from the joyous song of the western meadow lark, far from the robust scent of balsam and cedar. There were all manner of men and women aboard, as always; and, as always, all were interesting. We came among flocks of Mother Carey's chickens in their scurrying flight, a thousand miles from shore. We saw a porpoise school and a shining iceberg,

bigger than St. Paul's. A haze fell upon the sea and suddenly the iceberg showed in duplicate, one on the water, one sailing in the sky, causing us to rub our eyes and wonder what had happened to our optic nerves or muscles, till we realised that what we saw was a mirage.

We sailed through the Strait of Belle Isle with an unforgettable view of the desolate end of Labrador, reminiscent of many parts of Scotland's west coast, and by reason of its desolation (it was as if the spirit of loneliness lived there) seemed like intruders going into that strait. Then came the long, exquisite voyaging up the St. Lawrence with the spring, a little later than in the Old Country, tossing the blossom in the orchards of Quebec.

By the time we reached Montreal the ship was a home to me. There were times when I felt that I could go on for ever, with the pulse of the engines under foot as little distracting as the beat of my heart. All too soon I found myself on the wharf, ashore again, standing by my trunk near the pillar bearing my initial, ready for the customs officer's inspection. My heart was still in the little berth aboard, the trig white berth in which I went to sleep in the English Channel; in one week I had grown to know it better than houses I had lived in for years ashore. My coats had hung from its pegs by the docks at Southampton, had slithered against its white wall in mid-ocean, hung motionless again as we lay in dock at Montreal, the voyage over. I was haunted by my farewell glance round that cabin. It was an empty shell of a place, the trunks gone from under the bunks, the coats gone from the triple steel hooks.

A wild desire took me to stay with the ship, to go upon it wherever it might go, to make its sea my sea, its wanderings my wanderings! Very compelling is the lure of going down to the sea in ships, both for landlubbers and for seamen. One of the officers on board told me he had tried to live ashore but could not; he could only feel at home on the high bridge. It is easy to understand those ship's captains who, when age compels them to leave the bridge, find a house to live in not far from the shore and come down, with rolling gait, to sit upon a bollard of the wharfs and smell the ropes, hear the chirp of pulleys—a sound tuned to the call of a sea-mew—and watch the ships cast loose, sidle into the fairway under an eddy of gulls.

"Well," said the captain, saying good-bye, "we have been lucky—having no fog."

That reminded me of an earlier crossing when we crawled for days through murk.

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## II

Under the bridge, peering down, were dimly discernible two look-out men in the bows, craning forward, muffled, hands deep in coat pockets, staring into the nipping grey vapour. They looked like a new kind of figurehead. Up in the fore-crosstrees, in the look-out barrel, were two heads dimly seen, one on each side of the mast, each in the attitude of a short-sighted man peering into a small-print time-table on a wall.

The deck thrilled so that one's feet tingled as the siren roared out its plaintive note that rose into a melancholy crescendo. We had seen nothing but fog for two days and two nights; but all the while the siren let loose that halloo to somebody or nobody, as might be. What was that? The captain's head moved as he gave attentive ear. He turned and said something to the effigy behind him and the deck rumbled again, the siren making its complaint—"like a god in pain." The pauses between the blasts were briefer then.

That sound in between our bellows was possibly an echo on some fog-shrouded iceberg's cliffs. It was cold enough for ice. And we were hardly moving. The propeller whirled and desisted, whirled and desisted; the siren shouted almost continuously. Then, away off in that vapour, a Sad, long bleat came to us. No doubt about it now—another siren. After crawling through the fog two days and two nights, nosing carefully toward Canada (careful as a man in a dark corridor who does not know whether there are, or are not, steps in it) we had met some other fumbling vessel.

"Yes," came a voice behind, "didn't you know? It's the *Columbia*. We have been in touch all day by Marconi. Booh! It's cold! Let's get below again."

The unseen was on the port bow, booming close, and we replied. She wailed again and we answered with our moan and

groan, crescendo, dying fall as of remorse. She was astern, roaring like the lost, and our siren responded. Fainter, fainter, a far bellow; fainter, fainter, a distant bleat as she crept out over the Newfoundland Banks seeking for the open Atlantic—with men reading, yarning, card-playing, smoking in her smoking-rooms, women sewing, talking, reading, card-playing in her drawing-rooms, look-outs at her bows, crosstrees, bridge; and we did not see her.

Longfellow's "Ships that pass in the night" is hackneyed and when one has passed one's teens one is slow to quote it, but it occurred then. Ships that pass in Atlantic fog, crying thus to each other, are memorable. I did not seem able to forget that ship all day. "Yes, didn't you know? We've been in touch for hours by Marconi . . ." did not make me dismiss it. I could not even take the wireless for granted! It crackled and crackled overhead and down the slender wire out of the coiling greyness that we could stir up as if it were soup. I could not consider it casually. "All steamers fitted with wireless" seems equivalent to saying that magic is on board.

There, we had stopped! We roared again and again with hardly any pause between; and then came the weakest, most pathetic little toot as if from a tin horn on the end of a kitchen bellows, and very dim and ghostly there soared up on a wave and slid down in a hollow a Newfoundland cod-fisher.

No—I do not like fog at sea, but it is a great experience to pass through it. And pleasant it is to come out of it when the first bugle blows for breakfast and go in to loaded tables and warmth and lights, give and take placid, "Good-morning!" with the steward, who looks at us quickly to see if we are afraid—or hungry. We are thankful that he clearly sees that we are feeling fit and hungry!

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### III

Ice and fog together that captain would have called bad luck. In fog there may be ice. If one were asked, "Which would you have if it were given you to choose—ice or fog?" the reply would be, "Ice."

One afternoon on still another crossing, a sunny afternoon, as the ship surged through the North Atlantic heading for Newfoundland, we saw, along the northern horizon, a thin line of radiance. Looking at it, wondering what it might portend, what caused it, we began to see twinkling points in it here and there. Within an hour of first being aware of that glitter we discovered the cause. We came upon the advance scouts of that long white line—and it was ice, hummocks of ice, varying in size from perhaps three feet across to as many yards, with here and there little pieces no bigger than the square that is brought to your door by the ice-delivery man, and others much exceeding the average, like small cottages afloat, hummocks of ice by the hundred advancing upon us.

As each rose buoyantly in the water its wet part shone as the hull of a rising ship shines, but more wonderfully; for, as it rose, all the colours of the rainbow showed, dazzling. Then down it plunged, was merely a white block again. I said they came by the hundred; we soon saw that they must be wallowing towards us by the thousand. And as they rose and fell irregularly, blazing and going white, it was more than our eyes could stand. The eyelids came down willy-nilly, sheltering the eyes; all those on deck could only peer painfully at the display.

Along our sides the sailors fell into order with fenders at the end of long ropes, and as we steamed slowly on they kept alert for the larger islets of ice, to fob them off. A man near the bows would see one menacing our hull, and, hanging over the rail, guide his fender to meet it, take the impact so, and the lump of ice would go spinning round, joggle sternward, to be passed away from man to man.

I had been watching them at this work for some little time and when I looked round again I saw that the ice was not only on one side of us. It stretched almost from horizon to horizon. Only far off, in the direction whence we had come, was a thin strip of blue sea. On all sides the ice-chunks rose and fell in a blinding heliographing. An hour later there was no open sea visible anywhere; and the effect, looking down from the upper deck, was of a tessellated and unsteady pavement with curious veins scrawled through it.

When the sun set there was quiet on board. The gorgeous colours that, though they had almost seared our vision with

excess of light, had also given us a great sense of elation, suddenly went out. The ice had gone dead and our hearts felt it. Melancholy came aboard. Quiet and depressed, we looked at that ghastly expanse through which our vessel steamed—that white wavering plane, broken and cracked, stretching from east to west, from north to south. Still the sailors fended off. We went a trifle more quickly, not because the ice-blocks were any smaller, but because the captain was eager to get through before darkness came.

I stayed on deck half the night, leaning on a rail, watching the grey legions go past (for I might never see such a sight again), stayed there till, after midnight, away north-westwards a blackness showed beyond the leaden grey. It advanced on us, we on it. The chunks of ice thinned out; the main army had passed. That belt of black ahead was of the sea. There came a cling-clang from the engine-room; the captain on the bridge had given a turn to his indicator. The throb of the propeller came more quickly; the pulse of the ship went back to normal, the old travel-beat broke out again.

I looked astern. There, wan and grey in the night was the ice. When I looked ahead once more I found that to either side we were in open water. There was no moon that night to be reflected in it. There were reflections only of a few dim stars that our bows shattered with a hissing sound.

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**PART V**

*North Wales—and the Old Man at Chester*

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# NORTH WALES—AND THE OLD MAN AT CHESTER

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## I

North Wales is a haunted land. Although mountainous it is not all precipices or rock. Sheep can pasture to the summits and up to a little way below the peaks the land can be tilled.

From very ancient times people have been there, to judge by indications of habitations on all sides. The ruins of the castles that Edward the First built when shaking the mailed fist at Wales are youthful in comparison with other remains. Some of the stones of Conway Castle (erected originally by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, and rebuilt by order of Edward the First) were appropriated, on a neighbouring hill, from a castle in ruins there in those days; and that castle of Conway, and the Tudor house (Plas Mawr) in its excellent preservation, are hardly elderly in contrast with the hut circles on Conway Mountain above the town. Even Plas Mawr stands on the site of a former dwelling.

The spirit of antiquity broods over the land for any visitors who have natural sensitiveness to the proofs of predecessors in the world. The old wall of Conway still stands, though topped now with waving grass and spattered over with wall-flowers in crannies. Tourists in the motors from Llandudno, on their way to Llanberis for Snowdon, pass under arches—the old "gates" in the wall—under which Llewellyn's people must have passed. There is an enchantment in the place. Only six hours journey by train from London, it is like a foreign country to the Londoner.

The Welsh speech is spoken in all the upland farms and in the villages in the valleys; and in the little old towns the people are bilingual. That feeling of being abroad there doubtless comes as a surprise to the visitor from over its borders, and has its charm; but for all, native and visitor, there is that impression of antiquity. It dwells there like the scent of lavender and mint in old gardens.

You decide, perhaps, in the hotel breakfast-room, looking out of the window as you munch your toast and marmalade, to climb a peak with which the sun and the flying clouds are playing tricks as you gaze. You start out in its direction upon a macadamised road, with instructions where to turn aside into tributary lanes or where to climb a stile to circumvent a shoulder of foothill by a field-path. Your object is, perhaps, only to climb a mountain for the fun of the thing, the inflation of your lungs, and the pleasure of a wide prospect. But before you reach your peak you will have many surprises.

The bridge you espy from the modern road may seem oddly simple, sufficient, and somehow different from other bridges. While you are still wondering why it strikes you as unusual you come, following the advice given at the hotel, to a grass-grown lane into which you turn. It seems, grass-grown though it is, highly purposeful. Then the truth dawns: you cross a Roman bridge and are walking on a Roman road. A thin trickle of smoke from a chimney stack almost hidden in a crease of the hill marks a lead-mine, still being worked, that the Romans worked—and possibly, very possibly, others before the Romans came.

Higher up, with only the bleating of sheep round you, you blunder upon what at first you take for a fold. Wisps of fleece, fluttering on the rough wall, aid toward that belief; yet it is not like most sheep-folds you have seen. Approaching it you find that the entrance is low. Crawling through you discover a great stone—a great slab of stone—lying on the earth within. It is the old door of an ancient British hut. You stand quiet, looking round the place, tiptoe up and gaze over the wall into the next circle of stones, or bend down and peer (like an Eskimo, in Arctic pictures, entering his ice-house) through the low entrance to that next apartment that now has only the sky for a roof. The sensation of being in a foreign country dwindles before that of being upon a visit to your ancestors of two thousand years ago. The wind whistles over the walls that once their thatches covered. You feel that their ghosts may come home at any moment from the surrounding hills or that they may be watching you thence.

That is a haunted land and yet without any suggestion of the sinister. I could camp for the night to lee of the wall there without a childish dread or barbarian's inclination to devise an incantation against evil. On the crest of the slope above

the winds of years have sifted the earth from a dolmen. The cromlech stones, many tons in weight (one wonders by what simple, yet forgotten trick they were raised), stand warm in the sunshine.

It must always have been a countryside thickly inhabited. It is dappled with ruins of historic and prehistoric homes, burial mounds from battles or from long settled occupancies. A little butterfly, green and brown, like the grass and the soil, sits pulsing its wings on a monolith. What sites they chose, these people, for their circles of standing stones—or I should say for what the standing stones are the remains of. The butterfly flutters away, knowing itself observed or because the shadow of my hand passed over it, and blends with the grass. The stone is warm to my palm and I wonder what the hands were like that raised it, and what thoughts were in the minds of the toilers here.

I answer myself that they were thoughts very much like mine: they too saw the sun in the blue sky and were grateful for its warmth, for the white and gold of clouds. They too, knew the smell of summer-scorched bracken and found it good. They saw, as we see to-day, the flying arrow of mallard duck overhead and the shadow of the covey skim the hills. When they lit a fire the smell of wood-smoke gave them a sense of home, and a sense also of unrest. They too, wondered as the smoke was dissipated in the summer air what life was for (apart from the feuds of kings and the lust for lead, or tin, or gold), where they had come from, where they were going. And this wonder in their hearts, for some of them, was exploited by medicine-men and priests (the Druid Circle still stands within sight of the chapel of Saint Somebody or Other who laid the foundation stone in the sixth century); but others preferred to dream their own dreams of the mystery that could both raise the tranquil crest of Talyfan and invent violets and shelter them in the grass.

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## II

Coming back from Wales we stopped at Chester where an old man, old and gnarled, with white hair and clear eyes, entered the compartment. He chatted to two young people who called him Uncle and had come to see him off. His valedictory remark to them came to me like the refrain of a bright ballad. As the train moved away, he said:

"I've enjoyed myself very well, and it's a nice place is Chester."

It is a phrase that would serve as epitaph for most of us. The use of the word *nice* in the sense he intended is no doubt open to censure; but we know what he meant. And for Chester could be substituted the world—signifying the world that exists apart from our little wranglings over passing causes, the arrangements of seats at table, and so forth.

"I've enjoyed myself well, and it's a nice place is Chester," was the refrain of the whirling of the wheels as we bowled down through hot scented Stafford and Northampton and Warwick (where cows stood in shallow meandering waters under alders, and the roads were white and dusty, and wild roses were in the hedges, and yellow irises among the green grass beside ponds in field corners) and picked up the swell of the Chilterns in Bucks, and rattled into Willesden where the request of "Tickets, please!" announced that we were near journey's end.

"I've enjoyed myself well. . . ."

I have indeed; and so have many others. There is an inner life, responsive to the splendour of the world and communicating with it even over the barriers of financial worry that most men know, or across intruding bickerings. I have never been able to agree with those who are of the opinion that Hazlitt's death-bed speech—"Well, I have had a happy life!"—was spoken in bitter or sarcastic accents. The man who wrote *On Going a Journey*, and had such memories as that indicated in the passage, "It was on the 10th of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise*, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken," had enjoyed his life.

When I was five years of age my father took me one day to Viña del Mar, which is on a point of Chili facing the South Pacific. It must have been one of the many feast-days for the trains wore bunting, and garlands of flowers were hung round the locomotives. I remember how he stopped at a black, cavernous building, and said, "Listen to this. We'll chance it," and stuck in his head. I remember the halved door, the lower part closed, the upper open; and inside machinery moving perfectly, wheels revolving, and a shaft of steel swinging up and down like a gleaming metal forearm from a

fixed polished elbow.

What he called into the twinkling gloom was, "Hallo, Jock! Hoo are ye the day?" I did not know that language then, but my father knew many tongues and did not surprise me by springing a new one on me. From the interior promptly came the reply, "Ah'm fine, man, and hoo's yersel'?" and a man who had originally been white came to the door with a sweat-cloth in his hand, and they talked a little while. I remember the twinkle in my father's eyes afterwards when I asked him who the man was.

"I've no idea," he said. "He comes from Glasgow."

"But when you called didn't you know he was there?"

"No. It was just chance. I saw a pumping station in the sand and thought I'd see what it would bring forth. It is always worth trying."

I walked on with him, rather puzzled, though asking no more questions—trying to think it out for myself. But the conundrum was relegated to limbo when he took me into a vineyard, after tendering a silver coin to a dusky woman in a blue print gown, and for the first time I saw grapes growing and the sunlight in them. I have never forgotten those grapes, almost transparent, lit like jewels. "I've enjoyed myself well, and it's a nice place is Viña del Mar," I might have said.

When my father took me to that vineyard by the sea he was doing (aware or unaware) the best that any one, generation by generation, can do for those of the next—though I could not conceivably, thus early, realise how much that best is. Grapes in sunlight; green trees against blue sky; water plopping under the counters of boats, anywhere, from Iquique Bay to Duror in Appin, from Bideford in Devon to Juneau harbour in the pan-handle of Alaska, and the reflections like small flames wavering along the painted hulls; phosphorescence spinning in a steamer's wake; winds running in fields of corn; the leaves of aspens showing their silver sides among the green, twiddling before thunderstorms, and a wild light over all; the twinkle of herring-gulls in a summer sky—I've enjoyed myself well, seeing all these sights and responding to these sounds.

There is a life of the mind, there is an aumbry in the mind (of "Infinite riches in a little room . . ." of "All things that move between the quiet poles . . .") and, having that, it's a nice place is the world despite—despite many things! The simple eulogium of the old man at Chester must have significance for many, so I pass it on.

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**PART VI**  
*England*

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# ENGLAND

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## I

Out in the rural night of Kent and Essex one can hear London growling under its glow in the sky—or its filmy smoke canopy.

The noise of London never stops. Carts going to Covent Garden, the horses' hoofs plod-plodding, motor wagons going to Covent Garden with rattling of the exhaust, take up the task in the early hours before late taxi-cabs and drays and trucks have renounced. By the time the Covent Garden carts are going home comes the clatter of tall milk cans at the stations and throughout the city and suburbs. The dust-carts are also then rumbling at their work to and fro in the streets. Refuse tins are trundled, long-handled shovels knock on the edge of the cart after shovelfuls are flung up, the milkman and milk-boys come down the street with their jangling little hand-pushed floats and the cry of *He-ho!* (nominally *Milko!*) is everywhere.

Newspaper boys begin their deliveries, running up and down stairs and whistling shrilly in the streets. They emulate the milk-boys, crying *Pay-ah* as they thrust the daily sheet in letter-boxes and clash knockers. Postmen are hurrying to the sorting offices, the newsboys and the boys with the first milk-cans shout to each other from corner to corner, the length of a block, factory sirens shriek, tramcars buzz and clang and joggle at crossings, the daily tramp and patter to offices and shops is on the bridges, the motor-omnibuses are rattling their mud-guards and destination-boards and tin advertisements everywhere. The blent silver sound of harness-chains and drumming of hoofs on the wood-blocks is of the past. Triangles and muffled drums have given up as to a massed band of demons. The music of London is for most of us gone to-day—giving place to discord.

Sparking plugs plop. There are altercations, as of old, between drivers, or cheery shouts. The calls of street-hawkers begin, melancholy plaints, "A rag 'r a bone! Any old bot-tles!" and there is the pensive cry of, "Water-cree-ses!" Mothers gossip at their doors and laugh, bending double, mat in one hand, the other making gestures in air, thumb over shoulder—models for Mr. Belcher by the thousand. Names of children are shouted, fortissimo, double fortissimo—thus: "Peggy . . . Peggy, do you hear me call? . . . Get out of that puddle, Peggy! I'll shake the life out of you if I come." In the parks is the laughter of nursemaids with other children.

The second delivery of milk starts and the baker's boy is shouting in between the whistling of mixed bars of noise. That, in the near suburbs and residential districts, and in the city the din is rushing up to what seems a final crescendo—but is not. It will go on for hours. At the doors of open-fronted shops in Camden Town, Kentish Town, Islington, Whitechapel, Deptford, Battersea, Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush—all round, everywhere, butchers, grocers, and fruiterers call their wares: "Buy—buy! Buy—buy!" A fish-stall man pipes, "Fresh fish! Buy fish!" and the wag at a provision store near by tunes up with, "Fresh eggs! Buy eggs! What did the great Doctor Johnson say? Eggs is more nourishin' than fish." Passing by we add our laughter to the net of uproar. In the shopping districts where the wares are not shouted the lift spins up and down with cries of, "First flaw! Second flaw! Going up! Going dowahn!"

Typewriters clatter, telephone bells ring, people yell into the receivers in the hope of being heard at the other end of the wire and are heard at their own end over a wide radius. The Boy Scouts' band goes past. Motor bicycles volley along. Pekinese pups yelp. The children in the gutters shriek, "A aeroplane! A aeroplane!" London life is in full swing. In the afternoons in those streets where markets are permitted the hucksters' cries rise shrill and more shrill: "'Ere's a bloomin' fine bit of turbot." By the time the lamps are lit the fish occasionally bleed instead of bloom from Goldhawk Road to Deptford High Street, and there is a note of distress in the hucksters' voices.

The evening papers are out and boys charge down the streets shouting, the placard they carry fluttering against them as they run. Bus conductors are ringing their bells thrice and announcing, "Full up! 'Op off!" The whirr of rivers of taxis that swirl round the music-halls and theatres, the changing of gear, the honking—it all continues with the hauling down of iron shutters, slamming of pillar-box doors by collecting postmen, crash of dishes in the tea-shops, banging of rear doors

on delivery vans by irate men aware of much work still ahead of them. The buzz of electric trains is ceaseless over the Thames bridge from Victoria, the buzz is ceaseless underground. Turner's sunset crumbles over Chelsea Reach, gold and pearl and grey, and the blue haze of evening is peaceful among the arc lamps over the streets, but the orchestra goes on.

As in response to the flick of an unseen conductor's baton break forth gramophones, pianos, and wireless sets from a million parlours, dogs bark welcome to their masters, children cry refusal to go to bed, hobbledehoys sing, and giggle, and shout, "Goo'-night, Alf. . . . Goo'-night, 'Erb. . . . Goo'-night, Sis." At last the basic din slackens a little and more piercing seem the basso hoots or soprano screams of locomotive whistles. Then the street-sweepers come and the Covent Garden carts roll on again.

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## II

I think what I chiefly like in London, which is a congeries of villages clustered round a small but magically rich focal town, is what it can give me that is not merely of London but of the world. Its fascination for me is that the ends of the world come to its centre or report to it. London tells me not only of London but of the provinces and the further provinces, the "desert beyond Hyde Park." In big ways and little ways I am constantly having cumulative evidence given me for this theory to explain the liking I have for the place among my dislikes for certain aspects that are simply hopelessly horrific.

It is London the reporting-bureau that entralls me, London the repository for treasures of all the world in its National Gallery, Tate Gallery, Wallace Collection, South Kensington Museum, British Museum (where we may see the handwriting of Defoe, or of the author of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*), treasures from ancient Greece, Egypt, Babylon, London of the plaques, *Here lived . . . Here died . . .* Even Judges' window on Ludgate Hill used to halt me and delight me more than St. Paul's, with photographs not only of the crush of lumbering autobuses in Fleet Street, or the trees in Staple Inn to carry away as a souvenir, but with photographs of Welsh mountains, Yorkshire moors, Auld Reekie under its reek.

The topical films in the smallest towns everywhere let us see how prime ministers raise their hats, or the way in which royalty rides past from Buckingham Palace—and that without waiting in a crowd for hours. London becomes to me, and I fancy to many, more and more a place just to plunge into and get out of again. The motor buses have almost ruined it. Yet no one who has any sense of mercy toward horses, but will be glad to see the last one depart from its streets. When all vehicles were horse-drawn, horses had not a worse time in the great city than horses in any city, but now that the motor has come to stay the horse should go. We need not have our hearts broken as well as our ear-drums, and it is heart-breaking to stand at a busy crossing toward which automobiles crawl a few feet and halt, another few feet and halt and to see, among them, some horse strain into the collar and, no sooner than it has set the wheels of the cart behind rolling, have to halt again—and again lurch into the collar on a fresh start, on and on. I have seen horses fall dead on Ludgate Hill following upon a sequence of such torture at the end of Fleet Street. The look on the faces of their unwilling drivers was usually of agony. They knew that no horse should be asked to do such things. Rotten Row, and perhaps the rides round Hampstead Heath and Battersea Park, are the only places in London where any man with feeling for the beasts cares to see one.

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## III

Sophistication is one of the dangers of a great city, more insidious than is decivilisation in any wilds, but as for the question of whether to live in London or in the country, much depends on the person who is puzzled. The sense of mental activity—of Living—that is known to the dweller in London may be as greatly spurious as the dread of vegetating in the country unnecessary. The stir of the hive can delude a town-dweller into the belief that he is travelling, alive, going

somewhere, doing things, when actually he is only one of a throng of shop-gazers in a coma.

To be sure, in London there is a very pageant of humanity. Faces, faces, faces go past stamped with their emotions and, sometimes, thought. They inveigle the imagination. All the jostle of individuals, glimpsed and gone, sets one a-thinking not only of them, but of the chain of life stretching back far beyond even that half-truth called history, and wandering forward too into the other end of Eternity. Eternity can touch us moving through the hum of the Strand, as well as in considering the fields and the hills with clouds passing over.

There is a sense of security in London, if one excepts that sense of insecurity due to being told (whether in sincere prophecy by our well-wishers or with an ulterior motive by those who would instigate dread in us for their own profit) that in the next war London will be swooped over by soundless aeroplanes and its populace snuffed out in a twinkling with a spraying from the sky of lethal gas. To get into a taxi and, sitting still, be driven to a dinner lit by shaded lamps, is very different from cutting a way through wilderness with an axe and patiently stalking supper, very different from shooting rapids and sweating, burdened, along portages. The sybarite in us does delight in those aspects of London that make it kin with Sybarus.

If a man must live in a town, one beside the sea is more likely to keep him balanced, restrain him from quidnuncial coteries, from fluttering about in quest of cults, from parroting the platform of ephemeral movements, or one on a hill-top looking down on a spacious carse. To turn out of Princes Street in Edinburgh and walk up Hanover Street, or any of the parallel streets, and see suddenly, from George Street, the trees of Wardie, and the Forth, the hills of Fife beyond, is valuable. Or to live in a town the windows of which peep at a great mountain range, a town like Calgary, Alberta, is good.

The streets of London are not all of London, any more than the slums are all, or the members of the fickle—rather than progressive—coteries are all. London has its river, and it is a tidal river. That helps. The tugs come up with a wave at the bows and a boiling of water under the counter, bluff barges tucked up astern. They blow sirens that are short lyrics of travel. The smoke eddies from the smoke-stack on blustery days, and steam and smoke swirl round on either side—even as they eddy and swirl from smoke-stacks on the boisterous high seas. There are also the coastal barges with masts and red sails—and, in these days, auxiliary petrol engines—to be seen there. In the heart of the metropolis they go past between Lambeth and Westminster, between the New Cut and Whitehall.

Wild duck often alight on the old river and can be seen from the bridges even by people on the trams. When autumn comes, seagulls beat all day into the wind above the grey-green stream, or let the breeze flick them back within dipping reach of some scrap of food. They give their low, shrill mews, or even their loud cries at times, as they do round every coast from North Cape to South Cape. Gulls veering over Blackfriars Bridge can hint to us the world in its entirety, a mighty little miraculous globe swirling in space.

Walking on the Embankment, or pausing for a moment with elbows on the parapet, there is always an offering for us. London River helps to keep us in touch with the world—the world that includes every little metropolis, the world of ebb and flow of tides, of hurricane and avalanche, of dropping acorns, of wolf-packs and caribou herds, of glaciers and the renewal of roses.

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## IV

Somewhere in the eighties, the eighteen-eighties, Henry James first arrived in London, sat before the glow of a fire in the coffee-room of the old Morley's Hotel at the corner of Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square on a wet Sunday night and next day bought a pair of gloves at a glover's by the entrance to Charing Cross Station, dropped in at Rimmel's, found his way about and anon—becoming at home in the overwhelming city—was writing of what he called *a purely rustic walk from Notting Hill to Whitehall*. "You may traverse this immense distance—a most comprehensive diagonal—altogether on soft, fine turf, amid the song of birds, the bleat of lambs, the ripple of ponds, the rustle of admirable trees."

Admirable trees! It is not only the trees in the park that are admirable, however. Here and there in squares and corners

are others that sigh as if in drawing tired breath in the glare of street-lamps on burnt-up summer evenings.

Trees are alive, although with a different life from ours. I do not suggest that I cherish any love of gush about them, nor do I endow them with personality as we know it or with human attributes and say, as did a young æsthete to me once, that elms are malicious and like to drop branches down on the heads of unworthy people. I don't suggest that I have ever met hamadryads in the beeches of Jules Hill, or that Wilberforce's Oak has ever talked to me about Wilberforce.

Yet many trees I recall as I recall people I have affection for. There are two poplars on the road to Latimer, in Buckinghamshire, not far from Chenies, where Matthew Arnold and Froude used to go for quiet, that I often remember. They are like reveries by the roadside.

In cities there is a tendency for trees to be solaces. The great plane in Staple Inn, a noble prisoner, the firs on Hampstead Heath, the cluster of planes in Sloane Square—that make shadowy arabesques on the pavement—are in that category. The trees of place and plage and plaza, the little trees in tubs round the cobbled Flemish marketplaces, lone trees dropping leaves on Murger's folk in Montmartre courts; these also seem like exiles or people taken captive by invaders. The conference of our thoughts and their rustlings is at times as the conference of fellow-captives.

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## V

One Saturday just before the deluge—I mean the war, after which much was changed for good and all, or for bad and all in England—I took a day off from Fleet Street, slipped away to Bromley in Kent, and there boarded a bus for Westerham Hill. As it rushed out of Bromley (about two-thirty) we, the roof passengers, were astonished to hear a fine booming *Cuckoo!* Amazement and elation were expressed on each face.

"An extraordinarily early season," I heard some one say on the seat in front of me. "And look at the buds. They are bursting already . . . pay for it later . . . well, perhaps not . . . almost all the gulls have left . . . that's a weather sign . . . but still, early March . . . cuckoo!"

"Cuckoo, cuckoo!" rang out full and bell-like in the air.

I looked round in quest of the oddly hawk-like bird with long tail and wings set well forward, but the conductor interrupted, coming up for our fares. He was very gay indeed. One cry of the cuckoo seemed to be making us all kin.

"Cuckoo!"

It was following us. I looked round again and there, all alone on the back seat, was a very sedate old gentleman whom I caught in the act. He raised his head and with a beatific expression—"Cuckoo!" he pealed. He did not look as one who had been too patriotically helping to support the brewers. He looked to me as one drunken only with joy of having left Throgmorton Street behind until Monday.

I trust that when I am seventy (he looked quite seventy) I may have the inclination, whether I placate it or not, sitting on a bus top, to chant *Cuckoo!* to the first sifting as of green dust among the black, cobwebby tangle of the hedgerows. It was not till we had left Trinity Church behind, and were chirring along toward Keston, that every one on that bus had traced the cuckoo-call to its source. We spun on to where the sign of The Two Doves stands atop a pole by the roadside and as we stopped there to deposit a lady with a basket a bird trilled.

"Do you know what bird that was?" the old gentleman inquired of a boy near him.

"No, sir."

"Do you?" he asked of me.

"A robin," I replied.

"Right," said he. "And that? You heard that one?"

I was uncertain. I listened and shook my head.

"Another robin!" he announced, beaming.

Whether it was or not another robin that benign old gentleman sent waves of mirth all over the roof of that bus. Anon he asked, "What is the name of that tree?"

Nobody answered.

"Now, my boy—the name of that tree? You don't know? Why, it's an elm. Ah," he admonished us all, "there is something wrong with a schooling that does not give us the names of birds and the names of trees."

He rose, shaking his head, and went down the steps as we came to a halt at The Mark. The last I saw and heard of him he was pottering along towards Keston village singing, "Cuckoo!" and swinging his stick easily.

When he had gone I considered how many birds and trees I know, and yet do not know the names of them. That very day I plucked a twig from a tree that was nameless to me and carried it away to have it identified. It is a fine big tree, buxom all the year as a beech is in midsummer. The evergreen leaves are dark, and grow in clusters drooping along the twigs. I asked a gardener over a laurel hedge what its name might be and he did not know. I asked a grave-digger over a churchyard wall and he did not know. A stern-faced but smiling old dame, hearing our discussion, paused to inform us that it was an evergreen, and in duet we thanked her. I asked a ploughman. He did not know. But he was working with a motor plough and behind him, instead of a string of rooks, he trailed a pennon of gasoline exhaust smoke. Petrol has brought a new ploughman. Not but what the film of blue being dissipated in air over broken ground had its own fine effect.

Having dropped the old gentleman, the bus chugged on past Keston Ponds to right and later, to left, gave a glimpse of the green path that led to the Wilberforce Oak, a gnarled old tree on a woody slope whence may be enjoyed, on good blue days, a pleasant English vista of fields and further woods under framing branches. By the old tree is a stone seat and on the seat is cut, for the information of the passer-by:

"From Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, 1788. 'At length I well remember, after a conversation with Mr. Pitt in the open air at the root of an old tree at Holmwood just above the steep descent into the Vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice on a fit occasion in the House of Commons of my intention to bring forward the abolition of the slave trade.'"

At Leaves Green a cloud of rooks went floating over our heads giving their strident, leisurely caws. In a roadside field many birds lifted up their heads, then their crests, ran a dozen steps, halted, ran again, and then suddenly rose. So far so good. I know the black rook and I know the full-crested lapwing. I know starling is the name of the sharp-beaked chattering bird that fussed, as we went past, on the chimney of The King's Arms at Leaves Green. I know both the English and the Scots name of the bird with the speckled breast who mounts into tree-tops before sundown as to a minaret and, having called many times, *Hewey, hewey, hewey*, breaks into song. The thrush, the throstle, the mavis—we all know; he is as great a friend as the robin.

Birds and trees—all the way to Westerham Hill. That might well have been—have been—the touting call of the autobus conductors. The scene, I hear, is changed. The desire of people to live out in the country has taken the city into the country, but at least the commons must remain much as they were—Bromley Common, Hayes Common, Keston Common.

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## VI

I cannot subscribe, any more than did Hazlitt for all his love of London, to the view that beyond Hyde Park all is desert. What do they know of England who only London know?

There is, for example, *Down Along*—which is the Devon men's phrase for their country, the country, as they say, of "the red earth, the red apples, and the red-cheeked maidens."

A certain quality in the air to-day took me in memory to Devon—down along—and I saw again, by the grace of Mnemosene, the sea-wall of Appledore. Blue-jerseyed men, with tiny ear-rings, clustered along it, chatting and watching the bluff coasting barges putting out over Torridge Bar. I saw the foam and the sea-birds blown up together by a gale off the Atlantic, over the cliffs by Hartland Head. I saw again Coombe Martin, the two tall mooring piles in the diminutive bay and two gulls sliding over it take a turn that they might alight up-wind, one upon each.

I saw again Charles Kingsley's town of Bideford, Bideford in Devon. People on their way across the ancient bridge paused to look over at the froth and swirl of the tide-rip under the arches. The boats did not lie long in the mud, depressingly aslant. Before I well knew the water was aplopping and aplashing along the causeway, the black smacks were level with the streets. A ship's pup yelped at me, sprawling and slipping and playing at being a watch-dog, on a tarpaulined hatch. Yet another few minutes and there was the chirping of pulleys in the blocks, the coughing of a donkey-engine on one of the larger vessels. The tide had turned. There they went, drifting down to sea with a blend of the bluff and the stately, like ducks—smacks and "London barges."

To be sure the hobbledehoys may sing, and the market day piano-organs may proffer the latest music-hall song, but your true Devonian takes deep pleasure in songs that are as much of his quarter of the globe as the red cows, the red apples, the red-cheeked maidens, the red earth to which they all come, as the cider, the cream, the twining lanes—lying deep between high banks that are overgrown with berry bushes until every lane has a kind of primeval forest or jungle, three feet wide or so, ribboning along on either side of it, the wild beasts whereof are hedgehogs and voles.

One man jeers at what he calls "ballad music" another fears for its extinction and with emotion in eyes and voice pleads for its revival. I may be a Scot moved readily by many a song of his land from "The Flowers of the Forest" to "Over the Sea to Skye," but that does not close my ears to "Tavistock Goozey Fair," or "Widdicombe Fair," or to that other song—words by R. Monro Anderson, music by Armstrong, which is the pen-name of Robert Radford who often sang it—which tells of the winding roads and the fields and into which there comes,

". . . an old gull stabbing worms  
In the red loam. . ."

These songs belong to down-along as surely as do "The Twa Corbies" and "Helen of Kirkconnel" to the "vacant wine-red moor" of the Scottish border. They belong to a certain corner of the earth and, at the same time, to all the earth. We hear much about national song, national literature, national art—but the national need no more be parochial than patriotism need be a hole-in-the-corner emotion. Visiting the Highlands, I always hear the Highland accent with a certain pleasure; and hear it far from there (in the pilot-house, for example, of a Yukon River sternwheeler) with another sort of pleasure, that is near pain. In Devon I like to hear the cooing *oo* and the *s* turned to *z*, thus, for example:

"I zee a vine barrel acomin' in this mornin' but the tide turned avore her came near enough to lay hold."

It was a man like Pew out of *Treasure Island* who said that to me one day as I came upon him slithering over seaweed in an angle of beach where one has to watch how the tide sets so as not to be cut off. Nine men out of ten, unless born and bred down-along, would never dream of trying to scale that apology of a path going up from the bay unless they were caught by the incoming tide between cape and cape, and had no choice but to climb or drown. They are descended from the old wreckers, these lads who to-day are the lifeboat men. I saw Pew again upon the return of the tide. His keen eyes had detected his "vine barrel" coming in, by some fluke, a couple of miles or so further along. I saw him clinging to it with one hand, to a rock with the other, fending off his precious flotsam, next swinging agile to avoid being cracked between boulder and barrel.

There are always vagabondish poachers that one can chum with somewhere in the sanded inns (better fellows, it seems to me, a long way, than those other shrewd ones who are sidesmen for the sake of trade), fellows with a twinkle instead of a glitter in the eye; a twinkle is always much to be thankful for. There, as elsewhere, you can always find the good sorts; and there are always the apple orchards with blossom breaking on them in the spring, the moors purple in autumn, the sea, ebbing and flowing, smashing and roaring on the cliffs. Winds carry a rumour of it into the old cob-walled farm rooms, miles inland—a haunting sound, like the murmur children listen to, holding a shell to their ears.

## VII

Every now and then, with a sudden rush as of a hurricane, memories of England come to me, half the world away. These rouse a poignant emotion similar to that aroused by certain ballad lines, or lines of verse—such as, "Visited all night by troops of stars," or "The wind doth blow to-day, my love, and a few small drops of rain." They come that way, these memories, ecstatically, with the ecstasy of poetry, even when the cause of their coming is not that I have been reading the English poets, Edmund Waller or Edmund Blunden, John Keats or John Drinkwater.

Sometimes suddenly in my mind's eye I see England, not necessarily, not always, outdoor England—apples in a gnarled tree or sheep in a lushy paddock—but as often as not some indoor corner. Simply a bend in the stairs in an old cottage in Kent has a way of coming thus into my mind. The roof is low overhead and I have to stoop going up, and there hangs there an odour of the day's cooking. A fly bounces up and down at the little stair-top window. That is not an outdoor scene yet it is essentially England to me. The sound of a reaping machine echoes under that low roof like the voice of corncrakes.

I discover that England—as well as Scotland—has a very warm place in my heart. I look out of that window, stooping under the steep ceiling, and see George Bourne's Bettesworth in the garden pottering with bent knees at the bean rows, strengthening the stakes, a loose coil of bass trailing from the pocket of his rusty coat. The visions throng.

Associations, literary and historical, crowd my mind. I see the old duck pond at Leaves Green, all clear even to a duck's waddle and wiggle of its tail. I see the signs atop the poles of the wayside inns—the "Warranted Entire" that stuck in Pinkerton's mind in San Francisco. I see the gipsies in a side-lane off the road from old walled Chester into Wales, attired in clothes as bright almost as the garments of North American Indians. Then I am thinking of Matthew Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy* and his *Thyrsis*, and thought of Arnold leads to Chenies—and the two poplars near there—and all the hum of the bees in English gardens, under what is left of lattices, is in my memory and I know again the delight of sweet-williams, and anemones, and stocks, and I think of sunflowers raising their golden discs high in air above almshouse walls.

John Clare (poor, crazy John Clare) well knew England. I think of his:

"The snow has left the cottage top;  
The thatch moss grows in brighter green;  
And eaves in quick succession drop,  
Where grinning icicles have been,  
Pit-patting with a pleasant noise  
In tubs set by the cottage door;  
White ducks and geese, with happy joys,  
Plunge in the yard-pond, brimming o'er."

The old char-a-banc with its load of Londoners and baskets of beer under the seats may come into my mind, or the motor omnibuses, with names of East London on their fronts and backs, oddly adrift between the hedges of Essex and Surrey. But my reveries go beyond their rural termini. I have visions of that southern end of the island with its relics of pagans and priests, a font stone on the Welsh border, fragments of Roman road, Cæsar's Well, beside Keston Ponds. Buses out of London pass that. Selborne I think of as a sacred place because there an immensely interested young man once noted the age of oaks and the gathering of swallows, jotting all down.

I think more of the poets than of the makers of what is generally considered English history. I muse rather on past painters than past prime ministers. I think of Crome instead of Peel, of Constable rather than of Pitt. I think much more often of some interior with horse-hair arm-chair and shells under a glass case, geranium pot in the window, than of the interior of Westminster Abbey. My old England is not of Elizabeth's court and political intrigues but rather, as E. K. Chambers writes:

"I like to think how Shakespeare pruned his rose  
And ate his pippin in his orchard close."

I think more of fishermen putting out from Clovelly, more even of the gulls soaring and screaming over the clots of foam

blown up against Hartland Point, than of Hartland old church.

When I muse on England it is some cob-walled cottage of Devon, or some turn of a road under lit chestnut trees in the Cotswolds I think of rather than of Park Lane. The heart of it does not seem at the Bank of England but perhaps where, in a cart filled with hay in place of hearse, some last peasant of the Peak goes slowly past the fields he slowly tilled to rest under the lichened stones. The blackbirds sing there, the robin perches on the gravestones and trills, there is a cawing of rooks overhead.

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**PART VII**  
*Westward*

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# WESTWARD

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## I

It is no wonder that the servants of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay came to be greatly drawn from the Orkneys and from the Hebrides. Ceaseless memories of Scotland come to me here in Canada, but it is not the Scotland of town and gloves and cane. It is the Scotland of the tweed suit and the fly-hooks in hat. It is the Scotland of the twining roads that keep lonely company with the winding border streams about the headwaters of Tweed and Clyde, the Scotland of climbs on rocky-crested Goatfell, on Ben Ledi and Cruachan, of fishing off the rugged loneliness of Jura and hearing the gruff bark of a seal in Charsaig Bay. What is to me (and I believe, to many) the essential British Columbia in many ways is very much like Scotland.

Have you ever been aboard some Hebridean steamer, leaning on the rail to watch the bouldered slopes glide past, and the beaches and the fir-plantations, then come into a little bay, half a dozen houses scattered on the heathery slope behind it, seen a boat pulling out to meet you dropped into the boat and gone ashore to feel yourself in a new world, suddenly cut off from the dining-saloon and the menu cards, your ears filled with the brawling of the burns, your heart glad with the ruffling of the alders in the glen behind the clachan, the smell of peat-reek in your nostrils? If so, you would not, in many parts of Canada, feel lost, but as one living an old delight over again with an added zest.

The prairies have, of course, no counterpart in Scotland, but league after league of Ontario, league after league of British Columbia and the great north woods, are as Scotland touched by another magic. Exchange, in summer-time, gnats for mosquitoes; exchange the mists of late autumn for the colour and tranquillity of Indian summer; exchange the wet and the gales of winter for snow, sun-lit snow, and you have a fair conception of British Columbia in many parts. In place of the gipsies encountered by the roadside substitute a people somewhat like them, fond of bright raiment, of yellow and blue and green, a people with something of the same lure for our imagination, inviting our curiosity, as little accessible and with something of the same dash of wildness in their eyes.

The more I think of it, and the deeper I go into British Columbia, "off the map" (away from the street, the book-and-drug store, the soft-drink saloon, the barber's emporium with the revolving pole, the cafés, the hotels), the more I feel that the innumerable Sandys and Anguses who left Auld Scotland for the unkened north-west, to serve that trading company with the exciting name, must have been at home here. If they did not smell the peat-reek they had the unforgettable odour of the red-willow smoke of the Indian camps and of their own to strike the same chord, if one can speak of smoke striking a chord!

I know a score of little towns throughout British Columbia that are very much like Arrochar on Loch Long. I know many a river-bend that is like the bend of Tweed below Neidpath—but without the castle, with perhaps a great lone tree in place of it and fish-hawks perched atop. I know many trails that oddly recall rights-of-way over Pentland Hills, though we cannot travel those longer and lonelier trails on a Saturday afternoon and be back to town in time for dinner. We have to camp on the way; but there is the similarity. The call of a moose breaks, and accentuates, the quiet, as well as the heron's cry.

Thousands of immigrants come to Canada annually and the cities swallow them up. Thousands go through all the way to Vancouver and have only the glimpses the train offers of what is the essential Canada. They sit and stare with wide eyes at the woods through which the track runs round the north shore of Lake Superior. They say, "Isn't it beautiful?" but they pass on. They seem somewhat terrified by that serene and silent beauty. They take up a light magazine in the observation car and dip into its pages as though for the consolation of the trivial. They bend their heads low in the car going through the Rockies, and crane to see the high peaks—and then go through to the dining-car to eat, relieved to find white tablecloths and stewards in white jackets still in the world.

I cannot but think those are wiser who leave the towns alone, who accept the invitation of the other Canada that has been awaiting them for æons. It is easy to understand, of course, that in a way its bigness appals the city man; and the Canada

of up-to-date stores, of the opera-house and the movie and talkie house, the pretty bungalows, the side-walks with their mown grass borders, the rotary sprayer, and the electric-lit streets, is very charming. But that is, in a way, an artificial Canada. The Canada of the survey party, the prospector's outfit, the lumber camp, the pack-horse trail, the canoe and the portage; that, it seems to me, is the actual Canada.

There is an American coin—five-cent piece, or "nickel"—on one side of which is represented a buffalo (or, to be exact, a bison) and on the other the head of an Indian, a typical western plains Indian. It was done, as a matter of fact, from a Blackfoot, Two Guns White Calf. Canada should have one minted somewhat after the same fashion, perhaps with obverse of a beaver, caribou, or moose, and reverse of a portaging *voyageur*. It would not suggest the Montreal or Vancouver of to-day, any more than the bison and Indian suggest New York and San Francisco; but it would similarly recall the history of the land.

For whatever the material base of it, and the many inventions of men—steam-ploughs on the prairies driving a dozen furrows, throbbing gasoline threshers, steel hotels in the new cities set up to the rattle of electrically-driven rivets, the spiritual base of Canada is not in steel and sky-signs any more than the quintessential England is only in London, or in my city of Glasgow the heart and soul of Scotland.

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## II

I mentioned red-willow smoke. It is of the red-willow, whenever procurable (and it is generally procurable) that the Indian likes to make his cooking-fire, for its smoke is the least sooty of all. In the old days there were times when not only for that reason, but because of its slight visibility, it was used. Red-willow was the wood, on all counts, for the cooking-fire.

To some of us its very name is in itself moving, a spell. Dry red-willow flames well. There is nothing voluminous, thick, in its smoke. It is the antithesis of smudge-fire smoke, a mere ethereal sifting of blue, a transparent haze that soon is dissipated away into nothingness whether it drifts upward on a still day, streams out on a day of steady breezes, or whirls to and fro in a day of veering winds. If the camp be near the base of tall cedars it would take a practised eye, from a mile away, on an eminence, to pick out its trickle over the tree-tops because of the shadows under cedar boughs all day, like the blue of twilight.

Camping by a secluded lake on a spit of sand fifty yards from the water I sat on a boulder one day, shortly after my return, free again, back a bit from my fire, and just looked on it and mused on it. A wind blew gently out of the woods so that the smoke was blown like a veil, and by the time it reached the water its life was over. A pot was set on two large stones with the fire between them, and at either end of these stones were smaller ones placed so as to make sufficient draught. I could thus regulate my natural oven by a mere push of my foot against the end stones, as any chef regulates his stove by turning handles or moving steel knobs.

Sitting on that boulder and doting on my fire I wished that I could get a photographer with skill and understanding to photograph for me these stones, the flames, the forked stick thrust in the sand, the pot, the strip of bushes beyond with chinks of sunlit lake showing through and that sift of haze—a pictorial record of a camp-fire without any human beings, just the fire that innumerable men know from the Saint Lawrence to the Arctic, from the Ontario woods to where the Pacific boomers crash rhythmically, after storms, on lonely western beaches.

What a souvenir for days in cities! The odours would be lacking, the odour of the woods—balsam and resin—the odour, the savour, of red-willow smoke. It is not a smell, it is a perfume, the perfume of the comfort of the open air, as the smudge-fire (that drives off mosquitoes and flies) is that of its discomfort.

The joy of the open I would extol without infatuation. They talk of *pipe-dreams*. Here is a wood-smoke dream: In it comes Cartier, that Breton mariner who in the sixteenth century sailed up Saint Lawrence, comes La Salle, who adventured up the Mississippi in the seventeenth century, from the Caribbean Sea, past the grass houses of the Osages, the mud houses of the Mandans, the log houses of the Hurons, to the land of the Iroquois. David Douglas of Perth is in

that dream, a solitary figure in the narrow avenues of Indian trails. In the odour of wood-smoke Anthony Hendry (that Isle of Wight boy, outlawed for smuggling, who became explorer in the service of the Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay) treks into the country of the Saskatchewan, and in the blue haze across a hundred and fifty years Sam Hearne again goes prying, with curious eyes, down the Coppermine and looks out over the Arctic Sea.

The Sam Hearnés of to-day, the wandering prospectors who "grub-stake" in the comfortable little towns and go off into the hills, and the survey men and engineers in search of new one per cent grades for the stretching railroads (over which shall be transported the produce of this big land: the furs, the wheat, the cattle and the lumber, the ore and the bars of silver), through pass and cañon burn the same incense at morning and evening.

Always there is the camp-fire. Always there has been this sifting of blue among the scrub. Back in the unknown past men, making camp, have watched it begin and, camp struck, have dashed water on its embers before departing, looking over the shoulders on leaving and puckering their eyes to be sure it was extinguished. It is a very ancient backward glance, that, of man among the unseeing trees and under the unheeding hills, and still we make it, moving on, to be certain the odour of wood-smoke is not of a menace—only as it were the clinging memory of our camp of a day.

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### III

How fugitive, how immaterial, are often the things we cherish. What seemingly trivial memories we turn back to—seemingly trivial. There is a value in them beyond the face value, the superficial seeming. They have implications connotations. Back in the West again I recalled across twenty-five years, a freight-train—just a freight-train—I once met when I was *tramping the ties* or *hitting the ties* (which is to say walking on the railway sleepers) from Savona's Ferry to Kamloops.

The preparation for finding something tremendous, almost awesome, in that freight-train was of many hours' duration. I tramped on the railway-track eastward, first of all with nothing but the sage-brush dotted benches of sand rolling up to right and the gorge of Thompson River to left. The day was so hot that the blue of the sky had a shimmering appearance like satin. At Savona's in those days were only half a dozen houses, one hotel, one store. It used to be Savona's Ferry, then it was Savona's, now it is Savona.

On and on I tramped, grasshoppers clicking all over the railway track and the hills and, to all appearance, nothing else alive anywhere. Suddenly over the crest to right a head bobbed up, shoulders, a body. A horse stood on the sky-line, then another head, shoulders, and body bobbed up and two riders came across a slope at a tangent, heading towards me, the second one leading a spare horse. They rode down in exhilarating western style and reined up abruptly in a dust-storm of their own making. They were Shuswap Indians.

"You wanna buy a horse?" said the first.

"No, thank you," I replied.

They wheeled and away uphill they went, over the crest, and left the world empty as before. On I tramped, hot and weary and happy in the blazing sun. The heat poured down from the sky and was reflected up from the sand, so that I had to bunch my silk neckerchief to protect the underside of my chin.

At last I came to where the high hills (that lie back of the sandhills all the way from Ashcroft to near Kamloops) creep forward, push ribs through, one after another, till the sand disappears or only lies in clefts of rock. Thereafter progress was through a tunnel in a cape, across a trestle to the next cape, through a short tunnel in that, across another trestle bridge, into another short tunnel—on and on.

That was a lugubrious tract. The tunnels were almost all so short that I could see the light at the other end when entering—or, at any rate, a glimmer of light against one wall if the tunnel happened to curve slightly instead of being straight. In each there was a tip-tapping of water from cracks in the rocky ceiling. They struck cold, damp, coming out of the sun. On

the trestles between spur and spur of pierced rib there was melancholy too. The lake-waters lapped among the wooden piles.

I came at last to a dozen men—an "extra gang"—at work. They were friendly enough but the boss was a grim person and a brief exchange of civilities was all that seemed possible. They were not working at a place likely to make men affable, were imprisoned between two shadowing rocky promontories in a stretch of country very different from the open and sunny land round Savona's. These rock-cuttings and black trestles between would depress anybody.

I was glad when, later on, having given the gang "So-long!" I came out of the last tunnel and saw ahead of me, once more, rolling yellow-green hills to right and to left the glittering sky reflected in an expanse of water, the Thompson river spreading out into the dimensions of a lake. Along the shore was shingle like the beach of a sea and below were curving bays of golden-hued sand.

A board on the hillside announced *Tranquille*. To-day there is a consumption sanatorium there—and splendid work it does. Then there was only that board at the side of the railway track and a tawny coyote, skulking on the hill above, looked down at the lone pilgrim. The real *Tranquille* was across the river and in earlier days, when the gold-seekers were coming into that country over Indian trails, there had been, I believe, a ferry there of the same type that the man called Savona ran lower down.

The sandy beaches, as I marched on, tap-tap-tap in silly little short steps on the close-set railway ties, kept luring me. I left the track and went down over the shingle, threw down my roll of blankets and bathed and drank, bathed again, and slung and plunged and "felt good," as they say out west. A far-off booming recalled to me the fact that I was not on an uninhabited island. It was very faint but I knew what it was—a train coming west, whistling before curves.

Again it came to my ears, again, a deep, far hoot, again and again, drawing nearer. So I dressed and, shouldering my blanket-roll, returned to the track, stepping out afresh. During the next hour the booming whistle continued at intervals, each boom nearer than its predecessor. I began to wish the train would arrive. I accelerated, anxious to meet it and get the suspense over.

At last a singing in the rails announced it very near and a deeper roar came from close at hand. There was the monster engine with the cow-catcher fanning before it and the glass of the headlight twinkling in the sun. I stepped aside to let it go past. It seemed very high over me. The engineer in his windowed cab looked down, elbow on sill, head out.

With a splendid whirl the great hot locomotive went burning past, drivers plunging, piston puffing. With an odour of hot metal and oil it rocked by, and behind it came a quarter of a mile of empty freight-cars of all kinds—grain-cars, cattle-cars, flat-cars, refrigerator-cars, each screaming and yelling with sounds steely and sounds wooden. It was deafening. It was almost terrible, as if the cars had entity, personality. Eddies of wind and dust accompanied the agonised string. A sliding side-door had sprung in one car and it went by with a clap-clap-clap. Then a sucking draught, a final swirl, and the train was past.

I stepped on to the track again, looking after it, and saw a brakesman at the door of the caboose, sitting on a stool there in an attitude of summer weariness, sleeves rolled up, hat on back of head. I could hear the wheels, the last wheels of the caboose, go click-click-click over the joints of the rails. There were round me, also, before and behind, the little clicks of contracting steel as the rails recovered after the train had gone over them. The locomotive whistled again for a curve as I walked on.

Boom after boom came to my ears—fainter, fainter. Except for the lines of steel it might never have passed at all. It was less real than the foot-high, shimmering heat-haze that wavered over the yellow land, and as I was thinking that I was once again alone, and feeling the ambient loneliness of the country round me again, something drew my eyes up to the sandy rolls southward—some movement.

There was the prowling coyote padding along, head twisted towards me, teeth showing in the hungry and cynical grin of his species. Another joined him, or her, and another. Where scrub grew close to the track they came close with their flirting pad. Where the scrub lay backwards they drew off and made semi-circular scampers through it and round the open places to take up again, close-by, their teeth-bared surveillance, in the manner of their kind. From far away to west I heard the last faint *whoo-whoo whoo-whoo* of the train.

The three coyotes kept me company for miles. Nothing else moved in that still day except the grasshoppers and a white

cloud that came frothing and boiling over the unutterably still and staring indigo range of hills beyond the last roll of sandy and grass-tufted bench-land.

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## IV

I decided, on this return, to make the little town of Nelson (in British Columbia) my headquarters, my centre for trips into the mountains. I had arranged, before going out on one of these, for a car to meet me at the place where I planned to break out of wilderness on to a road again. We kept the appointment very well. Coming down the mountainside I threw a shout into the quiet and from far below a motor-horn gave two blasts in response.

I came out from under the forest-eaves and there was the car. Seated beside the driver was a man he had brought with him, he explained, when introducing us, just for the jaunt. In appearance he was ruddy and vigorous, with a light of great vitality in his grey eyes. His accent was in accord with his name, but we did not talk of Scotland that day. We talked, instead, of the changes in the West—of trails turned to roads, of pack-horses and saddle-horses giving place to motors—while the car slowed and accelerated as the highway ordained, purring down to twenty, humming up to fifty in a rush of balsam-scented air.

Having arrived in town we said good-bye, but that was not the end of him. He was sitting in the lounge of the hotel when I came out from dinner and at once rose to meet me and give his invitation—I might say almost his command, by the ebullient manner of his delivery: "Come and hae a dram."

At that time there was a sort of Prohibition in British Columbia. There were no authorised drinking-places. One could import liquor for private consumption or have it, by doctor's prescription, at the chemist's—the drug store. That was all. Saloons, as the West calls public-houses, were abolished and the beer-parlours of to-day were not installed. Having but recently returned to Canada after the war, aware of the governmental regulations and restrictions, I thought, in my innocence, when he led the way into a café, that we were going to have what is called a soft drink. But when he put a dollar bill on the counter and nodded, whisky was at once set before us.

"This is whisky!" I exclaimed.

"Aye, that's whisky," he agreed.

"But——" I began.

"Hoots!" he said. "We maun hae oor dram!"

So that was that. I realised that Canadians could not decently condemn the people of the United States for their lawlessness, in those days, in the matter of liquor-laws!

"Ye can get it in hauf a dozen places in toon," he informed me. "Ye put doon your fifty cents and, obviously, if ye say naething, that means whisky. What else could it mean?"

Leaning against the bar he plunged into a learned disquisition on clans and their septs and their tartans, asking me of my ancestors upon both the paternal and maternal side. What he did not know of Scots family history, Scots heraldry—and tartans—was trivial.

On Hogmanay I saw him again in the hotel where I was staying. He came into the bright dining-room, under the gay paper streamers and bells and the vivid swinging balloons, putting to shame my mere evening wear of regulation black and white, for he was in the full dress of his clan. His arrival was like the charge of the Macdonalds at Killiecrankie. Passing my table he bent over me, and—

"Hoo are ye the nicht?" he asked.

I replied with the refrain of an old song, "*I'm fine and hoo's yersel'?*"

"Just hangin' thegither like a wat peat," said he, and strode on.

Dinner over, out in the lounge, where the orchestra was coaxing dancers to take the floor, he sat down beside me for a few minutes and I took the opportunity to ask him about that "wat peat," suggesting that it should be "wat peat-divot."

No, man! Did I never hear tell of a wat peat? What sort of a Scot was I? I explained that I was not asking in a disputatious frame of mind, that this was an "argument" only in the Platonic sense, that I was seeking information, an authoritative decision. At that his manner changed.

"Och aye," said he, "fine I ken there are peat-divots, but the richt and proper phrase is, 'hangin' thegither like a wat peat.'"

On the evening of the first of January I was dining with friends at their own home in the little town, a picturesque place of bright-painted houses surrounded by lawns and gardens on a steep slope of mountain. I left their bungalow, which is perched some way up the slope, about midnight, and on my way down heard the sound of bagpipes.

Whence came the music? The street was empty save for its lamps and the trees among which they glowed, and the lacy designs of branch and twig that they cast on the snow, which glittered with points of frost in the manner of old-fashioned Christmas cards. Then round a corner some blocks below me there wheeled a solitary piper followed by a solitary man. Uphill they came, stepping out bravely. Certainly that piper had a stout heart. He piped steadily despite the sharpness of the ascent, and as they drew nearer I saw that the man who strutted behind was my friend of the Scots family history, the tartan lore, the wat peat.

I had just made that discovery when a policeman appeared from one of the tributary streets across the way from me, and I delayed under a tree to see what would happen.

Up they came, the pipes in full blast; and the policeman, barring the way, held up a hand. The procession (if we can call one piper and a follower a procession) halted. By the appearance of these two they assuredly felt like a procession. The policeman spoke, though what he said I could not hear; and at that the piper who, though he had halted at the imperious signal, had continued to play full in the officer's face, lowered his pipes. They sent into the night a long-drawn wail as the bag emptied.

"You'll have to *can* this," I heard the policeman say.

From behind the piper stepped my acquaintance.

"*Can!*" he expostulated. "*Can!* What dae ye mean?"

"You'll have to stop this noise."

"Noise! That was 'The Cock o' the North.'"

"Well, Jock," said the policeman, a typical western one, "it's time it was roosted. It's after midnight. You can't disturb people with that noise, or music."

"Ah, weel, I think it's redeeculous. But we maun abide by the law—at least," he added, "in some particulars. Come on," and away they went, Jock and the piper, uphill.

I heard the policeman, looking after them, laugh to himself. Yes, there was no doubt about it: without the aid of the pipes there was something rather teetering in their ambulation up the declivity of that side-walk, two dark figures against the snow under the lamp-clusters, one with the pipes under oxters, the other waving an arm in wide gestures.

Once or twice I met him again in the street or in the hotel and always it was of Scotland he spoke to me. In place of interspersing his talk with Latin tags as the manner of some is he strewed quotations from Burns and drew similes from Scott. To hear him talk was to find the occidental surroundings turning vague. After a chat with him the western mountains, the western town with telephone-poles along the main street, were less real than a memory of even some snell day by the lochs of Knapdale or Lorne when all is given over to the murmur of a grey tide among black rocks and a drear wind screaming thinly in the heather, and mists creeping in the glens, and a man's fingers are stiff with the chill and the damp, and all he thinks of, splashing home through pools in the dusk, is the light in a window and a fireside.

So, one day, deeply impressed by the thistle and peat-reek quality of the man, I asked him what I had often intended to

ask before—

"How long have you been out in this country? When did you leave Scotland?"

"Leave Scotland, is't? Never been in Scotland! I come frae Glengarry County, Ontario."

He repeated it with sonorous articulation like that of Alan Breck announcing that he bore a king's name: "GLENGARRY County, Ontario."

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## V

No matter how far one may travel in Canada from the centres of industry one finds conveniences and comforts in the wilds. The great department stores with their specialised postal—or, as they say on the western continent, mailing—services, send the last invention in bright lamps into the furthest night. The windows of the log-cabins of the Mackenzie illumine the snow with the radiance of petrol—which they call here gasoline. Be not astonished in the back of beyond to find your hostess appear in a silk dress in the evening to honour your presence.

A new country makes its beginning with the inventions of its day. The ferry on far Peace River is driven by petrol; and a modern invention of bull-wheels and cable, at once simple and efficient like most inventions used on frontiers, chugs it from bank to bank. These ferries can carry heavy loads of automobiles, drays, people. On many an out-of-the-way lake and river of the great West the chug-chug-chug of the gasoline-ferry echoes among the haunts of coyote and bear.

The especial ferry of these pages—which are really about Sam Hing but may best begin thus—is on the West Arm of Kootenay Lake, British Columbia.

I often wonder what Sam Hing thinks of it.

He is a Chinaman from Canton and has memories of sampans and rice-fields and pagodas and temple-bells. I am a Scot from South America by way of the Auld Country, the dear grimy streets of Glasgow, the "draughty parallelograms" of Edinburgh. By some trick of memory that is always how I recall these places: Edinburgh being dried, its pavements whitened, by a rushing wind; Glasgow in a drizzle, with gleam of wet umbrellas and twinkle of wet shoe-heels, and the lights of shop windows, very friendly.

Sam Hing does my washing for me while I am living in a house on the north shore of that West Arm. In summer he came over from Nelson to collect my "washee-sack," but when the snows arrived he suggested that I might walk the mile to the ferry with it and meet him there, on the Nelson side. So once a week I put my used linen in a rucksack and, hauling on gum-rubbers, go scrunching off to meet him.

A wind tosses a laden fir and throws a jet of white suddenly turned to colour, the colour of rainbows. Blue-jays scream to me, worried, it seems, to see me go, for every day they have a dole of food at my door. The clusters of the snow-berries on their bushes are like grapes of alabaster. Flocks of snow-birds, as many as sixty to a flock, sit in the tops of a twiggy cottonwood. They appear, from a distance, like leaves overlooked there by the late autumn winds. But, as I draw nearer, I hear them talking to each other, little birds hardly bigger than sparrows. I draw nearer still; and then, with a sound like the opening of many fans at a ballet, the seeming leaves are no more silhouetted against the bright and cold blue sky but are wheeling and fluttering in twittering curves and parabolas.

By the time I am half-way to the ferry Sam Hing will be setting out from Nelson in the tramcar to meet me at the landing-place. Even a little city like Nelson takes advantage of its water-power and owns three electric cars—one going up while another comes down, and a spare one in the car-barn.

What does Sam Hing think of it all? Round about are the white-powdered mountains glittering in the sun. Little creeks tumble down out of them, all arched over with snow that protects them and so keeps our water supply constant for the winter. No burst pipes here as in town!

Sam Hing: I think of Chinese vases and of Matthew Arnold's lines about the potter of Peking, the lamp lighting up his studious forehead and thin hands. A phrase from Joseph Hergesheimer's note on Chinese poetry comes to mind, regarding how a poem written "by the sixth Emperor of the Han dynasty perhaps two thousand years ago, is identical with the present complex, troubled mind; an autumn wind rises and white clouds fly, the grass and trees wither, geese go south . . ." I think of Crosbie Garstin's delightful song (in his *Vagabond Verses*) of a little Chinese lady quaintly adrift in Cordova Street, Vancouver. Here in the Far West we are almost at the East.

Clerihew, the ferryman, hails me thus:

"Weel, there ye are! Ah'm juist gaun tae start the engine. It's a grund day." (Here, you observe, is machinery, so here is a Scot abroad.) "Weel, we'll start."

He climbs up into his tower and I ignore the little cabin with the stove-pipe thrust out atop. The cold of Canada sounds worse than that of the Old Country according to the thermometer; but it is blood, not mercury, that is in our veins and the dryness of the atmosphere makes it almost impossible to one accustomed to the snell winter days of Scotland (wet winds chilling the bones over Fife fields in February; keen, cutting blasts that whirl aside the screaming peewits on the border moors) to believe that the thermometer is right in registering two below zero. I lean on the bulwark and watch the green ripples swirl into the white reflections. And there is Sam Hing on the shore waiting for me.

"Hollo!" says he.

"Hallo!" say I. "How you do?"

"Velly well. You well?" The Chinese are adepts at inflection.

"Very well, thank you. How you like the snow?"

"Allee lightee. Not too cold. You think him cold?"

"No."

"No. Not me."

I have a copy of Crammer-Byng's volume of translations from Chinese poets, *A Lute of Jade*, at my lake-side home and in the front of it I have pasted one of Sam Hing's notes from a "washee" parcel. It looks good enough to frame to decorate a wall, giving what painters call an accent there.

We swop parcels and I go back to the ferry thinking of Li-Po, the courtier-poet of the eighth century, and how he longed to be, instead of a courtier, a frontiersman. Also I think of his song of yellow dusk on the city wall and a woman's face looking out over her loom. I think of Po-Chu-I and his song of the peach bloom; of Tu Fu's bitter cry in his verses on *The Recruiting Sergeant*. He was another eighth-century poet of China and knew then what the people of Europe now know about the true inwardness of war—and yet may not profit by knowing. I think of his other song, away from affairs (that after all are generally in the hands of rogues and fools), his song of only a gentle rain falling in the furrows.

To Joseph Conrad all the East would rise up, with lagoon, and prau, and palm-tops above the mist, at "the grave ring of a big brass tray." Sam Hing's washee bill brings up the songs of these, and of Wang Ch'ang-Ling, a kind of oriental Herrick who wrote of maidens, it seems, as they were flowers, of flowers as they were maidens.

"Leaves of the Nenuphars and silken skirts the same pale green,  
On flower and laughing face alike the same rose-tints are seen;  
Like some blurred tapestry they blend within the lake displayed:  
You cannot part the leaves from silk, the lily from the maid."

Often I wonder if Sam Hing knows Li-Po, and Tu Fu, and Po-Chu-I, and Wang Ch'ang-Ling. He tittups away, chanting, "So-long, good-bye. Next week allee same. Velly good!" with his bobbing step that looks as if he learnt it on the treadmill!

Clerihew chugs me back.

"Yon's a cheery cove, yon Chink washee," he comments. "He's been aroond thae pairts for years. Ah think he must ha'

gotten the call of the West until him. He's aye laughing. He laughs at the mountains and at the ferry. Weel, it's a ground way tae feel. We canna be thankful enough for health and strength and tae be oot and aboot and able tae enjoy the world. It's surely ground."

With a handful of waste and an oil-can he may croon, "O but I'm longing for my ain folk," while Sam Hing hums, waiting for us, grinning at the landing, I know not what—perhaps the original of:

"Cold from the spring the waters pass  
Over the swaying pampas grass;  
All night long in dream I lie,  
Ah me! ah me! to awake and sigh—  
Sigh for the City of Chow.

"Cold from its source the stream meanders  
Darkly down through the oleanders;  
All night long in dream I lie,  
Ah me! ah me! to awake and sigh—  
Sigh for the City of Chow."

Yet neither seems to be in a hurry to go home, either to the sound of whirring grouse over the heather and the sight of the hump of Cruachan, or the boom of bronze gongs and vision of porcelain pagodas. "East is East and West is West," but there is a glamour here that holds men from East and West.

It may be that Sam Hing has never heard of Li-Po and the rest. And perhaps as sensible would it be for me, in London, moved by a sentiment, to stick my charlady's washing bills inside my Keats! And yet, I don't know—her bills were not so decorative as Sam Hing's. He makes his out with a brush and jet-black ink on slips of yellow paper. Perhaps, however, he does know Li-Po. I must have this question settled. Some day I must inquire of him: "You savvey Li-Po? You savvey Tu Fu? You savvey Po-Chu-I?"

Let us live in hope. Let us dream that in China the poets are widely known, are not without honour in their own country, and that my washee-boy is conversant, in the original, with these exquisite songs, blown leaves from ancient autumns, that the sight of him, waiting at the ferry (with his almond eyes and oriental smile), always brings into my mind.

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## VI

For some time I made my headquarters there, by that lake-side—in a settlement composed chiefly of immigrants from Scotland and England. There, at least, had been my *pied-à-terre*. There had been a roof under which to keep my books and such household gods as ordained wanderers may carry with them.

These Scots and English were not by any means all exiles in the melancholy sense of the word. Many of them, returning on visits to the homeland, decided that (in the words of Old Bill) here was a "better 'ole," things being as they are. Yet something of their native country, even for these, remains perdurably in the mind and heart.

This is a small planet and speed, the celerity of travel, our many inventions, make it smaller. The day approaches (despite devilish or witless devices to defer it) on which war between nations will be less international war than a sort of civil war and, like fratricide, finally too horrible to contemplate. Or, at least, we hope so. Even so, for each there is some spot of earth "beloved over all," as Kipling sang in the Sussex song that tells of "the dim blue goodness of the weald."

I have been there. I have seen it from a hill above Sevenoaks, sitting in the garden of an inn with Holbrook Jackson, drinking English beer out of a gleaming mug that seemed to be fairly descended from Elizabethan days, resting on the way to visit the Welsh poet, W. H. Davies, in a cottage among apple-blossom down in that blueness, and Scot though I

be the memory of that day haunts me often so that the wind in the trees half the world away from the weald seems, at times, remembering, to be the wind of that past day in the oaks above Sevenoaks.

It was the roulade of a bird one day in the garden that drove me back—and some way north of Sevenoaks. It took me back to Scotland, and why that bird was responsible you shall hear in a moment.

The last time I was in Edinburgh I went down by Hanover Street, past Heriot Row (with a look along it to where Stevenson lived), and on where the Water of Leith prattles through Canonmills, to Warriston, from where the skyline of Edinburgh, or the Athenian columns of Calton Hill, have a special melancholy majesty. I was on a secret, sentimental pilgrimage to the grave of Alexander Smith—of *A Summer in Skye*, *Dreamthorp*, *Last Leaves*. A thrush was singing in a tree-top, tossing ecstatically into the air the same roulade that I heard that day.

The thrush, the mavis, was one of Smith's favourite birds, and the common daisy—daisies dotted the grass of his grave—his favourite flower. Furtively—adread, I suppose, of being called *sentimentalist* by any chance observer—I picked one. I did not know then (not being endowed with prevision) what a vagrant life was to be mine; but now, heedless whether caught in the act I be dubbed sentimentalist or not, opening my *Summer in Skye* I take pleasure in that frail bit of Scotland preserved these thousands of miles away.

Turning its pages that afternoon, jogged by the happy flutings of the bird in the garden, I considered that it is only Smith's bones that lie at Warriston. When they asked Socrates how he would be buried, he said, "You will have to catch me first." Alexander Smith may be caught in his books, a lovable spirit. It is usual, I believe, to class him as a minor essayist but the French phrase, *petit maître*, seems more fitting—and for the Scot in exile, Alexander Smith is assuredly a classic.

I have tried him on many a Scot abroad, tried him also on members of that interesting race of Canadian Scots—sons and grandsons, born in Canada, of both Highland and Lowland folks. Seldom does he fail to charm.

For the Scot abroad, perhaps not Sir Walter himself can more surely, by the magic of words, conjure home to their dreaming eyes. Alexander Smith gives it all, from the old jugs hanging on the wall at Duddingston to the odour of peat-smoke and of seaweed and the weaving of gulls along the Hebrides. As I was reading here and there in *A Summer in Skye* the wind rose without until there was a subdued thunder of it in the new leaves of the cottonwoods and in the tall pines, and I seemed to hear, in that roar, the Atlantic pouring in between Colonsay and Jura, between Jura and Mull, shouting on the beaches of Ayrshire and up Kilbrennan Sound.

What with Alexander Smith and that subdued thunder I was sufficiently transported, but there was more to follow: there came the sound of bagpipes. Had I gone gyte? Or had the ghost of Smith and my reverie wrought some magic? Suddenly I realised the explanation: There was some sort of celebration afoot in the settlement. I had been invited to attend but forgot about it, wandering through Scotland with Alexander Smith. I went to the window and looked out. Along the road, on his way to that celebration, came a piper with his shoulders well back, his kilt swinging, and under the eaves of my house, thus far from home, music of home reverberated and passed.

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## VII

I had again seen great rivers flowing between wilderness mountains, eddies spinning slowly like strange circular mirrors under the sky, the ceaseless, polished rush of waters ending in the white scroll of rapids, with an osprey overhead. I had ridden up through the green quiet of the forests that flounce the foothills, that quiet broken by the sweet calls of the varied thrushes and the *quank-quank* of the small nut-hatches, and made camps on the edge of timber. I had wandered in the high country, that haunting elevated world between forest-top (timber-level) and peaks, mile after mile of heather, or of heath, and rock-slides where the grizzly bear strolls along with lolling head. And suddenly I was appalled by the scenic splendours that had delighted me.

There came into my mind what I had read regarding the thudding of the Pacific tides on the continental shelf, with a

weight of so many trillions of tons per square mile, affecting (so goes a theory I had recently read) the semi-liquid part of our globe just below its solid sheath, and urging certain acids upwards to change one stone into another—Nature an alchemist. I thought also of the pronouncement of some geologists that the pulsing of these tides is ever pushing the Rocky Mountains on to the prairies—at the rate of what? I forget. A minute fraction of space in a million years.

Of course these recent theories may be proved all wrong, or only half-truth, to-morrow. In most sciences we have a procession of inquirers, while finding proof of some surmises of their predecessors—and by aid of that proof acquiring more knowledge—rejecting earlier pronouncements. Sense or nonsense, I had read all that; it persisted in my mind as a bar of music may persist with or without high musical value, willy-nilly.

Surrounded by these peaks, under the tremendous drifting arrangements of vapour, grey and grey-blue, and ghostly clouds like threads of steam, I realised that I had lived too long in the apparent, the superficial security of houses, walked too much in streets made trig by the scavenging department, lunched too long in soft-carpeted restaurants down below, forgetting that the illumination over the table was but harnessed lightning.

A horrific sense of insecurity rushed upon me. There was some kind of shrub grew at that place and one side of it, about a mile long, was neatly cut as though by aid of a measuring tape, making it look like a trimmed box-hedge such as one sees in suburbia. It was no gardener topped by a bowler hat who had done that clipping but an avalanche in Spring, gardening up there where hardly any one comes. I wondered over the riddle of our days, as men must always have wondered. What is it all for? Whence? Whither?

Eight thousand feet below, in the dining-car of the Trans-Canada rushing along to Vancouver, people would be sitting down as easily as in the Ritz, unfolding the napkins over their knees before electro-plated covers put in front of them by Waiters (or stewards) in white jackets. Here was another world and I was glad to be in it, to see it, to experience it, alone with the tremendous clouds and the steep miles of avalanche-pollarded brush and the wind rushing down off a glacier as warm air rose from the valley below.

I strove to exorcise that intrusive feeling of my insecurity among these vast natural monuments of boulder and rocky crest reflecting a violet light, so that I could fully enjoy the lunch-time rest up there; but as I sat on my little knoll and looked down on the tossed world, range after range marching away into the edge of sky, forest-top after forest-top below me—and what I knew to be the tips of thousands of tall trees in distant valleys, looking like moss from that elevation—it returned.

I could not rid myself of the impression that I felt the thud of the Pacific breakers five hundred miles away, beyond all these quiet ranges westward, could not rid myself of the belief that I felt that slow drift eastward of the Rockies and the Selkirks. I drifted with them! But no—the throbbing was only of my heart, the drift was optical illusion (and too quick!) from looking up at the clouds passing over.

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## VIII

The High Country calls one back with a synthetic spell. Its beauty calls. Its grandeur calls. Its loneliness even calls. Also it dares us to come back. I forgot that I was not as young as I used to be—and refused to remember what the doctors had told me during the war. For several months I had sat at my table writing and taking no exercise. The work over, I planned another sortie into the mountains, poring over maps. Yes—that's where we'll go this time. It was a place into which we could not ride, could not even take a pack-horse, but often before I had packed into such places on my own back.

I did it again. I did it once too often. All was as noble, as grand, as lonely, as beautiful and with the same hint of menace, as ever. We camped beneath a glacier near a stream the spray of which watered great juicy clumps of purple pentstemon. We heard the glacier sigh and moan in the night. Next morning we went round a shoulder of hill so steep that we were grateful to a bear that had gone that way a little while before us and left the indentations of its paws for us to step in. We saw coveys of ptarmigan skim the upland meadow of bryanthus and become invisible as they passed on over snowfields. We slept on mattresses of "fir-feathers." We saw dawn hit the peaks and dusk snuff out the last light on them.

When we returned to Nelson I did not know what was wrong with me but it seemed that something, undoubtedly, was wrong. I went to a doctor to ask if he knew. He did. He knew at once. He began, "I do not want to alarm you but . . ." A physical flaw in me that the medical boards during the war had whispered over was no longer a mere flaw and I had to lie on my back for a year, contenting myself with the knowledge that what was wrong had a fine he-man sound for one who in his life had worked in lumber-camps and railway construction camps, and comforted frightened long-horn steers and troubled bulls on a sinking cattle-boat, and was pleased with himself for having done these and kindred things—it being *athlete's heart*. That is pleasanter to consider than, say, crooked heart.

Early in life, years and years before, I had met Mnemosene before I knew her name. She came to my solace then. With her I wandered here, wandered there, through streets and forests, heard the waves beat on Bennan Head and splash on the water-stairs at Iquique. Also—there are such things as Books.

During that period I read, with horror, Blair Niles's *Condemned*—and realised that my incarceration was nothing to whimper over. My enforced leisure was heaven compared with the hell of the penal settlement in French Guiana that she described. I lay in a room the window of which framed two pine-trees. Between their boles and lower branches I could see the curve of a bay and, above the higher branches, watch the weather on a mountain side.

Chiefly travel-books I read during that period. In our own age there are travel-books produced (as in past times) that give more than terrestrial transportation. They open magic casements. Their writers do not just "go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar." We are richer by their experiences even when these may seem trifling—or lacking in jeopardy.

W. H. Hudson is one of these. I turned back to my favourite among his books, *A Naturalist in La Plata*. I read again in Beebe's *Edge of the Jungle* of that old Indian woman in British Guiana who loved a certain plant that was "of no use whatsoever," loved and tended it because "in months to come it would be yellow and would smell." With Hergesheimer I was again in Havana, in that book of his that Cabell called a "multi-coloured sorcerous volume," his *San Cristobal*. . . . Philip Guedalla told me, in his *Conquistador*, of an awakening in a hotel bedroom into which he had been conducted too late at night to have any impression of the view from its windows and how, drawing the blind, he saw the prune-blossom fill a valley of California. Blair Niles told of waiting at Latacunga, in Ecuador (a better land than that of the *transportés*, the ironically-named *libérés* and the *rélegués*) for the mist-cap to lift from Cotopaxi—and how there came a tap at the door in the morning and the voice of the French exile who runs an inn there, "Monsieur, Madame, the mountain. It is clear!"

The French, by the way, may not be as great wanderers as Britons or Americans but when they do travel and also write they give us some memorable contributions that defy rust awhile, as witness the *Voyage en Espagne* (which I re-read during that year) of Theophile Gautier who, with his keen eyes for seeing surfaces and his limpid and masterly presentation of them, makes us aware of what lies behind; or, in a manner very different, Paul Bourget's *Sensations d'Italie*. Dubois, studying Arabic, saving his francs at the call of the name of Timbuctoo, magnetic for him, and eventually going there after years of preparation, should be remembered among romantic travellers, and his book on Timbuctoo—of which there is an excellent English translation.

We can have what we will at the turning of a page—all times, all places. We can ride through century-old England with Cobbett or with Vandercook, in *Tom-Tom*, hear the transported drums of Africa throb through the secretive forests by the Essequibo. We can go no further afield than to Salisbury Plain and Winterslow (in the *Travels in England* of Richard Le Gallienne) to look for the cottage where Hazlitt wrote; or we can put out of grey Clyde in a nineteen-ton yacht with Hildebrand (of *Blue Water* fame) and sail with him to sunshine and happiness in the Balearics. We can go with Rockwell Kent, artist in many mediums and man of his hands, in another small boat to watch the sea-weed rise and fall on rocky beaches and see the high glaciers gleaming spectral above misty precipices of South America's indented tip, or with John dos Passoes through Spain in his *Rosinante to the Road Again*.

With H. M. Tomlinson (whose sentences have a way of troubling us with implicit strange inquiries, or exciting us with latent encouragements when, superficially considered, they might be supposed to be no more than descriptive) we listen to the jungle by the Rio Caracoles in the hinterland of Brazil or, homing with him from Malaysia, feel the chill of the English Channel as the Phœnicians felt it, cutting to the bone where "the shadow of land to port might have been the end of all the headlands of the seas. It was as desolate as antiquity by twilight." Antiquity by twilight! Tomlinson is one who can give us both the scene and the emotions conveyed by it.

From among the classics we may select the ponderous or the naïf—or have both together, with Johnson and Boswell, touring Scotland. We can choose whom we will, go back to Herodotus inquiring through Thrace and Egypt in the fifth century before Christ or accompany that gay cleric, Laurence Sterne, flirting through France on his *Sentimental Journey*, in the eighteenth.

Countless good travel-books there are, the appeal of which is chiefly, no doubt, to regional specialists. I know an old-timer and trapper (one old enough to remember the buffalo days) who has a collection of volumes somewhat circumscribed in domain but greatly interesting to those for whom the West has an appeal, many of them of a sort marked *scarce, rare*, in booksellers' catalogues—Narratives and Journals of Alexander Henry, Alexander Mackenzie, Alexander Ross, David Douglas, David Thompson, Sir John Franklin, the Earl of Southesk, and so forth. Along the bookcase top are, fittingly, old calumets and tomahawks, bows and arrows, moccasins of Kootenay and Assiniboine, of Cree and Blackfoot.

For those in London who, fretting for escape, look East I should think the gorgeously-named Java Head Bookshop over against the British Museum, which specialises upon volumes on the East Indies from Ceylon to the Spice Islands, must be unsettling. There among the books, so many devoted to the one quarter—their quarter—of the globe, they must feel that books are not enough and that they must arise and go now, and go to the Flores Sea.

Some good travel-books, though but of the other day, are, it seems, unfairly forgotten, such as Norman Duncan's *Australian Byways*. It appeared first in *Harper's Magazine*, and *Harper's* did not ever offer a roving commission to scribe or artist who had not well earned the invitation. A Writer has to keep on, keep on, it would appear, if he would be remembered by more than those—well, those who can remember books without constant reminders. In youth most of us, I suppose, were inveigled by the sound of "The Great Lone Land," and by the cuts of spectacled Waterton galumphing through the Amazon forests; and it is one sign, I take it, that we are not yet moribund, that there is an invitation for us in such titles as *Going Down From Jerusalem* or *Passenger to Teheran* and that we can be engaged by photographs of a windjammer doubling the Horn for England out of Sydney.

There are travellers (like Bates and Belt) whose passion is for countries where snakes may at any moment wriggle down out of the thatch with stealthy design upon their lives and where, when they get up in the morning, they have cannily to shake their shoes before putting them on lest poisonous creatures are ambushed in them. There are travellers (such as Shackleton and Scott) whose partiality is for void Antarctica along the edge of which only penguins await them to flap a welcome. Because of the diversity of travellers' tastes and minds, we can have what we will in the realm of journey-books, whether our desire is but to forget awhile the tussle to keep receipts level with bills, or for something more on our journey.

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## IX

I toyed again, as I lay there, with the notion of preparing an anthology of the open air. I had pondered it many times, in fitting surroundings, coughing in the smoke of smudge-fires, or breathing deep of balsam when riding the trails. Packing in to mountain lakes up steep inclines, camp equipment on my back, I had paused for breath and moaned to myself, "Never again! Never shall I do this again!" wiped the sweat from my eyes and gone on, made camp for the night, fished a mess of trout, tossed the flapjacks in the pan, fried bacon and fish and, sitting by the crackling fire, exclaimed, "This is great!"—and pondered the anthology.

Remembering, recumbent, those days and nights I toyed again with the notion. No doubt Thomas de Quincey would be in it and "on a heavenly day of July," tramping on his way to Chester, see that "elaborate and pompous sunset hanging over the mountains of North Wales," and Borrow also would be of the company, though Petulengro's "There's a wind on the heath, brother," would come in as much for the sake of Petulengro as for the sake of Borrow. The excerpts, not the names appended to them, were to be the chief consideration.

Homer would be quoted from but not where he nods. Chief Salatha's answer to the priest (who had told him of the glories of Heaven) regarding the glories of the Barren Lands would be included because in that speech, by the stress of

his thoughts and feeling, Salatha had a voice like Homer:

"My father, you have spoken well; you have told me that Heaven is very beautiful; tell me one thing more. Is it more beautiful than the country of the musk-ox in summer, when sometimes the mist blows over the lakes, and sometimes the water is blue, and the loons cry very often? That is beautiful, and if Heaven is still more beautiful, my heart will be glad, and I shall be content to rest there till I am very old."

Any description of a hill "curved like a woman's breast" would be barred. The Paps of Jura is fitting, but usually better simile—even anatomical—could be found for the curves of a hill than that one. It is writing of that kind that causes some people to be dubious of poetry, does harm to the cause. Any account of a storm that speaks of the "kisses of the rain," or of a scorching desert that speaks of the "kisses of the sun," would also be barred on the ground that osculation is foreign to both rain and sun.

To give an example of what is essential for this collection: There would be that passage by John Muir in which he tells how, on a day of great winds in the high Sierras, the ecstasy of the tumult entered into him and he had to climb a tall tree the better to survey and enjoy the scene. We would read of the waves of wind and Muir at the top of his tree, clutching tight, swinging in arcs "like a bobolink on a reed." There's a simile! There would be that account of the lone gualichu tree by Cunninghame Graham (from his volume called *Success*) and the other account of the same tree by Charles Darwin from his book on the voyage of the *Beagle*.

The volume must contain an account of the sighting, by Christopher Columbus's men, when their hope was almost gone, of that "branch of a haw tree with fruit on it" adrift in the Caribbean Sea, and of the light "like a candle," seen after dark, of which it is told that "Don Christopher did not doubt that it was a true light and that it was on land." Also would we read of how there came to be written upon a cliff fronting the Pacific in North America, by aid of vermilion and grease, "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, 22 July, 1793."

Part of the account of Shackleton's boat journey from Elephant Island it will be essential to include and very definitely there must be that scene where he and his fellows arrive at the door of the whaling-post in South Georgia, unrecognised (as was Odysseus on his homecoming), ending with:

"'My name is Shackleton,' I said.

"'Come in,' said he . . ."

Tales hard to believe by some, perhaps, yet true, would be quoted from the logs of those who participated. Thus we would read of a certain expedition across the Siberian tundra, of how, when the food supply was ebbing, a discovery was made of mastodon carcasses embedded in ice, and of how on the flesh of these ancient monsters, preserved as it were in a refrigerator of ages, the sled-dogs were fed.

Again in these pages would "Master Chanceler, being withal nothing dismayed," salute the Emperor of Muscovy and deliver unto him the letters of King Edward VI.; and certainly would there be store of such direct and poignant notes as men, facing death in desert or wilderness, leave beneath a cairn of stones, such notes as marooned or wrecked explorers, in the uttermost uncharted seas, thrust in bottles and commit to the waves.

Let us give an example in that vein. It must not be omitted, though the man who wrote it (after the death by cold and scurvy of sixty-one of his fellows) was miraculously saved with the remaining two men of the party:

"As I have now no more of life in this world, I request for the sake of God if any Christians should happen to come here, they will bury my poor body, together with the others found, and this my journal forward to the King. . . . Herewith, good-night to all the world, and my soul to God. . . . Jens Munck."

Some polished cadences of Raleigh should be culled; also an account of his bitter and noble end at home, after all his wanderings, and in that book must still cry out the voice that cried from the silent crowd when his head was shown to the people: "We have not such another head to be cut off."

Balancing the phrases of the scholarly wanderer and courtier there would be that colloquial narrative by the taxi-driver—from William Beebe's *Galapagos*—of his shipwreck on one of the uninhabited islands of the group with its meaningful repetition that *nights was the worst*; also the verbatim report, taken down by Dr. Hudson Stuck from the lips

of an Alaskan prospector Jack Cornell, of his journey, undertaken alone and with no hope of financial reward, over hundreds of miles of the great north-land in search of two men who had been gone so long into the wilderness that the people of the settlement where they had outfitted grew anxious regarding their fate. Of how, despite the fact that the snows of two winters had fallen on their track, he traced their route and found the body of one, you would read in such sentences as these:

"Hit was the rainiest summer ever I seen, and the mosquitoes was a terror. I had a veil, and I honestly believe them mosquitoes eat it up, for it went to pieces all at once. I honestly believe they eat it up they was that thick and that venomous. The only chance to sleep was to travel so long and so hard that I fell asleep as soon as I stopped. . . ."

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## X

My enforced rest was in a climate very different from that of French Guiana. Winter: the snowflakes falling, falling, and lying on fanning evergreen branches and staying there in big white puffs. Two days, three days, perhaps, of snowfall (beginning about mid-November), deliberate, insistent. That is accompanied by a sense of utter tranquillity. All is over for the year. There is a snap in the air and in the blood. The old people say, "Well, winter has come," and the young ones get out toboggans and skis, and the lumbermen go to their work in the woods. This is the season, according to one's leanings, of reading, or dancing, or bridge, and of surprise parties.

Snow comes much later in the year in this part of Canada than many persons in the Old Country, over-accentuating, perhaps, the significance of entertaining film or story of the six-gun hero in the blizzard, seem to imagine. (My typist typed that six-gun as sex-gun and almost I let it stand so!) For two and a half months I watched the winter coming. Living in autumn, I looked up every day to the slopes and crests of the mountains and saw the two seasons before me, winter on the peaks, autumn on the slopes and, in the valley, a lingering summer. Amazing how straight is the line of demarcation between winter and autumn along the ranges.

Not until the end of December did the snow creep down that year to the lower lands. Then I woke one morning to a great quiet and a white light. It had been snowing all night. The sky was emptied. It was cloudless and blue and against that blue the trees on the ridges were shining stalks of silver.

Spring: the lake had frozen in February. From where I lay I could see people skating. When I closed my eyes, so long I watched them, they still skated under the closed lids. In March there were resounding cracks in the ice like whiplashes. By the end of March there was a sound of trickling outside. The ice had gone. Spaces of grass showed round the bases of the trees and I heard a chickadee pipe—not *chick-a-dee-dee*, which gives him his name, but his earlier call, the call of two notes that is interpreted as *Spring's here!* I heard the wild duck honk, passing overhead, and after that the reports that were brought in to me were, "The varied thrushes are here . . ."—"I saw a kingfisher to-day." And one blazing day of late March, all the snow gone from the valley, I heard a quick tapping in the woods up the hill. "There's a woodpecker!" I shouted my news.

At an angle of thirty degrees I looked up through the first sift of new birch-leaves to the still snowy peaks. Every day the snow crept higher and, as it melted, the mountain torrents widened and foamed down. Through my open window I could hear them roaring.

Summer: Bees were abroad. They were buzzing past in the genial lower lands by May. Flowers bloomed. The scent of wild syringa was in the air. A pair of vireos nested over my window and sang there and I could watch redstarts popping up and down in the pines. At night, with the curtains drawn, I watched after a sultry day the Aurora Borealis swirl its lights to the zenith and send its searchlights across the sky from behind a mountain northward. The Northern Lights do not belong to winter only.

Autumn: the firs and pines threw down their cones and streamers of leaves blew all day past the window from a clump of birches near-by. Nature was at work carpeting the earth with leaves and needles, reds, pale greens, yellows. Says the

dictionary:

"Indian summer: in America, a period of warm, dry, calm weather, in late autumn, with hazy atmosphere."

For these parts the words "with hazy atmosphere" should be deleted from the definition and a phrase could be added somewhat thus, "with morning mists that evaporate rapidly before the sun, leaving everything as if newly washed." The redstarts departed and the vireos, the thrushes whistled and went, the green-backed swallows were with us one day and all gone the next. Then mists clamped down, melancholy, inert, along the mid-mountains for days on end. The rain came, falling through tinted mists that crept along the slopes and drifted on upper currents into high ravines, and when the rain stopped the heights were revealed powdered white. Squirrels had much to say about it.

"The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done."

Rain again, with flakes of snow in it. Then a clear day and windy, the slim birches and young cotton-poplars creaking, and bending, and returning, like fishing-rods, and streamers of crinkly leaves whirling away from all the deciduous trees. At night I would wonder if it was raining again or if the sound I heard was just of the leaves ruffling, ruffling past.

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## XI

At last I was allowed to get up, at last I could write again, and one morning I awoke with a resolve to commit to paper an essay on Stevenson.

It had been in my mind in a nebulous state for several days. I had been thinking of the Tweed, of Symington, Broughton, Stobo, Peebles, and had recalled that he, rambling through Neidpath Castle as a boy, had picked up there in a deserted room a glorious penny dreadful entitled *Black Bess, or the Knight of the Road*. Perhaps that recollection was what made me ponder a paper on Stevenson.

Rising, I continued to arrange the effort in my mind. I went in to breakfast still perpending the proposed attempt, and over breakfast recalled a day long past when I was tramping in Argyllshire, Jura the colour of ripe plums across the Sound, and came to a ruined clachan among the heather and an elderly man in the brass-buttoned attire of a ship's officer investigating among the stones. He gave me good-day, and then said he, "Yes, here's where I was born." He explained his nautical garb. He was an officer on the *Pharos*, the steamship of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, had risen from the deck he told me, and been on that boat all his days.

"You must have known Stevenson," said I.

"R.L.? The son, you mean?"

"Yes."

Why, yes, of course. He had met him often. And how he ever fell ill of his complaint he could not understand, for he was a robust-looking lad. He remembered him at Skerryvore, always out in a small boat rowing in the tide-rips. That was where, no doubt, the lad got the idea for *The Merry Men*. A wonderful description, that, of the Roost of Aros. My seaman was of the opinion that perhaps Stevenson had got "his sickness" by camping out in France—"that's not a country for camping out in . . ."—when he travelled about there with a donkey and slept in woods and behind dykes. "Ye have no doubt read the book."

I recalled all that, half the world away from the sight of purple Jura across the Sound, half a life away from that past day of sun and seagulls and the Atlantic uproar. I decided, then, not to tackle my article. Why should I add my little stone to the cairn in his memory? Stevenson had meant much to me in youth. He was part of my life. The article would be too intimate. As definitely as I had decided, on waking, to begin the article I then decided to leave it undone and sat down to

await the arrival of Eric Dawson who was going to call for me in his car to give me an airing.

Eric, by the way, though not a Scot, was born in Glasgow. During the war he served in the motorboat patrol and wrote a book about his experiences in that branch of the navy, called *Pushing Water*. His beat was from Stornoway and Cape Wrath to Oban. He came to see me one day when a copy of Iain F. Anderson's *Across Hebridean Seas* had just arrived. I handed it to him to look at, and saw him lost among the photographs and turn to the map and drift into the text and turn back again to the map, unaware whether people were talking in the room or not. There he sat with his forefinger following the indented coast-line and, by his aspect, beholding again Loch Broom and Loch Ewe and Loch Torridon. He came back to us, his forefinger on some special spot, to remark, "There's a beautiful place!"

Well—I had just made my decision to let the article on Stevenson go unwritten, when I heard the approaching hum of the car. It stopped at the gate. There were Eric and Ella and their adorable children—Derry and Sheila.

We were going to Forty-Nine Creek where, because of the depression (which was everywhere), many men were at work placering for gold, content if they washed out, in the clean-ups what averaged a dollar's worth or two dollars' worth a day. Better than being on relief, they said It was a creek that had been worked with great profit in the very early days of gold excitement in British Columbia, named so because those who began the search for "colour" in it were old Forty-Niners from California.

Our destination linked us with Stevenson again. I thought of him, another Scots exile, in California, mounting up from Calistoga to the deserted mine of Silverado. The scenes through which we passed were much the same. We twined through hollows of ruffling deciduous trees. Above were the tall conifers and the odour of them filled the air. We passed under an aerial tramway that led up to just such a mine-dump as that on which, at Silverado, Stevenson used to sun himself.

Along the crests was "that pencilling of single trees," the forest sky-line as he described it: ". . . each fir stands separate against the sky no bigger than an eyelash." Down the ravines mountain streams turbulently hurried. We came to Forty-Nine Creek and lunched, sitting in the car, looking out at thin rain (a Scots mist) that was part of the whispering quiet of that forest.

We got out of the car and passed to the bridge, twenty feet from which we had stopped, and there I leant on the wooden rail and looked down at the water. The others left me there, for I was unable to walk uphill and they were going up the creek-side trail a little way, with a pan, to find a place at which young Derry might have the fun of washing at least a few grains of gold from the gravel or sand. Stevenson was still in my mind. Often, I thought, in his California days, he must have leant elbows on such rough wooden parapets, dreamt over such creeks. And odd, thought I, that my mind should be on him all day although I had decided not to attempt an article on him.

It was very beautiful there and I was happy in being out and about again, though perhaps somewhat homesick for Scotland because of the trend of my thoughts that day, aware of how far off it was, yet intensely glad with falling water and those ruffling woods of peace. I thought of the cobbles of Irvine, of the rattle of traffic in Union Street, Glasgow, of the Forth seen from the corner of George Street and Hanover Street in Edinburgh, of Swanston, of Stevenson in California. I do not ask you to infer anything esoteric, psychic, supernatural in what follows—though, to be sure, one can ponder the climax from many angles, these among them, if so desirous.

I had been looking up the gulch in which the creek pours, and down into the water. In the midst of all these reveries in and out of which, though I had dismissed the earlier intention to write an article on him or his work, Stevenson moved, haunting my day, my glance dropped to the rail. I had my elbows resting on it, and in the V formed by my crossed wrists I saw—you may imagine with what manner of emotion and with what sense of strangeness—these initials carved into the wood:

R.L.S.

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**PART VIII**  
*Honolulu*

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# HONOLULU

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## I

An opportunity of the kind called heaven-sent came to me after those months of incarceration for more than an easy outing of a few miles by motor car. A sea voyage again was in my line of life, and my unexpected destination was Honolulu.

The voyage thither and the sojourn there had the quality of a dream for me. Homeward bound again, Hawaii was as a dream remembered on waking. The man who reclined on the deck-chair next to mine was not reading his book. Open, but back up, it lay on his knees and he was deep in reverie. Suddenly he turned his head.

"The arrival at Honolulu, and the departure from Honolulu," said he, "are enough, alone—were there nothing else—to make a visit there memorable."

I thoroughly agreed and when he lapsed again into reverie I meditated on my arrival there. I had sailed for Hawaii from Vancouver, the ship's orchestra playing us out with "Auld Lang Syne" and "Will ye no' come back again?" Five days later we sighted land, revealed first as a smudge beyond the blue undulations of the Pacific. Soon, rising higher and flashing greens and rust-reds to the sun, it began to disclose capes and bays. On a languorous wind odours of flowers were wafted to us.

Diamond Head I recognised from many a photograph. Then, as always at such landfalls, small swift craft of important aspect came out to meet the arriving ship. Over our hull an accommodation ladder was being draped to receive those who came to inspect us.

The colloquy in the lounge with courteous immigration officers and the scrutiny of a genial doctor being successfully over, I was employed on the business of seeing that my baggage was ready for the landing when I heard music. Very different from "Auld Lang Syne" and "Will ye no' come back again?" it seemed to me, strange, exotic to my ears, though later I was to consider it was closer to these than it sounded at first. When the preliminary splendour of brass softened and singing voices rose clear, said I to myself, "Here is the sort of singing that Odysseus once heard, tied to his mast, while his seamen's ears were stopped, passing the Isle of Sirens."

I left my baggage to take care of itself and looked out through a port-hole. We had arrived. We were moored. There was the wharf and in a niche of it brown folks were welcoming us with these haunting airs. Sudden shocking realisation that my friends would be awaiting me ashore while I dallied, thrall'd by that music, these voices, took me back to my luggage. A steward had it in his care and I was relieved to find that the gangway for disembarkation of passengers had just been set in place.

Down the gangway I went and there indeed were my friends. They were standing beside the barrier round the customs officers' domain, wreaths of flowers in their hands. Not only of the music, perhaps, was my neighbour of the deck-chairs thinking when he made his remark regarding the sufficiency—even were there nothing else by which to remember Hawaii—of arrival and departure, but of the *leis*, these tropic-scented garlands that were looped round my neck.

Wreathed in blossom, I answered the inquiries of customs officers. I unlocked trunks and opened suitcases aware that there are two sides to life, two worlds in one—and who shall say, I pondered, keys in hand, which it is the more fitting to call the real, the world of the scent of jessamine and ginger blossoms, of hibiscus, of carnations, and tuberose, or the world of declaration to authority? Authority was not arrogant on that wharf. But how could it be aught but genial, even in the exercise of duty, among those scents and to that music. *Aloha, Aloha!*

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## II

Once upon a time the name Pacific Ocean used to mean to me a wide disc of gently swaying azure, palm trees suddenly sprouting on the horizon—the works of Herman Melville, Louis Becke, Stevenson, Nordhoff and Hall. But now, at that name, I have a vision of long, leisurely, hyaline undulations receding to the base of unsubstantial cloud mountains and of a glass sphere afloat, a glass globe shot with opalescent hues of a summer day, riding buoyantly on its way. Not of cork nor of wood do the Japanese make the floats for their fishing nets but of glass, and often one of these goes adrift. A friend of mine, a yachtsman, in a small sailing craft bound from Honolulu for San Francisco, saw one when half-way across, encrusted with barnacles. No knowing how far it had come. All the way from Japan, perhaps, or perhaps no farther (far enough) than from Hawaii, where are many Japanese fishermen.

Sometimes these floats are of clear glass, sometimes they are shot with green, sometimes tinted ultramarine as though blue Pacific days had faintly dyed them. When things of utility are also things of beauty there is a special sense of rejoicing in us, beholding them. These floats are in that category. Even over coral reefs, as by some special providence attending fragility, they ride unscathed on the crests of the rollers. I have one on my table now, set in a gold-lacquered bowl. It looks in the light of this fugitive moment like a great soap-bubble on the point of bursting, all the windows twinkling in miniature in it. On a beach of many a Pacific isle these lost spheres, that might delight a crystal-gazer, come to rest—on Midway Island, Wake Island, the Ladrões, on Guam and the Fannings, on the beaches of the Hawaiian Islands.

Strange are some of these beaches to folks accustomed to a pebbly foreshore where the pods of seaweed pop under their tread and limpets cling, or to rocky promontories on which a seaweed fringe rises and falls to every crash and return of the waves. That sense of strangeness I experienced first on the beach of Kahuku, seeing no swathes of seaweed between foreland and wave, but flotsam of broken bamboos and sugar-cane stems.

There is a dream-like quality in existence there, at least for the visitor on vacation. The residents work. They are not idle lotus-eaters. They do more, by the evidence, than precariously hold the wolf from the door. They have their worries and anxieties, no doubt, as all have, no doubt, everywhere; but even so, with so much beauty round them, I think they cannot ever be unaware of the Hesperidean quality of their sea-girt home, that quality which charms the transient guest on holiday.

The diversity of hue in the leisurely-moving populace gives a ceaseless sense of the exotic to that visitor. Apart from the native Hawaiians and the white inhabitants (many Portuguese among these) there are here immigrants from the Philippine Islands, Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, some Samoans, some immigrants (much darker) from the West Indies. Certain blendings of blood provide at times an arresting aberrant beauty. To motor slowly through the streets is to dip into many ways of life. You observe that there are Chinese here who still wear their wide-sleeved blue tunics. You hear the flip-flap of Japanese sandals on the sidewalks. The brightly coloured disc of a Japanese oiled-paper umbrella moves along over a piece of daintiness in kimono and slippers—but think not, because of this umbrella, that the day must needs be dark. There is a rain there that they call liquid sunshine. Out of a clear blue sky it comes, a drizzle of broken rainbows. A Hawaiian passes by with a wreath of flowers round the crown of his hat. He is not going to a festival; he is merely being himself. In the evening, in the Hawaiian quarter of the town, you see a group under a tree and hear them singing quietly to a light thrumming of guitars. They are just being themselves in the balmy and scented night.

Along the water front I had the expected pictures—saw dusky, lightly-clad sailors leaning against a wall in various attitudes of ease, the drooping fronds of a palm over them, and beyond—for sails have not yet gone from the sea though auxiliary motors are there—a schooner's masts and trig hull, the flames of reflected sunlight flickering under the stern knuckle. Over a shed-roof the vast smoke-stacks of liners showed, halted between the American coast and the Orient or the Antipodes.

There were moments when I was reminded—perhaps because of that feeling of being by no means cut off there from the world's activities and cultures, but in a lively metropolis, of foreign lands as they are presented at expositions. There came a fancy at times that round the next corner I would arrive at a turnstile under a sign reading *Exit*.

During the length of my visit I retained a feeling of having come into a different world, another world, yet with no sense of being lost, cut off, in a backwater. One may, indeed, on that island of Oahu, Honolulu's island, have understanding of the remark of a certain philosopher that wherever you are there is the centre of the world. While California was still but

the west of the gold diggers of Poker Flat and Roaring Camp, many children were sent hither from that wild west for their education—and on past laurels neither the schools nor the university rest content. On the theory that demand creates supply, by the evidence of its library and its book-stores there are readers of breadth and discernment in Honolulu—and one does not have to add the saving clause "for its population" or "for a place of its size" when lauding its Academy of Art, founded and endowed shortly before her death by a generous lover of art of these parts, the Mrs. Cooke whose portrait, a fine piece of palette knife work by Charles W. Bartlett, hangs in one of the galleries. The same may be said of its museum, the Bishop Museum, where you can study the handiwork of all Polynesia, and beyond. Its exhibits range from the boomerangs of the Australian black-fellow to the polished surf-boards of Hawaiians. Malaysia, Indo-China and Japan are represented there. The mortuary feeling that one experiences in many a museum is not felt in that charming building.

Having once or twice visited the Academy of Arts you have not seen it all. During my brief stay, in several of the rooms exhibits were changed from time to time, and with diversity—a one-man show, for example, of water colours by a Californian artist giving place to a collection of lithographs and engravings from all parts of the world. On each of my visits, about to enter one or another of the rooms, I found groups of young people from the schools were being inducted into the history or ways of other lands by aid of lectures and lantern slides, and the exhibits. The place is used. Reminiscences of Spanish America came to me when, having seen enough in the galleries for one day's delight and meditation, I came to a quiet court with a patio effect—and there sat down to enjoy tranquillity. Round a series of such courts the Academy of Arts is built.

With the Bishop Museum and the Academy of Arts, with their library and their book stores and their educational centres, the folks of Honolulu are certainly not isolated mentally. Liners to and from the Orient, liners to and from New Zealand and Australia, stop there. Many famous musicians—singers, pianists, violinists—in the course of their world tours have been heard in Honolulu, not only on gramophone records or on the radio.

Talking of music; there was a time, let me confess, before I had been to Hawaii, when I was not greatly enamoured of what I presumed was typically and essentially Hawaiian music. A sad lassitude, it seemed, was in the airs offered to me as Hawaiian. Much of what I had heard, friends resident in the islands assure me, was Hawaiian with a difference, not the real thing. Certainly now I can say—though to be sure all this is but a personal impression—that hearing Hawaiians sing in Hawaii I was reminded of that line of Keats, "Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!" There is much of sunburnt mirth and less of melancholy than I had imagined in the music of these islands.

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### III

One evening our friends (Linda and Alfred Castle) had a feast prepared for us of native foods cooked in native fashion. The table was covered not with cloth but with ti leaves. Our only transgression of ancient custom was that we sat at a table instead of round a ti-strewn strip of sward. Knives and forks and spoons were provided lest we wished further to transgress by using these, but we did not. Individual dishes in small calabashes were before each guest in a semi-circle and from time to time a servant came to the elbow of each carrying a large calabash in which was warm water lest he or she might be in need of a finger-bowl. There was little of Laughton as Henry the Eighth about that feast.

While we dined a Hawaiian orchestra played for us and often I found myself neglecting the sickle of dishes before me to give all attention to their strummings and their voices. In memory I see again the smiling faces of the musicians, the dark and merry eyes, the white teeth gleaming as they well-nigh laugh forth some of the refrains. Not music "after the Hawaiian manner" or "inspired by the Hawaiian" were we given but the traditional airs; and easily, as I gave ear, imagination served me with these islands before any white man came that way, Captain Cook or another. The breakers crash on the reef, the night is flower-scented, the world is kindlier than we thought.

When the feast was over we sat in the *lanai*, a large coral-paved room lacking one wall—one side of a *lanai* is always open to the garden, the island air. There they gave us a love song of old days, one singing close beside us, others answering from distance. At the evening's end we had a song in translation, a song of good-night that began with a loud

volley of twanging strings and high voices and finished with a diminuendo, a whisper of "Good-night," the singers moving away from us to be lost in the shadows of the trees in the tops of which the steady trade wind ran with a sound as of a river in a placid dream.

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## IV

The quality of a beneficent dream is assuredly felt here by the visitor from climes that know hail and sleet and blizzard. From the island of Oahu one has to go to the island of Hawaii and climb mountains there to know what cold is. In Honolulu you are wakened at morning by the cooing of doves. For an hour before the sudden pounce of night you have the fuss and clamour in the wide-spreading monkey-pod trees of mynah birds going to roost—birds as fiercely loquacious as starlings.

During the first few nights of my stay sleep was interrupted by sounds without that were strange to me. It seemed that nocturnal gardeners were at work. I could hear a sound as of shovels rasping in gravel. One afternoon, out in the garden, a sudden wind came flurrying along, agitating a clump of tall closely-set bamboos. I had explanation then of the noises that had wakened me on these nights: the brittle clashing of their stems one against the other.

A mountain range, very steep and steeply cleft, of volcanic origin though now most luxuriantly and verdantly clad, raises its erratic ridge along one side of the island. Through a gap in that ridge round a sheer cliff—Pali—a motor road passes. I drove up the Pali road one day when all was still in Honolulu. Beyond the last homes, glimpsed among gardens, it curves upward through what is practically a belt of tropical wilderness, for the city reservoirs are situated there, and all trespass is prohibited.

As we ascended, coming nearer to the Pali, we could see trees on the steep slopes wildly gesticulating. A stream that dropped over a cliff among the tangles of herbage was caught in that wind and torn into a mere tatter of mist. Here was a change from the still day below in the streets of Honolulu. We reached the gap and there the car shivered. When a gale comes in from east over the Pacific against that range the wind pressure is something to remember. I was reminded of tide-rips among the islets of a rocky littoral. That wind off the sea must have been viewlessly undulating and banking and scrolling along the face of the mountain range as an incoming tide on a day of storm along a resolute cliff, seeking for a passage. At the Pali the wind found it. It roared through to us. We roared to it and with a sense of exhilaration passed through the gap, a back-wash of the gale off the high cliff to right assailing us. A newcomer, on such a day, is gripped there by two emotions, one of amazement at the vigour of the compressed sea-wind, the other of admiration of the view suddenly revealed of beach and promontory far below, the lines of surf along the reefs, the explosion of breakers on rocks off-shore.

From a day's motoring on Oahu you return with many impressions of the island life: of flooded rice fields in which water-buffaloes and bare-legged folk are at work; of the cone-shaped hats of Koreans showing and disappearing as they rise and bend, tending the pine-apple rows and the sugar-canets; of the naval base; of military posts, and aeroplanes swerving and banking overhead; of sugar mills; of little villages where the children coming home from school and the groups gathered at the garage doors or round the gas pumps are all dusky-hued; of unkempt corners, too steep for tillage, where wild cactus flaunts; of houses almost hidden in a mass of bougainvillæa; and—amazing sight for those who come from a land the coasts of which go abruptly down into deep water—of bobbing heads far out, as it seems, at sea. As such an one watches, astonished, the distant swimmer rises and walks among the foam. He is mounting a reef. A moment later there is again just a bobbing head and the flash of a bare arm to indicate his whereabouts. They are amphibious, these folks, looking for squid out there. Nowadays, to aid them in sighting and spearing their ocean prey, they usually wear glass goggles or thrust before them glass-bottomed boxes. Often at night, late at night, you may see, as far out as you saw the bobbing heads by day, Jack-a-Lantern gleams moving to and fro as they fish by torch-light.

Close view of the strange fish of these parts you may have by a visit to the city's aquarium. Fish like clippings of richly dyed satins and silks and patterned damask you see there, fish rainbow-coloured, vivid fish, a fish with a fin like a bright trailing feather. As they sinuously steal about in their tanks and waver through crannies of the rocks placed in studied

disorder in their tanks to make them feel at home there they seem less to be considered as food than as bric-à-brac, *objets d'art*! The Pacific Ocean shells are in the same category, and even one long past childhood may spend a charmed hour in looking over the collection of some conchologist of these parts.

In the curio-shops of Honolulu are many beautiful things, made as though to match the fish and the shells. Here is an ash-tray that it seems profanation to strew with ash; here is a cigarette box of no more than unpolished sandalwood, with sanded lid and one shell atop for a handle, charming in its simple beauty; here is a box of polished koa wood with an engraving of a poinsettia flower on its lid; here is a bowl of copper with a teak lid that has a blue crystal for handle; here are lovely things of lacquer, of porcelain and jade, of pewter and papier-mâché, and pieces of Chinese wrought iron, perhaps of no more than half a dozen rushes and one bamboo in a black frame.

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## V

Passing down to one of the beaches on a narrow path that led through a belt of knee-high shrubs, I noticed a flower among the leaves that was only, according to the norm of flowers, half a flower. Some insect, I presumed, had devoured the missing petals. Then I noticed another in the same condition, a mere semi-circle to one side of the stalk. It was about the size of an English field daisy, with one half nipped off. Odd coincidence, thought I, and curiously examining the bushes found that all its blooms were alike in that respect.

What manner of blight, I wondered, takes but half a flower? Then and there my host overtook me, and I turned to him, evidently with wonder and inquiry clear enough without speech, for he explained before I questioned. Yes, yes, he must tell me about these segments of blossom. There is a Hawaiian legend regarding them: a young prince in distant years, setting out in a war-canoe, plucked one of the flowers when they grew complete and broke it in half. One piece he gave to his sweetheart, the other he kept; on his return each would show the other the frail treasured memento and they would be wed. But he did not return. He was killed in battle. Ever since that day the flower has grown so—only half a flower.

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## VI

So much to see—so short a time to see all. That was my thought as the day drew near for me to leave Oahu. Through the lively but orderly flow of Honolulu's business and shopping area I went on my concluding affairs, halted at a corner to watch a Hawaiian policeman regulating traffic with a finished grace of authority, admired again a side-walk within the kerb of which palm trees rose, admired again, also, the drifting—too quickly drifting—stencil of their shadows on the façades of airy office blocks; saw again the statue of King Kamehameha, and noted the hour (my hours there near an end) on the clock of a tower on which is the word *Aloha*—the Hawaiian word of friendly salutation. I passed on and halted again to look at the moored row of brightly painted sampans of the Japanese fishers, buoyantly bobbing to their wharf on the last reef-restrained Pacific swell.

There is a law, I was told, by which any vessel of sixty-five feet or more in length must have a navigator aboard who holds at least a third mate's certificate. So they build these sampans a foot shorter and away they go a thousand miles out to sea to their fishing, able seamen apparently though uncertificated. A friend of mine, discussing their methods of navigation with one of them, was informed that "the chickens" are a great aid on occasion. "We follow the chickens home," the fisherman said. The chickens, my friend explained to me, he being conversant with the pidgin-English of these parts, were the seagulls.

It is hard to leave Hawaii. Once or twice during my visit regret was expressed that I was not there in the time of flowers. I had difficulty at first in assuring myself that I had heard aright, for all the while that I was there I was aware of the scent of flowers and of the colours of them everywhere. They wished, they added, that I might see their trees that put on

blossoms like flames. One flower, by the way, or one flower cluster, I often especially recall, but the name of it I do not know. To sight and touch the outer petals seem as though of fine porcelain, a porcelain sheath over the inner loveliness.

Much I shall often recall, great and little, from wide vistas of the Pacific seen between a eucalyptus tree and a monkey-pod tree on the mountain called Tantalus, to a little green lizard on a garden wall; from the waves being shattered and leaping in foam over islets between Koko Head and Kahuku Point to the colours of a cowrie shell. The avenues of royal palms, the hau trees, the mango trees, the guava by the roadsides, the great banyans I shall not forget.

To that one known as Stevenson's banyan, I made a pilgrimage on a fitting day. I was sitting in the coral-paved *lanai* of my friend's house hearing the doves cooing in the recesses of the garden, watching the cardinal birds fluttering through the hibiscus, when a diminutive Japanese servant (a winsome animate puppet in a gay-patterned kimono) arrived with the day's paper. On opening it the first words that caught my eyes were these: "Robert Louis Stevenson's birthday."

It has been my experience to find much graciousness among Americans and I need not have been astonished that the birthday of the wandering Scot, who stayed a while in their midst there, is not forgotten. In San Francisco is a very beautiful memorial to him, the "golden galleon" that may remind one of the *Hispaniola* in *Treasure Island*—three feet or so long, atop a granite shaft at the base of which is a drinking fountain. Bravely the ship shines there in perpetual gold leaf.

On that anniversary of his birthday I made my pilgrimage to his banyan tree at Waikiki, a changed Waikiki from his days, a place now of many bungalows, each individually pleasant enough, no doubt, but close set. Extraordinary trees are these banyans. One of them, by the way they grow, may seem like a small wood. On his especial one there is now a metal plate to his memory (placed there by the Daughters of Hawaii) and in memory of the Princess Kaiulani. She was the daughter of a Scots father and Hawaiian mother. On that plaque are the verses he wrote for her (they are in his *Songs of Travel*) when she was leaving the island to go to her father's land for her education, these verses ending thus:

"Her islands here, in southern sun,  
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,  
And I in her dear banyan shade  
Look vainly for my little maid."

Stevenson is not forgotten in Honolulu. His first arrival there (on the *Casco*, with a following sea that sent a mill-race of water along her lee scuppers) was on January 24th, 1889. His second visit was in the nature of a flight, it would appear, from the boredom of politics in Samoa, in the year 1893. He brought with him then a Samoan servant who, soon after they landed, developed measles, and master and servant were quarantined at the old Sans Souci Hotel.

With a charming elderly lady I sat chatting one day of the old times. She had stories of the whaling era. She had reminiscences of the missionaries. There was one about a bishop who, in his eagerness to preach to his flock in their own tongue, attempted it before efficiency had come. Quaint bloomers he made, some of such a sort that the congregation would suddenly break forth in joyous laughter. Many of his sermons were thus accidentally merry.

Through her dreaming eyes, as she spoke, I saw old Honolulu. What a change, said she, the motors had made. People walked in the old days. She and her friends would often walk to Waikiki beach to swim and surf-ride there, walk back to Honolulu again, and think nothing of it. She spoke of a Mr. Stevenson, who had stayed at Waikiki—"Mr. Stevenson, the writer, the author; yes." Mr. Stevenson is still remembered by many of the elder folk.

Several excursions he made while there, one to Molokai, as his readers know. There was another that was to have been to the Kilauea volcano. I do not know why, but for some reason he did not go all the way, went ashore at Hookena and there, in a house facing the beach, remained till the steamer returned. To that short stay at Hookena he must have been referring, I think, when he wrote: "Alone on the coast of Hawaii, the only white creature in many miles, riding five and a half hours one day, living with a native . . . a lovely week among God's best—at least, God's sweetest—works, Polynesians." For the Polynesians he had a warm heart. "I love the Polynesian," he wrote.

Mr. W. F. Wilson of Honolulu (in an article he contributed to the old *Scots Pictorial* in 1897) expressed the view that it was very likely while at Hookena, "watching the different crews paddling to land with their loads of opelu and akule, that the idea of 'The Bottle Imp' came into his head." That may be so, but it was not till he settled at Samoa that he wrote that story. I know the human desire to claim all we may for our specially loved corners of earth. To a statement that

Stevenson had once visited Canada I clung tenaciously, even in face of much testimony to the contrary, clung tenaciously, no doubt, because—with a soft corner for Canada—I wanted it to be true. That the statement was erroneous I have now little, if any, doubt, but in self-defence I would add that it did, despite much negative evidence, have the ring of truth and was presented to me with some impressive circumstantial evidence by one who clearly believed it. It was certainly at Honolulu (we have his own letters to inform us of it) that he finished *The Master of Ballantrae* and wrote what he called a "lark," *The Wrong Box*.

Many were the Scots in the Hawaiian Islands during those visits of his. Many are still there, some with such a burr in their speech that with but two-three words spoken one need not ask their country of origin. One of these told me—but Scots have a way of telling stories, veracious and otherwise, against themselves—that sometimes in the law courts there, when a Scots witness is called, an interpreter is called also!

On Stevenson's second visit he delivered a lecture to the Thistle Club. The club rooms were reached up a flight of stairs in Market Street. Across the landing, fittingly, were the printing works of the late Mr. Robert Grieve, "a kindly Scot," says a *kamaaina* (which means an "old-timer") of Honolulu. The lecture—informal—was on what Stevenson called "that long-drawn-out brawl entitled the history of Scotland." The names of Wallace, Bruce, Queen Mary, Prince Charlie inevitably sounded in that lecture, which was a somewhat merry one. But when the speaker came to the name Knox said he, "John Knox I should never presume to mention in a jocular manner."

For another lecture arrangements were made. It was to be a public one and tickets were to be sold towards raising a fund to aid the club library; but when the day came for that one a doctor interdicted it. Stevenson's remark, with a twinkle in his eye, reports Mr. Wilson, was, "It would never do to kill myself in giving a two-bob lecture." Two bob: fifty cents, I take it, was the cost of tickets for that lecture which was not given.

Before he left Honolulu, at the close of that second visit, the club presented him with one of its badges, a silver thistle, which he always wore. It was in the lapel of the coat in which he was buried. He remembered Hawaii, and in Hawaii he is graciously remembered.

Partly for Stevenson's sake I went out to the lighthouse at Diamond Head. There it was, in *The Wrecker*, that Loudon Dodd sat chatting with the light-keeper and a seaman from a man-of-war who inadvertently gave him some information regarding a mystery of the Pacific in which he was involved. Out beyond the reef, on the inner side of which the heads of fishers bobbed, an inter-island steamer trailed a pennant of smoke. On the horizon, looking enormous against the edge of sky, a liner Asia-bound seemed for long while motionless in distance. Then, overhead, came a massive craft of a kind that Stevenson did not see in his days there, the *China Clipper* on the last lap of her trans-Pacific flight, soaring from Hawaii on her way to California.

Many changes these islands have seen since Captain Cook's day, but the tides still rise and fall as of old; the waves crash from emerald and cobalt into sun-bright foam on the reefs; the trade wind sweeps through the palms; the hula-girls dance to the old rhythms; oleanders scent the air.

Wreathed again with *leis*, as on my arrival, the flowery adieux of island friends, I knew the dream was over. The mooring hawsers were loosened from the bollards. The voices that had welcomed me on my arrival sang me away, singing *Aloha* as voices of a dream.

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**PART IX**  
*Splendour in the Grass*

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# SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS

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## I

Many people must have felt—perhaps most people, in fact, have felt—a sense of arrangement or of pattern in their lives at times. When Lafcadio Hearn, for example, put down his pen for the day in his home in the Orient, and allowed himself to meditate a spell on his own life instead of concentrating on his interpretations of Japan, he must often have recalled a house in Bangor, North Wales, where, as a boy, he saw a collection of Chinese and Japanese curios and timidly tapped the notes out of a gong like a golden moon. Bangor and Tokio, childhood and manhood, would be linked in a design of ramping dragons and cherry-blossom.

Of an experience of that sort I once had I should like here to tell you. As already I have indicated, like many boys—like most boys, perhaps, who have a chance in that direction—docks, and ships in docks, had a great fascination for me in my early days in Glasgow, those old blue-grey nitrate-barques with their black-painted ports, from Chile lying in Kingston Docks, the smaller orange boats from Spain near-by, Spanish sailors with bearded lips, and the beauty and mystery of the ships. But there was other romance of reality also, for the boy that was I.

Whether by accident or in divine plan (here is a question for the old Free Will or Foreordination ghosts), sticking in the wrapper of a fine American broom that came into our house when I was a small boy there was an advertisement of Richmond Gem and Straight Cut cigarettes. Fifty reproductions of cigarette cards (even over fifty years ago there were cigarette cards), coloured portraits of Fifty Celebrated Indian Chiefs were dotted over a sheet of glossy cardboard round a picture of a buffalo-hunt, to hang on the wall.

I remember some of them still—Young Whirlwind of the Southern Cheyenne tribe, Black Hawk of the Sac and Fox, Mountain Chief of the Blackfeet, Spotted Tail of the Sioux, Always Riding, a Yampah Ute. That garish thing arrived aptly at the time that my father had presented me with Catlin's book on the North American Indians; and Egerton Young, a missionary to the Crees, being in Glasgow at the same time on a lecture tour, played his part.

The River Cart at Millbrae became the Missouri River. The old Giffnock quarries (as I mentioned earlier) were the Bad Lands of Dakota. The knob of Ballygeoch was a butte of the western plains. And when we went down into Renfrewshire the Gryffe was the Saskatchewan and Misty Law was a peak of the Rockies. When I went exploring through the Great Lone Land of the Mearns Moors I did so in peril of attack from the Blackfeet and in my boyhood's play, determined to get over that anxiety, made friends with them and visited their camps, invisible to all but me. The pipe of peace I smoked one day with the great chief Crowfoot within hearing of the trains whistling on their way beyond Bridge-of-Weir.

A little while after that came, inevitably, the realisation that life is real, life is earnest, and make-belief was no longer its goal. The bitter truth was forced upon me that what, apparently, we have been brought into the world for is to pay the income tax. But thanks to the nitrate-barques from Chile, the orange boats from Spain, and to the advertising manager of Richmond Gem and Straight Cut cigarettes I had a fairly happy boyhood as boyhood goes in Glasgow. I had known Young Whirlwind, a Southern Cheyenne, and Always Riding, a Yampah Ute.

There are people who vigorously and what is called rationally decry all those who ever speak of Escape from Life. Life, they say, is to be lived, not escaped from. In the other camp are those to whom Life is, actually, in the escaping from life—without capital letter. For a while to exist was, apparently, more demanded of me than to live. In Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, London, as a working journalist I hunted for the news that by common consent most people want to know, interviewed notorious criminals and brave—often boastful—life-savers (who had saved lives in coal pits or off the coast in storms), famous (or notorious) musicians, and politicians who can go without any qualifying adjectives. The Fifty Celebrated Indian Chiefs on the cigarette cards of that advertisement that hung its life away, slightly fly-spotted, in the kitchen of my early years, were of the past—Red Shirt, Spotted Tail, Sitting Bull, Always Riding, Young Whirlwind, and the rest. The Cart was just the River Cart and the Gryffe, when I visited old scenes, was no longer Saskatchewan. The tax collector had put an end to all that. A primrose by the river's brim only a primrose was to him.

But the other day it all came back to me—Life as the boy knew it. Some work upon which I was employed—relating to the history of western Canada—took me to the little station of Gleichen, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, about sixty miles east of Calgary. That is where one alights to visit the Blackfoot Indians. A considerable part of my work had, obviously, to do with the Indians and, to aid me in it, I had learnt the sign-language—that talk of the hands by which tribes of totally different language can converse from the Saskatchewan to the Gulf of Mexico, and that not only about concrete matters, but about the abstract. Outwardly I was working journalist and novelist with an introduction from the Department of the Interior (Indian Affairs). Inwardly—well, a bit of the boy-that-was remained in me somewhere, as I was to discover.

I had permission to move about on the reserve collecting the data for my job; and suddenly one day I felt that all I was about was unreal. I was dreaming, surely. I was a small boy in Glasgow making up stories for myself out of Catlin and Ballantyne and Fifty Celebrated Indian Chiefs on cigarette cards. In a world of telephones and electric light, radio and motor cars, I was again escaping from life, the life of the tawse.

There is that about the western prairies which provides the most notable Rodinesque studies from life. The world there is just a base for the great cope of the sky—with the Rocky Mountains like a ragged edge to west. I had sat down to talk to an aged Indian who had no English, and to help me (in case my sign talk was not enough) I had a young Blackfoot interpreter with me. We were on an edge of the prairie where Bow River, in course of ages, has split it deeply. It was a beautiful day. Down in that twining valley of the plains—where, as a saying goes, there are no mountains though there are valleys—the leaves on the river-side cottonwoods were so many spots of light shaken by the wind, and the whole dome of the sky, resting on the distant edges of the plain, was a rare piece of lacquered blue with not one flaw of a cloud.

The old man was telling me queer stories—legends of his folk. Once upon a time, he said, long before white men were there, long before they had horses even, the Indians knew the speech of the lower animals and could talk to the prairie-dogs and coyotes, the antelope and the buffalo. The interpreter was a young man who had been to white men's schools and, when repeating these stories in English, would occasionally throw in, as a personal aside or comment, "You may find this difficult to believe . . ."

Suddenly the old man rose to point out to me the whereabouts of one of the queer incidents he recounted, and at once the whole world seemed to be a plinth for a living statue. He stood on that segment of earth against the sky. The heavens were his background. With a very Indian gesture, indicating the sweep of Bow River down in its gorge, he told the story of a charmed buffalo that, though full of arrows from the hunters, had not died but had gone down over the bank there and into the river where it simply disappeared—a ghost buffalo! (You may find this difficult to believe.)

It was his last legend. He sat down again and turned, doing so, from a statue representing all the neolithic men who once ruled these acres, to an old Indian of to-day living on a reserve with dreams of the past, surrounded by white farmers and stock-raisers, oil wells and natural-gas workings, grain elevators. There the whistle of railway trains on the horizon blends at night with the hoot of the prairie owls and by day aeroplanes ponderously zoom overhead above the lightly veering hawks.

We had got along pretty well. Apparently he wished to signify his appreciation of a white man who could listen to his stories, his myths, without looking at him with a "That's a lie!" expression. He had a gift for me and gave it to me then—one of the old pipes, with a bowl of carved stone, a stem of pierced wood two feet long. He gave it without a word, only with the sign-talk—the old sign-talk that all of the young men know of, but that some have not troubled to learn. I was his friend, he signed, and this was a gift, a gift for which he desired no return; but he wanted us to be *shot at*, he signed, he and I together, *shot at to make a picture*. He wanted a photograph to be taken of us together—he holding the pipe to me and I with a hand on it—as a souvenir of that day.

You will realise that I was deeply moved. I inclined my head. I made the signs, *You put the day into my heart with this gift. This that you give me will always be close to my heart*; for the sign-language, even as their talk, is greatly metaphorical, like that of the Old Testament and of Shakespeare. Then we sat silent a while on the prairie there beside the gash of Bow River. What he was thinking I do not know. I was thinking of the days before I knew that life was real, life was earnest, before the income-tax collector had my name irrevocably on his books, when as a small boy I visited the camps of the Blackfeet—invisible to all but me—in Scotland, and smoked the pipe of peace with a viewless, imagined Crowfoot. The sound of Bow River below us, flowing shallow (for the month was September) through the Blackfoot Reservation in Alberta was, for a few minutes, the sound of Gryffe, in Renfrewshire, rippling over its stones.

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## II

Some years before that visit to the Blackfoot Reserve I met, in British Columbia, a mining man who may be called MacNair as that was not his name. I have lost trace of him, and so am unable to have his sanction for use of his name here. But from A to Z what I have to tell will be as accurate a report as I know how to give of the matter to which it relates—one that must be of interest not only to ethnologists but to many others.

MacNair and I were talking of the aborigines of the continent, and he made the remark that ethnologists need not wonder, over the craniums of primitive folk and the signs of their ancient occupancy, what manner of people they were, what sort of thoughts once moved inside their skulls.

"There are still, even on this continent," said he, "neolithic men who can divulge to the right kind of civilised or sophisticated person the thoughts, the minds of those of distant ages."

He gave me an example. He had been in Alberta eastward of the Rockies and had gone along Bow River from Calgary, examining geological formations. Just on the edge of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation he had left his horse on prairie-level at the top of one of the cliffs known as *cut-banks* in these parts, and descended to the lower level where the river flows. The place had obviously been a *piskun* (a Blackfoot Indian word) or a *jumping-pound* (the white man's phrase); that is to say, it was one of those places at which, before the Indians had horses, they were accustomed to drive to the slaughter herds of buffalo—as the bison of this continent is generally called in concession to an early error—an error due perhaps (this is only my suggestion—I have not heard any one else make it—and it may not be correct) to the French voyageurs' *Les boeufs*. The system was to surround a herd and, by waving robes and yelling, stampede the animals so that they plunged violently down over the steep bank one atop the other. Descending after them at places less sheer, the Indians then killed the beasts not already killed by the fall and proceeded to the gralloching, as Scots deer-slayers would say, and the skinning and cutting up. The buffalo, as every one knows, of course, supplied the Indian with tipis (tents), robes, spoons, forks, needles, glue, and so forth. At the base of that cliff MacNair found there was an odd formation. He described the rocks as being "like flies in amber" in some spots. Fragments of bone, fragments of pelt, stray hairs were mixed with earth and stones under a glutinous veneer.

From a scrutiny of the scene he happened to look up to the prairie rim above and saw an Indian on the cut-bank's edge sitting on a horse, motionless, apparently paying little attention to him. His survey of the ground at the cliff-base over, MacNair clambered back to the prairie level, got his tethered horse and rode along to the Indian to speak to him. Though the *piskun* was on the edge of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation he tried Cree, that being the only Indian tongue he knew, and he was aware that some of the people of the plains tribes can speak not only their own language but that of a neighbouring tribe.

This Indian spoke fluent Cree in response. MacNair asked him what he was doing there, why he was sitting motionless on the rim of that cut-bank, and Napoosis Ogemaw (to give him his name, which signifies Boy Chief) explained. He had no English at all and probably it was the fact that MacNair spoke Cree that caused him to divulge all he did divulge. For the Indians appreciate an interest in them that goes the length of making those who feel it take the trouble to learn an Indian tongue. I have found that even to be conversant with the sign-language is a great aid toward getting close to those very interesting folk.

He was there, Napoosis Ogemaw explained, to relive the past. Ever and again, he said, as he sat there the old days would come to life—the dead men would come back. He would hear them, hear their voices as they stampeded the herds over the *piskun*.

"You can call it what you will," said MacNair to me, "explain it how you will. Perhaps my sympathy with the old fellow made me tap his thoughts. It may have been telepathy. All I can say is that that was one of his lucky days for getting the past back again, and that I also suddenly heard whooping voices, and the frantic bellow of the buffalo, and felt the plain, on the edge of which we were, shaking with the coming of a stampeded herd. My horse began to tremble. I felt that in

another few minutes the herd would be on us and then I looked round, pulling myself free of the spell, and of course there was nothing—just the empty plain."

That's the first part of it.

On my first visit to the Blackfoot Reservation, so much was there to see, so much to do, that it was not till the night I was leaving that I remembered MacNair and Napoosis Ogemaw. The agent—George Gooderham—was on the platform (Gleichen) to see me off and we were having a final chat. Suddenly I recalled all this that I have related and began to tell it to him. Mr. Gooderham stared at me.

"Well, there is a Napoosis Ogemaw on the reserve, an old man, but very fit," said he.

I mentioned that MacNair had talked to him in Cree. Mr. Gooderham replied that that might be so for Napoosis Ogemaw was either a Cree who had been adopted into the Blackfoot tribe or a Blackfoot who, in his earlier years, had spent some time with the Crees. Some such story there was in that Indian's past, but he had not definite information regarding it. When I saw him a year later I had so much else from him to interest me that whether he was Cree or Blackfoot—and if Cree how he came to be living with the Blackfeet, or if Blackfoot why he had lived some years with the Crees—I did not inquire. Some day I may. It has at any rate, nothing to do with this narrative.

The locomotive whistle roared close and the train came in, putting a closure to that last moment talk. But I had a letter from the agent a week later to tell me that he had mentioned it to Napoosis Ogemaw and that the old man had said that if ever I came back he would like to meet me.

The following year I returned to the Blackfoot Reservation. There had been a fair at Brooks, a little prairie town near the reserve, and some of the Blackfeet had been invited to present a few of their old-time dances and to take part in the horse-races there. Napoosis Ogemaw had been one of these. His riding horse had been taken home in a bunch with others, and he had come direct to the agency in the wagon of another Indian—or it may have been in a motor car, for some of them now have cars.

It was a payment day at the office with all the colour that such days provide—cars, wagons, buggies parked along the fence, and horses of all hues, from blacks to pintos, hitched to the rail. Indians old, middle-aged, young, were in picturesque groups before the door or sitting on bench and floor in the outer waiting-room, filling it with the blue haze of tobacco and kinnick. Among these was the Indian who wanted to see me, whom I was eager to see, and we were introduced.

I looked upon a man of powerful build though not tall. His breadth of chest was magnificent. He was not fat—simply largely built. We "talked" a little in the sign language till Mr. Gooderham had some business attended to, and then the suggestion was made that Napoosis Ogemaw should be given a lift home to his cabin, which was several miles away, in the agent's private car and that I should go with him. An interpreter would be provided for our aid lest my sign-talk broke down under the strain of so intricate a narration—and certainly in sign-talk it would have taken me a long time to communicate it all and, no doubt, considerable intent patience on the part of Napoosis Ogemaw to follow it. So off we set, the driver and my wife in front and, behind, Napoosis Ogemaw (half-filling the seat and worried that he could not give us more room) the young Blackfoot interpreter and I—the interpreter between us.

"Well," I began, "Napoosis Ogemaw wants to know about that white man he met long ago at the *piskun* and what he said to me."

"All right," said the interpreter. "Go ahead, please."

As the car spun along I unfolded it all, sentence by sentence, Napoosis Ogemaw making no sound save the occasional Indian grunt of attention. The prairie undulated past us. Riders in distance grew larger, came close, and passed with eddies of dust at the heels of their loping mounts. We met not only Indian horsemen going to the agency but Indian wagons crunching and dusting along, beside some of these a leggy foal of a mare in harness tittupping in the wonted western way. We seemed to be heading straight for the verge of the sky in that land where earth is but a base for the enormous dome. I came to an end of recounting what MacNair had told me of his experience and closed, in the Indian fashion, with: "That is all. I have finished."

The interpreter gave a little laugh of acknowledgment of my knowledge of the ritual before he translated that. When he

had done so, Napoosis Ogemaw turned his head toward me and bowed; and there was the end, it seemed. The car ran on and not a word did he speak.

The prairie stopped before us. There was a broad gash in it, the gash of Bow River, and below were the cottonwoods and willows turning yellow—the month of my visit being again September—on either side of the river that, shallow at that season, rippled on its way. It was very beautiful there.

I thought that Napoosis Ogemaw was pondering the wording of his reply to all I had told him, much as I had once or twice had to ponder a phrasing before speaking to the interpreter. So I gave him time. I did not realise then—which was no doubt foolish of me—that there was no comment necessary, that all I had repeated of MacNair's experience was perfectly normal to this old man, nothing to make a fuss about, and that he could not imagine inside that head of his that I might want ratification of the story, be incredulous of anything so credible.

Perhaps I did wonder if MacNair had invented the story though Boy Chief (sitting there massive in that car) he had not invented. I belonged to the steel age; he belonged to the stone age. Recounting that story I had found it, again, supernatural. Napoosis Ogemaw, listening to it, found it commonplace, but was no doubt gratified that a white man was able to hear once what he heard often, feel often what he often felt—and had remembered it all and told it to another.

"What has he to say about it?" I asked at last.

The young man who sat between us translated that and got a brief reply, in a casual tone, which he passed to me with the formal beginning of *He says* to all sentences.

"He says that is so. That is right. That is how it was."

There was no more to be said, and hardly need to say that. MacNair had told me the truth—and I had again met a neolithic man.

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**PART X**  
*A Garden in the Wilderness*

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# A GARDEN IN THE WILDERNESS

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## I

A certain commission that has nothing to do with this book, so need not be entered into here, carried me a thousand miles northward from Vancouver to Skagway, noting, nightly, the Pole Star drawing nearer. We journeyed on beyond Skagway (the "Gateway of the North") up the spectacular White Pass and heard, when the train stopped to let us look down on the great gorge of it, the roar of all its cataracts. We saw, mounting onward, fragments of the trail of '98 in the steep gulch alongside, a foot-wide scar between the rock-slides that have descended over it in the years—as though Nature would fain wipe out the memory of it.

At the boundary between Alaska and British Columbia we remarked other evidence that we were indeed more than entering, that we had entered the North, seeing on a blackboard on the wall when we halted there the imperative command that all *mushers* must report. We were *going in*. Men and women of the North speak of *going in*, *coming out*, not just *going* and *coming*. The phrase was inevitable. Here was a far cry from Vancouver.

Here was a far cry even from Skagway as we rolled on by Lake Bennett, that twisted under cliffs and round the butt-ends of rock-slides, with only the rufflings of passing winds on its surface and the twinkling pin-points of sunlight, though in '98 as many as four hundred rafts were counted at one time on it, rowed by sweeps, sculled by sweeps, aided on their way by blankets rigged up for sails on lopped trees for masts. Going in—indubitably were we going in. There is a feeling as of having come to another planet up there on the divide. And at Carcross, sixty miles or so north of Skagway (that once had a name more vocal of the land—Caribou Crossing—changed to Carcross because of muddles with the mail caused by the existence of the district of Cariboo in British Columbia's far interior), one is aware of the ambient silence and vastness of the Yukon. It has a quality like that of a little village on the shore of a great sea. It is a jumping-off place for that wilderness the peaks of which keep watch on it, the twisting waters of which come to its doors.

Aboard the *Tutshi* (pronounced *Tooshy*), thrashing out of Carcross to investigate that silence, the realisation must come to many that the old phrase, *the Lure of the North*, is not just nonsense. Most, I think, must be aware of it and to some of these it comes as a call to be answered, to some as a warning; better to be gone, they feel, before it has them in thrall. Of the lady whom I was to see later I heard nothing at Carcross. Here was a land that seemed as empty as the sky. A gaggle of geese passed overhead and, dropping beyond a range to the southeast, left an added sense of emptiness. A flight of ptarmigan, piebald, white and brown, strung across the blue bloom of the dwarfed spruce trees and there was the impression that this was more rightly their domain than ours. We were intruders among mystery. Beyond that silvery blue of the spruce trees were staring cliffs, mutely, heedlessly watching us. Beyond and above the cliffs were obdurate peaks with snow in their lower creases and glaciers lying in their upper hollows.

From Tagish Lake to Taku Arm we churned on, the uninhabited shores slipping past. The reflected silvery light off the water touched, as with a veneer of unreality, the white-painted boat, the high pilot-house—and the faces of those who clustered on deck looking at this austerity of desolation. Valleys that we opened up seemed vast as Old Country shires. The mountains that hung along their far ends might have been of stationary clouds. On we went southward on that waterway, and passed out of Yukon territory with British Columbia's extreme north. The aeroplane, I considered, will make a great change in this land. I spoke the thought aloud and a man who stood by me had a story to tell of adventure and fortitude of the pilots of these planes that are indeed changing the Northland's life.

But this is of a garden in the wilderness, and of a lady in the wilderness, and I would merely prepare the stage for her entrance as it was prepared for us going in, going on. When we had dropped Engineer Mountain astern and the little cluster of the houses of the Engineer Mine dotted along its base had dwindled to the value of crumbs——

"Where are we going to now?" I asked the first officer, having been invited by them up into the pilot-house.

He glanced over his shoulder, surveyed me for a moment, and then replied that he was not going to tell me: I was to see for myself without any preparation and so have my own uninfluenced impression. I accepted the decree and sat mute

behind him, his robust figure, as he stood at the wheel, blotting out a section of the everlasting mountains. I looked down at the water that came rippling toward us, as if for ever; I looked at the shores, and the blue-sifted spruce trees slid past on either side—as if for ever.

The captain came up, the first mate departed. We took a bend and at last I saw what seemed to be the twisting water's end and caught there the gleam of a few roofs, very small in the immensity. Yes, we were indeed, at last, at the end. But even though these sternwheel steamers of the inland lakes and rivers are of shallow draught to make landings on beaches, we could not land at the apex there, shelving as it did into seepage and quagmire. We slowed down and crept close to high cliffs along the base of which lay what I can but describe as a floating sidewalk. It disappeared round a projection and as we drifted alongside a dapper Oriental—I say dapper advisedly, for he wore a white shirt and his trousers were creased—appeared at the cliff's base as if by some magic of the land. He caught the rope thrown down and tied us to a knob of rock.

With the other creatures of my dream—or the other incredulous mortals (on each face was an expression as of incredulity)—I went down the gang-plank. With them I passed round the base of the cliffs to where that floating sidewalk touched land and with them, speechless, followed the path beyond. It brought us to a garden, to sweet-peas, delphiniums, asters, fox-gloves, snapdragons, columbines, pansies, peonies, and many other flowers besides—a pool of colour under the sheer precipices.

At a small gate stood a lady to welcome us. Would we care to walk round the garden before we met Mrs. Partridge? she suggested. We passed on, quiet, spellbound, for we had expected nothing like this—wilder wilderness, perhaps, but not a garden in it. And, finding it, the contrast with the scene round us made it all the stranger. Having walked through that oasis of colour we came to a house beside which was a small conservatory. There we clustered, looking back at that tended and multi-coloured enclosure, looking up at the contrasting severe summits, deeply aware of the quiet ashore here, the throbbing of the steamboat's engine and thrash of her sternwheel no longer sounding in our ears.

It was then that a little white-haired woman in velvet and lace came to the door—our lady of the wilderness—and bade us enter.

"You must introduce yourselves," she told us, "for you know me now but I don't know you."

It was a large main room into which we moved, with space for all. There was a salver for our visiting-cards on a table to one side, cards of our hostess beside it; and a book lay there also for us to sign our names as her guests. The servant who had appeared round the cliff to meet the boat, and another, carried trays among us laden with glasses of home-made wine. When we had all drunk to our hostess she began to speak. She told us that this was a place far off to most and that it had been her husband's custom to keep open house for all comers. He had recently died, she said, but she was here to carry on the tradition; and would we, to commence the evening, sing our two national anthems? Here, where all the boundaries were so close—Alaska, Yukon Territory, British Columbia—it had been one of Mr. Partridge's aims, it appeared, to work towards friendship between the English-speaking peoples.

"You see," she pointed out, "he had the two flags side by side on that wall."

In a corner-niche was a little old harmonium—it had been in the country close on fifty years, I heard later—and sitting down before it she played, a frail figure in velvet, white-haired, with lace at her throat and wrists. But soon she was prevailed upon by her friend and companion (who had met us at the gate) to lie down. Before she obeyed, however, she had to make another little speech, one of apology. She said that she had known a lot of trouble recently and that very morning she had been upset. A murmur of condolence passed, and she went on to explain that there was a moose she was trying to tame. It had been coming very close to the door but that morning, just as it drew near, an aeroplane roared overhead and frightened it away.

The wilderness with its moose and its caribou and its wolves; the wilderness, this garden, and aeroplanes: that is the North to-day.

There were new odours in the room and the servants brought among us trays of tea, coffee, cakes. I need hardly tell you that before we left we all trooped past that couch where our hostess lay, to give her our adieux. And then I stole off beyond the house, up the slope a little way (past a cluster of trees, the very boughs of which seemed to hold the hush), to look at the place where she lived. I got beyond the voices. I felt the enfolding silence, the silence one reads about, the silence of the Yukon. The sense of all being but a dream within a dream caught me; the strangeness caught me; the silence

caught me. In fact what I felt there was perhaps that spell of the North of which I had often read. I realised that, for better or worse, it might easily take hold of one—till death do us part, as it were—and it was a spell, it seemed, at one and the same time tranquil and sinister, beneficent and terrible. I understood the Lure of the North, that Lure other than the one that is in the hope for sudden fortune in the gold of its rocks and sands. These phrases one reads, "Come and find me;" "What lies beyond the ranges?"—and so forth—are not mere nonsense. I tore myself away from that arresting and detaining quiet, that spell, and joined the others below. Our heels sounded muffled on the floating side-walk as we returned to the boat.

It was then well on in the evening by the evidence of our watches but day lingers long in these high latitudes in summer, and even after we had cast loose and backed away from the cliff the sky above us was full of bright memories of day—and would hold them almost till a new day dawned. In the water through which again we thrashed the day had not gone. It clung there, beautiful and a little sad. But in the place we had left, under the towering precipices, lights were being lit. It was real, it was true, and we were leaving it alone there as the night of the valleys brimmed round it. I watched the lights diminish in size beyond our grey wake in the spectral water, watched till they were eclipsed at a bend, and then climbed again to the pilot-house in that queer drizzle of lingering day through the gathering night.

The first officer was there. He looked at me as I entered, raising his eyebrows in an inquiry. But somewhat as he had wanted to give me no word of preparation for what I was to see, I felt unable to say anything to him in reply to that lift of his brows. And I think he understood. Of course he understood. I shall never, so long as I live, forget that lady in the wilderness, the lady of Ben-My-Chree.

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## II

Her husband, Otto Partridge, was born in Hertfordshire, England, in 1855, and when he was but a boy his people removed to the Isle of Man. The college at which he was educated was the well-known King William's, which is about a mile from Castletown near the south end of the island, and ten from Douglas, facing the bay. From the headlands there one can see the deep-sea steamers that have come through the North Channel rounding the Calf of Man, lurching on their way to Liverpool, or heading for the Atlantic, outward bound. He was not the first King William's boy to hear the call of the sea and respond. In many an engine-room and on many a ship's bridge over the seven seas are old King William scholars.

At fourteen years of age he was apprenticed in the mercantile marine and when nineteen he sailed, with a younger brother, to San Francisco, having heard from an elder brother at that time resident there of an opportunity in a schooner trading to the Farallones and coast ports. Arrived at San Francisco they found that their wandering elder brother was off and away to New Orleans. There was at that time trouble between the States and Mexico, and what had these two young men to do but join a sloop of war under Commander John Phillips, special dispensation being granted them from Washington to sign on for three years.

That little flutter out into the world over, they returned to England. Mr. Partridge then fell heir to a legacy, married the woman who was to share thereafter all his romantic life, and set sail for California again. In the Santa Clara valley they set up their home on a fruit-farm and there it was that Otto Partridge's interest in horticulture began. That was understandable. There he could see the whole valley when the foam of spring broke upon it, and would know the view from Mount Hamilton looking over to Los Gatos when the prune orchards were in blossom.

In the year 1897 all the west was excited over the gold discoveries in the far north. Everybody was saying, "Klondike, Klondike. . . ." It was like a refrain. One heard it on trains and one heard it in hotel-rotundas and in the clubs. It was in music-hall songs: "the Klondike." Skippers of ships putting into west-coast ports could not let the seamen ashore because of the lure of it. If but one of the sailors were allowed to scull a boat to a wharf on some business, the boat did not come back. French leave was the vogue then. "The Klondike, the Klondike. . . ."

A friend of Otto Partridge's in Victoria wrote him a plea for his partnership on an adventure into that mysterious north and in 1897 he was off. Those were wild days on the new frontier. Soapy Smith was very much alive in Skagway with

his gang of desperadoes. Otto Partridge was carrying with him twenty thousand dollars in currency and the stories of the notorious Soapy Smith of Skagway did not sound good to him, so he got permission from the captain to pay a secret visit to the hold. Among his "not wanted on the voyage" effects was a bale of oakum—for ship-building was in his mind as one of the means of *making good* in the North. Transport, he realised, would be wanted there. Into that bale he put his ready cash. Soapy Smith's gang did some desperate things but the looting of cargo was not among them. Arrived safely up the trail at Bennett, Otto undid his bale of oakum and had his twenty thousand dollars again. With a little group of men he looked for opportunities and floated the Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation Company. The *Ora*, the *Flora*, the *Nora*—three of the first steamers on the Yukon—were Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation boats.

Mrs. Partridge had come only as far as Victoria with him from the flower-scented Santa Clara valley, and was waiting there while he went on to spy out the land. But the following year she "went in" after him—over the famous Trail of '98, the old scar of which you see to-day from the train as it twines up White Pass. Few were the women then in the land. In the old souvenir volumes of photographs of those days a woman in any of the groups is a rarity. She went over that trail on foot.

The White Pass railway was being built and with its completion along the shores of Lake Bennett from the town of Bennett to Canyon City (which are now little more than names by the track-side) the Navigation Companies' activities there came to an end. Further into the North went Otto Partridge and his wife. He took over a sawmill at Milhaven, a little to the south of Carcross where to-day you go aboard the sternwheel steamer for Ben-My-Chree and for Atlin. For a home, Mr. Partridge built a house-boat on the lake.

With the history of the North the lives of the Partridges are blent. Bishop Bompas was then in the Yukon on missionary work among the Indians, and it happened that an old-country friend of Mrs. Partridge—Miss Dalton—came out from London to assist him in his labours. Finding Mrs. Partridge there on the house-boat she decided, instead of going in for missionary work, to join the Partridge ménage and keep her friend company. It was at this period that they began their expeditions into the hardly-known wilderness through which the waterways twine in their lonely fashion.

Mr. Partridge built a yacht, for the navigation of these waters, which he christened *Ben-My-Chree*, Manx for Girl of my Heart. All through his life was this romance of his love for his wife and devotion to her, a devotion reciprocated. They were always together. They knew the life of settled lands but the invitation of these wild and secret regions was in their hearts. That yacht careened with them over Lakes Bennett, Tagish, and Marsh. They went upon hunting expeditions into the further recesses, getting meat for their winter supply.

It was in those days that a prospector, Stanley McLennan, came to Mr. Partridge with news of a gold discovery at the end of West Taku Arm. He had found gold and silver in the rocks but had none in his pocket. He had to be grub-staked, and Partridge grub-staked him. Not only that but, with his yacht, he helped in the transportation of supplies.

It happened that just then Lord Egerton arrived from England, looking for a virgin hunting country. Otto Partridge was a man after his own heart. They shared that love of the remote. The camp beside the lost lake, the aurora shaking the sky with its plumes, the sense of escape—these they shared. One day they climbed to McLennan's prospect away above the high cliffs, and Lord Egerton became excited over it all. The scene is impressive in its austerity and, for those who can be moved by wilderness as well as formal garden unforgettable. But not only the grandeur of the scene excited Lord Egerton. The mineral showings, unearthed by Stanley McLennan, he felt, warranted financial backing for development work. All that was needed was capital. So Lord Egerton, Mr. Partridge, and Miss Dalton (who all this time had been accompanying the Partridges on their expeditions) pooled a sum of money to allow of the working of the property. The house-boat was towed away from Milhaven to the end of West Taku Arm and cabins were built ashore there for a mining crew, and the work began in earnest. Lord Egerton went home to England and all was going well when old Nature took matters in hand.

One spring, when the thaws came, an avalanche began to slip on that mountain and in its progress started a rock-slide. The timbers of the trestle-towers of the gravity tramway that had been built up the steep slope were snapped like matches, the mine workings were buried under tons of débris, and several members of the crew were overtaken and killed. Did you ever see a rock-slide? That is no little run of scree for a few yards. The rocks, big as houses, are undermined by the melting of the snows. The slide comes down and thrusts its weight against them. There is cataclysm, havoc. There is a roar as of the tipping of a thousand trucks of steel rails. The boulders roll down and roll not straight, being not, of course, complete and polished spheres but monstrous and jagged things. They roll a little way in a straight line and then, as if endowed with individual and erratic life, leap sideways. Cannoning into other rocks they send these

trundling and bouncing downwards. With the most appalling divagations they descend, and in the momentum they may roll on uncertainly across the flats at base of the mountain from which they have been loosened.

That disastrous slide stopped the mining labours at the head of West Taku Arm. One might think that it would have put a period even to the occupancy, that they would have left the place to Nature then. But no. In the course of all these labours they had come by an affection for the land. They were identified with it; it was theirs. And besides, Mr. Partridge was not of the sort to accept defeat.

They left the boat-house that had been their home. They went ashore and began the building of the houses I saw there. To open up the mine again may have been in Mr. Partridge's mind all the while, but in the making of the home he worked on. He made of it a place fit for a woman to live in. He laid out vegetable gardens and flower gardens. Talk of the desert and the sown! In that wilderness they built their home and tended their gardens. The sweet-peas, the delphiniums, the enormous pansies of the long northern summer days, the columbines were strange contrast to the hard, the implacable cliffs. And that they might not be cut off from the outer world Mr. Partridge appealed to the transport company (the White Pass and Yukon Route), asking them, when the steamer came up the lake to the Engineer mine, some miles below, to send it on to Ben-My-Chree; he called the place by the name of the yacht he had built to explore these waters.

When visitors inquired of them if they did not feel "cut off" there, No! they said, not they. There is such a thing as the international postal service, and they had many correspondents. They had books; they had, in winter, their dog-team and their sledge should there be any call to "go out"; they had the beauty of winter—a beauty as great as that of summer—and with the winter's cold they knew how to cope. The frost drew its white flowers on the pane, lovely as these summer flowers flaming in the garden.

Twice a week through the summer the steamer churned on to the end of that inland fiord and tied up to the cliffs. I never met Otto Partridge—he died just a few months before I saw his garden—but as a story-teller I believe he was enthralling, a gifted raconteur. Ask him of the old days of the North and the yarns would come forth, extraordinary, whimsical, wild. And there was much to see—from the beavers at work in their colony to the glass-houses where the Partridges had their vegetables in season and out of season. Yes, and mushrooms in February, he would say.

Those who visited them in those days tell that to see Mr. and Mrs. Partridge together was to be aware of the harmony of their minds and outlook. Each was the complement of the other. Their devotion was palpable without parade.

This place at the back of beyond became famous. All the world over were travellers who, when in the mood of remembering, would be back in spirit there. The voice of their host would be again in their ears. His personality they would recall. Early in 1930, just when navigation opened on the lakes, he was suddenly taken ill. Years of clambering in that upended country had told upon his heart. They got him out to Whitehorse and there, shortly after his arrival, he died.

To his wife there was but one duty left, one labour—a labour of love and remembrance. There she remained, at Ben-My-Chree, keeping open house as he had done, for all who came. But with all her charm we had the feeling that she had another wish, unspoken, the wish to be with him again. It was at the back of her eyes, despite her kindly attention to her guests. Her friends, it appeared, thought it would be better if, for the next winter, she "came out," and she told my wife that perhaps she might go out. That, thought my wife, presumably meant Vancouver, Victoria—or at least Skagway.

"Oh, no!" was Mrs. Partridge's response. "I might go out to Whitehorse."

So, with the last boat, before the winter claimed the lakes, she left for Whitehorse and there, worn despite her rare spirit, with her secret loneliness, the end came in 1931. Otto Partridge had not long to wait for the company of his life's companion in the further travels of the spirit if such there be.

What, I wonder, will become of the old harmonium in a corner beside the stairs? It is an old-timer too. It is more a souvenir now than a musical instrument, but in the old days it led the singing, Mrs. Partridge playing, when the guests from outside, loath to go, lingered on. Miss Dalton, who had some time earlier gone back to England, expressed a view shared by many—one may say shared by all in the North who knew these two: that the old place might not be left to Nature to obliterate. It had become a point of pilgrimage during the Partridges' lives. Why, just because they were not to be seen there in the flesh, should it be forsaken? So, round that house in the heart of the hushed wilderness, for these two whom even death kept but a little while from each other, is the garden that they loved, for a memorial. Queer to remember that lonely water where the moose come down to drink, and how when one strolled alone up the slopes to get an impression of the scene the clumps of trees were as wicker nets to catch the quiet. Queer to remember all that in the

midst of the bustle of affairs in the world's centres.

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**PART XI**  
*Maple-Leaf and Thistle*

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## MAPLE LEAF AND THISTLE

Far from Hawaii, far from the Grampians, far from Valparaiso and the Andes, from Glasgow—for

". . . little did my mother ken  
The day she cradled me,  
The lands I was to travel in . . ."

—in this house by the shore of Kootenay Lake, in British Columbia, another magic carpet carried me over many leagues. Little did my mother ken of that magic carpet either or, to be precise, that magic box. *Radio, wireless set* were not words she knew.

But before coming to that wireless set I must tell, preparing the way for it, tell briefly, of a summer's journey over many miles, an outing in the world as unexpected as that dip into Honolulu, the sight of the palm trees, the whiff of those tropic blossoms. One never knows what to-morrow has in store. Another commission carried me again up the indented coast of British Columbia, through the "pan-handle" of Alaska, over the White Pass and on, northward, to Dawson City and the gold fields of the Klondike. At table one evening on the coastal boat I had to say to the chief engineer, because of his voice, "You come from Glasgow."

"From Govan," said he.

The steamer also was from Govan as I had discovered on taking my first constitutional round her decks. There was the legend—definite as the Chief's accent—on a brass plate, *Built at Fairfield Shipbuilding Yards, Govan*.

I left her at Skagway and boarded a train that twined up that pass through which the men of the gold rush went afoot and sometimes, when their packs were heavy, at the more precipitous parts, on hands and knees. At Whitehorse, the northern terminus of that railway, a hundred miles or so from Skagway, I went aboard a vessel of a different sort from the coastal ones, a shallow-draught, stern-wheeled steamboat. The warning whistle blew and was answered at once by all the dogs—dogs that do not bark. Throughout the town they raised their voices in a canine keening, answering the siren. By the noble look of them these animals should bay basso-profundo, or should have bell-voices like that of the Great Dane. But no; there are even notes at end of their reply to the siren like the high shrill ululation of coyotes. The volume of it subsides and a dying fall of peevish whimpering makes an end of it.

On the wharf the people watched those trooping up the gangway as though they were going on a long voyage into strange lands. The captain mounted up into the pilot-house and thrust the window open, a monarch of the river looking down on the final bustle. Ropes were cast loose. She hooted again and away she went, churning upstream, for she has to do so to turn. Sweeping round, her speed increased as with a bound in the pull of the current. Back she surged past the wharf and the crowds, her siren crying a parting "who-who!" and all the loafing dogs of Whitehorse (out of work for the summer) raised their great heads and answered.

Away we puffed through the nightless summer of that weird northland, down Yukon River.

On the way to Dawson I saw little of the pilots, for that is a tricky stream and navigation downriver takes up all their attention. Guests in the wheel-house, going down, fuss them. There are places where the river swings like Mississippi, swing after swing. The Indians, in giving a direction to any one in these parts, tell him he has so many "looks" to go. The pilot up in the wheel-house and the engineer on the main deck are in constant touch. In a phrase of the river, the engineer is "on the bell." Approaching one of these "looks," just before the bend, just at the right place, the pilot rings for full speed astern, and immediately the stern-wheel responds. But that merely puts a brake upon the ship to allow of the pilot swinging her round into the next "look," where again he rings for full speed ahead and away she goes with the current and her engines. Once upon a time, because of an accident downstream, word of which had been telegraphed to Whitehorse, a captain took his vessel down without any ring for a brake from the engines, and that trip was a series of gasps for all on board. There is a place at which, on the way up, you can go ashore, walk leisurely through the forests and be ready to get aboard again before she comes in sight.

Butting up against the current, except at such places as the Five Finger Rapids, the pilots can be sociable—at least, over their shoulders—and so, coming upstream, I was invited to mount to the wheel-house. On entering I was greeted thus:

"Sit ye down. This iss peautiful weather, whateffer."

I am not making fun of that accent. I would not make fun of these pilots on any account. Men who can run that river from the breaking of the ice to the freeze-up are men to respect. Moving it was, somehow exciting, to hear that lilt on Yukon River, six thousand miles or so from Mallaig. For the Hebrides I had come, as the years slipped along, to have great affection, though born abroad. Such names as Appin, Moidart, Morven, were as music to me. So was that voice!

It was the season when the caribou herds migrate from the seaward ranges and the St. Elias wilderness of Alaska to their summer pastures by the head-waters of Stewart River and the banks of the Macmillan—both good Scots names, by the way. As we came quaking up against the deliberate pouring and eddying of that great waterway we sighted herd after herd. They swam, hurrying, across our bows, or trod water to let us go past and then swam valiantly through our wake. Talk of the ways of these beasts led to talk of the red deer—and red deer gave me opportunity to ask the pilot, "What part of the Highlands do you come from?"

"I'm an Isleman," was the reply.

So then our conversation—as the boat foamed up against the flow of Yukon—was of Skye and of Mull, and of the Minch. From the top of the ship, that high-perched wheel-house, I was invited to descend to the main deck to see the engines.

"From Govan?" I asked the engineer there.

"Aye," he replied, "and the engines too." And he pointed to the brass plate on them.

On the way back to Skagway from Dawson, my work there finished, I turned aside at Carcross. It is just a store or two, a house or two—some of logs, some of sawn lumber—a wharf, a railway station, a few people, and many sledge dogs lying about in the summer sun, the long day of summer, off duty till the snows come and the long night lit by the aurora borealis. On another lake steamer out of Carcross I made the inland voyage (lakes and rivers the chief highways there) to that hinterland of blue-spruce forests, stark mountains draped with glaciers and an ambient silence almost palpable—Atlin Country. Up in the wheel-house on Tagish Lake, shutting my eyes and hearing the captain and mate talk together, I could imagine that the next landing would be at Tobermory or Stornoway. A young man named Dan Mackay was at the wheel; the captain was a Macdonald from the Isles.

Back again at Vancouver the business upon which I was engaged took me next far inland to the country about the head-waters of the Columbia. Riding there one day over the benchlands, sunshine golden on one area of the wide view and a thunderstorm rumbling and seething at another so that the mountains there turned to cloud and the clouds to mountains, and which was which the eye could not decide—I was stopped by one whose voice made me wonder whether I should say, "From Glasgow?" or "From Govan?"

"From Glasgow?" I asked, and he was.

I must bide a wee, I must come in the hoose and "ben the hoose" and meet his wife, who was born in the Island of Arran. There is a room in that house that I shall never forget. It was his workroom and along one wall was a novel frieze—a folding map, done in the bird's-eye-view fashion, issued by a shipping agent of, I believe, Renfield Street, or it may be Jamaica Street. He had unrolled it to full length and tacked it to the wall.

"Sometimes," he explained, "I sit here and have a trip or two. I go to the Broomielaw and sail all the way doon, past the rock of Dumbarton and the Cloch, away doon here by the Cock of Arran and away across to Campbeltown. Or I'll take train to Greenock or Gourock—or Ardrossan—just as I fancy. I'll land in Arran and climb Goatfell"—and he jabbed a finger on it—"or I'll go fishing at Blackwaterfoot." And he made the motion of casting a fly toward the long map. A cheery old soul, he was, not homesick at all, he solemnly informed me, "but no' forgetting hame, ye understand."

I could see that. Among my baggage (not forgetting home, either) I had certain books. William Power's *My Scotland*, George Blake's *Rest and Be Thankful*, H. V. Morton's *In Scotland Again*, and a copy of a new edition of that old classic by Alexander Smith, *A Summer in Skye*, I left with him, realising that for him these had been written.

I had to go on to the prairies, to one of the Indian reservations. I had been there before. One of the men I wished to see, the agent for the tribe told me very regretfully, was in hospital recovering from delirium tremens in which he had gone on a lone war-path. For despite the law against supplying alcohol to the aborigines there are those who will do so. I was informed, however, that he was much better and would like to see me, so I went along.

There was a rumour that he was not a full blood. There was a suspicion that, Indian though he looked, he was a half-breed. He had, nevertheless, been brought up—*raised*, as they say there-away—as an Indian. He was proud of being Indian, apparently, cherished old Indian ways. He made the bowls of his pipes out of pipe-stone and from choke-cherry made the stems, and smoked *kinnick* instead of tobacco. He knew the old myths of his people and he "spoke," as well as his Indian tongue and English, the old sign-language of the tribes. He knew their rituals and their dances that have come down from the stone age.

I sat beside his cot in the clean-smelling and shining ward, his squaw to the other side of it rolling and smoking cigarettes, saying not a word but smiling at the right places and now and then turning her head toward us at some part of our talk specially interesting to her.

"Whether he is a full blood or a half-breed," I considered, glancing at her, "their children will be Indian enough, with no evidence of a drop of white blood."

We got on very well together, so well, indeed, that after my business with him was over, all my questions asked, and answered with great interest and intelligence, he did not want me to go. It was his turn to interview me. What nationality was I?

"I'm a Scotsman," said I.

"Me too!" he replied promptly.

So he was, then, as some suspected, a half-breed. Having been brought up as an Indian by his Indian mother, having lived as one with his mother's people, he looked very Indian—and that "Me too!" came as what I can best describe as a whimsical shock.

Well, there had certainly been plenty of Scotland in my western journeys and voyages that summer—taking meals with an engineer from Govan all the way up the coast of British Columbia and through the pan-handle of Alaska, listening to the voices of Skye and Mull on Yukon River, Tagish Lake, and Lake Atlin, claimed as a compatriot by a half-breed Indian with a full Indian name, a wearer of moccasins, a smoker of *kinnick*. And then the climax, the grand finale:

The cottonwoods and the tamaracks and birches were yellowing with warning of summer's end when I came back to this house by Kootenay Lake where I had to sit down and marshal all the notes I had been taking and get the jobs done for which I had been gathering these. There was a radio in the house—a wireless set—and one morning I was urgently called to come and listen.

There was a voice telling us that crowds were gathering, the voice of George Blake at the shipyards telling us, over five thousand miles away, of the launching of a new Cunarder. From where he stood, he informed us, he could see both sides of the Clyde, and rain was coming on and umbrellas were going up. I heard Queen Mary's voice and a crisp tinkle of shattered glass, heard the ship slide away, and then George Blake again letting us know how the vessel looked as she went. I heard the cheering beyond it. But what took me home, as on a magic carpet, was that touch about the rain.

I saw the Clyde. I saw the umbrellas darkly gleaming. I saw the streets, the doorways, the grey light on wet slate-roofs, the steeples in the rain—aye, even the sooty city pigeons cowering, hunched in their niches—sitting on a sunny morning in a house by the shores of Kootenay Lake in British Columbia. In another decade, no doubt, there will be more than a voice out of a magic box for us. We shall both hear and see—truly see, not figuratively—across these miles.

The love for the Old Land must be considerable, after all, I think, in one who, hearing of rain on umbrellas in Govan—rain on umbrellas in Govan!—felt that he would like fine to see auld Glasgow again. Scotland is a place in the sun and rain, but it is more than that. I have said it before and I will say it again: it is a kingdom of the mind. Wherever a Scot goes Scotland goes with him, inside his cranium, inside his heart—which need not at all imply any chauvinism. The old love for it endures, whatever his reason or necessity for living elsewhere.

THE END

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### Transcriber's Note

- Hyphenation and spelling inconsistencies left as in the original
- [Pg 32](#): "ash-try" to "ash-tray" located in "... thrust the ash-try closer."
- [Pg 110](#): "chat" to "that" located in "... tell us of books chat would delight ..."
- [Pg 139](#): "usuage" to "usage" located in "... in the old German usuage of such ..."
- [Pg 150](#): "ryhthmic" to "rhythmic" located in "... heard again the ryhthmic creaking ..."
- [Pg 287](#): "nagivation" to "navigation" located in "... discussing their methods of nagivation ..."
- [Pg 313](#): "riplied" to "rippled" located in "... shallow at that season, ripplied on its way."

[The end of *Coloured Spectacles* by Frederick Niven]